# Article information:

Protests and trust in the state: Evidence from African countries - ScienceDirect  
<https://0-www-sciencedirect-com.lib.unibocconi.it/science/article/pii/S0047272717300816?via%3Dihub=>

# Article summary:

1. Protests can have a significant impact on citizens' trust in their leaders and monitoring institutions, with even a single protest reducing trust by half of the standard deviation across regions.

2. The impact of protests on trust can also affect civic engagement, with protests leading to decreased support for the ruling party and increased willingness to attend protest rallies.

3. Beliefs in institutions are volatile and sensitive to social crises, contrary to the common view of high persistence of social capital or trust.

# Article rating:

Appears moderately imbalanced: The article provides some useful information, but is missing several important points or pieces of evidence that would be required to present the discussed topics in a balanced and reliable way. You are encouraged to seek a more balanced perspective on the presented issues by exploring the provided research topics and looking at different information sources.

# Article analysis:

The article "Protests and trust in the state: Evidence from African countries" presents an empirical investigation of the impact of social protests on citizens' beliefs in leaders and institutions in Africa. The authors argue that protests inform citizens about the state of the world, and citizens may learn that their leader is dishonest or that monitoring institutions are insufficient to prevent leaders from misbehaving. The study uses a careful match between two rounds of the Afrobarometer survey and a database on local conflicts and protests in Africa to test these hypotheses.

The article provides valuable insights into the dynamics of trust in the state, but it also has some potential biases and limitations. One possible bias is that the study focuses only on African countries, which may limit its generalizability to other regions. Additionally, the study relies on self-reported data from surveys, which may be subject to social desirability bias or other forms of response bias.

Another limitation is that the study does not explore alternative explanations for changes in citizens' beliefs following protests. For example, it is possible that protests signal a shift in public opinion rather than revealing new information about leaders or institutions. The authors attempt to address this concern by conducting placebo tests using acts of violence against civilians instead of protests, but this approach may not fully capture all alternative explanations.

The article also lacks discussion of potential risks associated with increased civic engagement through street protests. While the authors note that citizens may favor street protests over silent protest at the ballot box, they do not explore potential negative consequences such as violence or repression by authorities.

Overall, while "Protests and trust in the state" provides valuable insights into how social protests can affect citizens' beliefs in leaders and institutions, it also has some limitations and potential biases that should be considered when interpreting its findings.

# Topics for further research:

* Risks of street protests in Africa
* Alternative explanations for changes in citizens' beliefs following protests
* Social desirability bias in survey data
* Response bias in survey data
* Repression of protests by African authorities
* Public opinion shifts in response to protests

# Report location:

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