

Fear and Political Participation: Evidence from Africa¹

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Abstract:

Research finds that personal exposure to violence or crime increases political participation. The effects of fear, however, have not been studied. Since the number of victims is much smaller than those who are afraid of becoming a victim, this suggests an important but unexplored channel from crime to political participation. Moreover, if people who experience violence or crime are also afraid of future exposure, existing estimates conflate the effects of past experience with those of fear of future exposure. We find that fear of crime accounts for 10-23 percent of the effect previously attributed to direct exposure. We further find important differences between the effects of fear and victimization on political attitudes. Whereas victims of crimes have more authoritarian political attitudes, people who are fearful of crime are more supportive of democracy and equality, and hold other attitudes that are normally associated with rule of law and democracy.

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Exposure to wartime violence (for a review Bauer *et al.*, forthcoming) and, more generally, to commonplace crime (Bateson 2012) is linked to increased prosocial behavior, including political activity (e.g. more likely to vote, act as leaders, etc) (Bateson 2012; Bellows and Miguel 2009; Blattman 2009). While this research helps to understand individual-level behavior, the aggregate implications are unclear. With the possible exception of genocides, relatively few people directly experience violence during conflicts. Even if one expands the focus to crimes of various sorts, the percentage of people with these negative experiences remains limited. Consequently, at the national level (or even sub-national level), the changed behavior of victims may have a limited impact.

In contrast to the minority of victims, a much larger number of people are afraid of becoming victims of violence or of crime (i.e are insecure). Globally, the number of insecure is likely quite substantial as roughly 1 in 5 individuals (1.5 billion) live in countries affected by repeated cycles of political or criminal violence (World Bank, 2011). However, to the best of our knowledge, the potential effects of insecurity on political participation have not been studied.⁴ In this paper, we examine the effects of fear of exposure to crime on political participation.

We focus on two related questions. First, does this fear affect political participation? Not only are many (more) people exposed to insecurity, but this has important implications for the existing literature. In particular, if fear does affect political participation, then the literature has been conflating the effects of exposure to violence and of insecurity.⁵

We use self-reported measures of fear of crime, exposure to violence and political participation from two rounds of the Afrobarometer Survey (more than 10,000 respondents from 18+ countries in each round). The results strongly suggest a previously unstudied pathway from crime to political participation as insecurity is correlated with increases in community action, community meetings, protests and political conversations. This pathway appears to be at least as

⁴ The closest study of which we are aware, Nasir *et al.* (2016), finds that insecurity leads to the same type of prosocial behavior as victimization. However, it does not examine political activity nor does it measure insecurity directly.

⁵ If individuals who are exposed to violence are also afraid, in the absence of a separate measure of fear, the estimated coefficient for exposure reflects the effects of both exposure and fear. The true effect of exposure to violence will only be estimated with a separate measure of fear or in the highly unlikely case where the effect of fear is identical among the exposed and non-exposed populations. A similar point is made by Rockmore who separates the effects of insecurity from exposure to war time violence on per capita consumption (forthcoming) and agricultural behavior (2012).

important as exposure to violence. The effects of insecurity are statistically indistinguishable from those of exposure while they affect a larger share of the population. Moreover, the inclusion of a measure of insecurity lowers the estimated effect of victimization by 10-23% suggesting that the existing literature on exposure to violence conflates the two effects.

Second, we investigate the effect of fear on the “substance” of participation. That is, if people who are afraid participate more, what sort of attitudes do they contribute to society? For example, some existing literature would lead one to think that fear makes people more “authoritarian” in nature (Feldman and Stenner 1997; Marcus *et al.* 1995). We find no evidence of this. Indeed, perhaps surprisingly, we consistently find that people who are fearful of crime are more supportive of democracy and equality, and hold other attitudes that are normally associated with the rule of law and democracy. Since victims hold the opposite views, the aggregate effect of exposure to crime (and, most likely, to violence) on democracy may depend on the relative proportion of victims and insecure individuals.

In the next section, we review the relevant literature on victimization, fear, and political participation, detailing the need for systematic empirical analysis in this area. In the third section, we present our empirical strategy and results regarding political participation. A fourth section explores the additional hypotheses about the substance of political participation of those afraid. A fifth section concludes with a summary and implications for the literature.

I. Perspectives on victimization, fear, and political participation

Why people participate in politics—from attending community meetings to joining a protest to leading a group—is one of the oldest questions in political science and the basis for a massive literature.⁶ This scholarship underlines the importance of such factors as socioeconomic status, education, age, or gender in determining whether a person participates in politics. And yet, despite all the work in this area, a novel hypothesis has emerged in recent years: the idea that being a victim of crime or violence can spur people to be more active in politics (Bateson 2012; Bellows and Miguel 2009; Blattman 2009).

⁶ Benchmark works include Brady *et al.* (1995) and Verba *et al.* (1978, 1995).

From a variety of perspectives, this idea seems surprising. For one, though traumatic life events have been relatively understudied in this literature, the limited evidence suggests that negative events, such as job loss, negatively impact political participation (Rosenstone 1982). And this seems consistent with work in psychology that routinely finds that exposure to political violence has a negative effect on psychological wellbeing (Mghir et al. 1995) and interactions with others (van der Kolk et al. 1996).

However, recent studies on the effect of victimization finds increased subsequent participation in politics. Looking at representative surveys from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America, Bateson (2012) shows a consistent correlation between crime victimization and increased political participation, measured using several different indicators. Strikingly, the positive correlation exists across different kinds of crimes, from petty to severe, and for almost every kind of participation. Looking at more severe victimization, such as wartime trauma, several authors have used a variety of techniques to attain plausibly exogenous exposure, and they have generally found that such trauma leads to greater likelihood of voting and civic engagement at the individual level (Bellows and Miguel 2009; Blattman 2009).

The causal mechanisms attributed to these findings vary. In the violent conflict and war scenarios, some authors point to post-traumatic growth theory (Tedeshi and Calhoun 1996), a body of psychological work indicating that important (potentially positive) personality changes can result from terrible experiences. However, as Bateson (2012) notes, this sort of mechanism cannot account for her findings about crime, which indicate that even pickpocketing and bicycle theft can spur political participation—annoying events for sure, and even frightening, but generally not traumatic. Instead, she attributes her findings to emotional and expressive factors, citing accounts suggesting the benefits of participating for crime victims (Bejarano 2002; and Rozowsky 2002): “Crime victims may turn to politics because political participation mitigates the emotional consequences of victimization” (Bateson 2012: 571).⁷

While certainly a plausible mechanism for her findings, the focus on emotions as a source of political participation opens up a broader question. If the political participation observed in response to victimization is being caused by anger at being a victim, or fear of being a victim again, should our main variable of interest be “anger” or “fear” instead of whether or not the

⁷ See also Rojo Mendoza (2014).

person has been victimized? From this perspective, being a crime victim would be a source of anger or fright, and indeed may raise these emotions to particularly high levels, but the source of the political participation would not be different from other people driven by their anger or fear.

Indeed, viewed from the perspective that emotions like fear could drive political participation, the findings with regard to victimization and political participation seem not so strange. For example, it has become unfortunately common for political advertising to focus on voters' fears, precisely because campaign strategists feel that it is an effective way to get people to the polls. There is evidence that they are right. As Gruszczyński et al. (2013, 136) recently note that, "Negative emotions such as fear or threat, as well as more neutral emotions such as anxiety, lead citizens to pay more attention to political information" (Brader 2005; Geer 2006; Marcus et al. 2000). Relatedly, Valentino et al. (2008) find that fear is indeed unique among negative emotions, and that while anger, for example, depresses information seeking, fear boosts information seeking and learning (see also Huddy et al. 2005, 2007 and Lerner and Keltner 2001).⁸

Nevertheless, like the findings with regard to exposure to violence, the idea that fear might have "positive" effects seems at odds with much conventional wisdom on the effects of fear of crime in societies. Scholars often talk about how fear leads to the "reduced participation in democratic practices by residents of violent communities" (Buvinić and Morrison 2000, 69). And indeed, democratic theorists tend to associate the idea of fear with the antithesis of democracy's supposed quest for justice, equality, and freedom (Robin 2004). It should be noted, however, that despite the prevalence of this idea, empirical evidence for it is scant. The few empirical studies we can find have generally found no relationship between fear of crime and participation in social organizations (Perkins et al. 1990, and 1996).

There are thus plausible reasons to think that fear may be an important predictor of political participation, as well as reasons to doubt it. However, the existing related empirical studies cited in the previous paragraphs are almost exclusively of the United States, and they do not consider the wide range of variables of political participation we study here. There simply is not a good

⁸ In fact, findings such as these regarding emotion have been seen by some scholars as the answer to why people participate in politics far more often than one might otherwise expect (Groenendyk 2011). Most rational theories of political participation suggest that people will participate only if they are convinced that they will make a difference—that is, that the reward is greater than the cost of participating. Though political participation is lower than perhaps many would like, it certainly must be much greater than it would be if people only acted if they thought they would make a difference.

empirical answer in the literature to the question of whether the fear of crime and victimization affects political participation around the world. In this paper, we attempt to provide one, focusing particularly on crime.

II. Data and Methodology

Since Bateson (2012) provides the most comprehensive examination of the effects of exposure to crime on political participation, we use her analysis as a benchmark. Consequently, we begin our analysis using the same empirical specification and data from the Afrobarometer. Subsequently, we expand the analysis to consider additional data and empirical specifications. We primarily rely on data from 4th round of the Afrobarometer, which provides representative surveys of 20 sub-Saharan African countries during the period 2008-09.⁹ As a robustness check, we replicate our analysis using the data from the 3rd round of the Afrobarometer (2005).¹⁰

Our primary variable of interest is the self-reported measure of fear. The underlying question asks “Over the past year, how often (if ever) have you or anyone in your family: Feared crime in your own home?”¹¹ We create a binary variable for whether a respondent ever feared crime by aggregating positive responses (i.e., just once to twice, several times, many times, or always) and dropping respondents who answered “Don’t know” or who refused to respond.¹²

We create a similar measure of exposure to crime by combining responses from the following questions: “Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family: Had

⁹ The countries are Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

¹⁰ The 3rd and 4th rounds cover the same sets of countries with the exception of Burkina Faso and Liberia which appear only in the 4th round.

¹¹ This particular question was not asked in Zimbabwe, and the data from Lesotho do not include information on the respondent’s district, so the final data we use come from 18 countries.

¹² The combined number of people who either did not respond or responded “Don’t know” was tiny in Round 4: only 0.32%. It was larger in Round 3, which we will also examine below, but still fairly small (4.36%). Given our findings below, one might be concerned that these people are systematically different from the rest of the population—most importantly, perhaps they are more fearful than others, which influences their non-response. If they are also people who participate less in politics (perhaps as a result of that fear), their omission from the analysis could bias our results toward finding a positive relationship between fear and political participation. To address this concern, we compared the average values of the dependent variables in our sample with those of respondents excluded from the analysis (those who answered “don’t know” or did not respond). Performing eleven different t-tests (six dependent variables in Round 4 and five in Round 3), we found insignificant results in seven of the eleven instances, indicating that we could not reject the hypothesis that their means were the same. In each of the four cases where we found significantly different means, the mean of the excluded group was *higher* than in our sample, indicating that people who answered “Don’t know” or did not respond tend to participate more in politics. In other words, if these were fearful people, our results would be even stronger if we could include them in our analysis.

something stolen from your house?” and “Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family: Been physically attacked?” In particular, a person is coded as having been exposed to crime for any positive answer to either question.

These measures have two limitations. First, they measure household as opposed to individual exposure. Insofar as personal experiences or emotions have a stronger effect than indirect exposure through family, our estimates may be a lower bound. More broadly, much of the previous literature focuses on individual exposure. Since we consistently find significant effects from our measure, this suggests the existence of within household ‘spillovers’ of experiences which influence political participation.

Second, there is some uncertainty of the timing of the experience relative to the political behavior. That is, the fear of crime (or exposure to crime) may have only occurred *after* the relevant political behavior. Therefore, we cannot claim causality and can only examine correlations. In the robustness section, however, we are able to provide evidence suggesting that the relationship is from fear to political behavior. For instance, we are able, however, to distinguish between fear of crime and of political intimidation or violence. Only the former is significant. Moreover, prior political behavior (i.e. voting) is not correlated with the fear.

We examine political participation along several different dimensions: community action (such as acting with others in a group), community meeting attendance, protest, political interest, political conversations, and group leadership (Table 1).¹³ Each has five different levels of participation, ranging from no participation to participating often (again, respondents who answered “Don’t know” or refused to answer were excluded).¹⁴

To examine whether fear affects political participation, we estimate the following ordinary least squares (OLS) regression¹⁵:(1)

for each individual i and district d . The dependent variables, DV, are the political outcomes described earlier. *Fear* and *Victim* are the primary variables of interest and are the binary

¹³ There is no question regarding group leadership in the 3rd round of the Afrobarometer.

¹⁴ Following Bateson (2012), levels are coded from 0.2 (“No, would never do this”) to 1 (“Yes, often”) with each additional level increasing by 0.2.

¹⁵ The choice of OLS is to follow Bateson (2012) as closely as possible. Since the choice of numerical values (i.e. 0.2, 0.4, etc) for the dependent variables is arbitrary, we also verify our results using an ordered probit. The results are qualitatively similar and are available upon request.

measures for (household) fear of crime or victimization by crime over the past year respectively. By controlling for both prior victimization and fear, it is possible to separate the effects of fear () and victimization (). This contrasts with prior studies which have only included victimization so that the estimated effect of victimization also includes the effects of fear.

Control is a vector of control variables: gender of respondent, age and its square, self-reported socioeconomic status and education level, and urban status. Since the Afrobarometer surveys do not contain many control variables, we are particularly concerned by omitted variables and further address this in the robustness section. Lastly, we include district fixed effects. We estimate robust standard errors clustered at the district level.

III. Results

To provide a benchmark for the effects of the inclusion of the fear variable, we begin by estimating equation (1) omitting the variable measuring fear. Since we differ from Bateson (2012) in our use of district as opposed to country fixed effects, Table 2 presents results from both types of fixed effects. The top half of the table presents the estimates from Bateson (2012) while the bottom half presents our benchmark estimates. Although the magnitude of the coefficients tends to decrease with the district fixed effects, the results are generally qualitatively and quantitatively similar.¹⁶

We next introduce the variable for fear and fully estimate equation (1) (Table 3). The estimated coefficient for the variable measuring fear is significant for 4 of the 6 dependent variables (community action, community meetings, protests, and political conversations. While the estimated coefficients for fear are always smaller than those for victimization, this difference is not statistically significant (with the exception of group leadership). This implies that victimization is not the only link between exposure to crime and political participation; insecurity has an equally important correlation with most outcomes. Consequently, the effects crime (or violence) may be felt by a much larger portion of the population than previously believed.

¹⁶ The results reported throughout the paper are qualitatively and quantitatively similar with country fixed effects. These results are available upon request.

The inclusion of fear does not change the strong significance of estimated coefficients for victimization. However, the magnitude of the estimate coefficients decreases, by 10 to 23 percent depending on the specification. This suggests that previous estimates in the literature conflate the effects of insecurity and victimization and have overestimated the effects of victimization.

Political Participation: Robustness

Although the measure of fear has a consistently large and significant correlation with political behavior (Table 3), several concerns remain. In this section, we address potential omitted neighborhood and fixed personal variables, the timing of the political behavior relative to the fear, the type of fear, the type of governance, the effect of previous histories of violence, and whether the effects are limited to the specific round. As is described below, the results remain qualitatively and quantitatively similar to those in Table 3 (with the exception of the specification for community meetings which sometimes becomes insignificant).

Due to the parsimonious nature of equation (1), our estimate may be affected by omitted variables. We begin by considering the potential effects of neighborhood characteristics. For instance, neighborhood characteristics such as the provision of public goods or of security might be correlated with both crime and political participation. To account for this possibility, Table 4 adds eleven new control variables related to public good provision and security to begin to address for neighborhood characteristics.¹⁷ While the magnitude of the coefficients for fear tends to decrease, they are qualitatively similar to those reported in Table 3. The coefficients in the community action, protest, and political conversations specifications remain significant while the coefficient for community meetings becomes insignificant.

Similarly, the estimates may be affected by fixed individual characteristics. For instance, certain personality traits could lead people to be both more afraid and more participatory in politics. Since the Afrobarometer surveys do not contain detailed personality data nor of many individual

¹⁷ The variables, also taken from the Afrobarometer, are (1) whether or not the area has an electricity grid that most houses can access; (2) whether or not the area has a piped water system that most houses can access; (3) whether the area has cell phone service; (4) whether there is a post-office within easy walking distance; (5) whether there is a school within easy walking distance; (6) whether there is a police station within easy walking distance; (7) whether there is a health clinic within easy walking distance; (8) whether there are market stalls selling groceries and/or clothing within easy walking distance; (9) whether the interviewer saw policemen or police vehicles in the area; (10) whether the interviewer saw any soldiers or army vehicles in the area; and (11) whether or not the road to the area was paved/ tarred /concrete.

characteristics. However, insofar as these characteristics are fixed, they should also have influenced prior political participation. Consequently, by controlling for prior political participation, it is possible to simultaneously control for the effects of fixed personality traits or any other (largely) fixed personal characteristics (such as ethnicity).

We therefore add a binary variable for (self-reported) voting in the previous election to the control variables in equation (1). Since the underlying question for fear of crime addresses the past year, we focus on respondents in countries whose most recent election was more than a year earlier. Consequently, Table 5 presents estimates from respondents from only 12 of the 18 countries.¹⁸ The inclusion of the prior voting variable has only a minimal effect. Similar to Table 4, the estimated coefficient for fear is significant in the community action, protest, and political conversation specifications remains significant.

We next consider the issue of timing. Since the recall period for the political behavior and for the fear of crime are over the past year, it is possible that the fear occurs *after* the political behavior. We conduct a placebo test using prior voting as the dependent variable. We argue that fear ‘changes’ political behavior. If true, then fear over the past year should be uncorrelated with previous political behavior. The sample is again restricted to those 12 countries which did not have an election in the past year and therefore whose election clearly precedes the measure of fear. The coefficient for fear is not significant suggesting that it is capturing something recent (Table 6).

Though our principal results about the effect of fear are robust, one might also wonder whether there was something special about the particular time period during which the Round 4 Afrobarometer surveys were taken. We have therefore replicated the main result (Table 3) using a different round of the Afrobarometer, which was conducted in 2005 (Round 3). Our sample still includes representative data for 18 countries, and Table 7 presents these results and shows that they are broadly similar to those presented above (the dependent variable regarding group leadership is not available in Round 3). In fact, the estimated coefficients for fear tend be larger than those for victimization (although this difference is not statistically significant. Moreover, the

¹⁸ The 12 countries are Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Liberia, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia.

significance of the coefficient for fear tends to increase. In contrast, some of the victimization results are weaker, both in magnitude and significance.

So far, we have shown that fear of crime has a consistently robust effect on many type of political behavior. Does this effect extend to other types of fear or is it particular to fear of crime? It is possible to examine the effect of fear of political violence. In top half of Table 8, the variable for fear of crime is replaced with the variable for fear of political violence. The coefficient for fear political violence is significantly correlated with political interest and group leadership. In general, however, it is not significant. In the bottom half of table 7, we include both measures of fear. Certain people may be generally fearful. More broadly, the measure of fear of crime might be also capturing some of the effect of fear of political violence. For instance, individuals may not distinguish between the two. The inclusion of the political fear variable strengthens the significance of the fear of crime variable, which now becomes significant in 5 of the 6 behaviors.

An additional concern regarding these results might be that we have pooled both democracies and dictatorships in our sample, and one might reasonably wonder if fear affects political participation differently in these regimes. In order to examine this possibility, we interacted our fear variable with an indicator of whether or not the respondent's country was democratic, as coded by Cheibub et al. (2010). We did this with both the Round 3 and Round 4 data, so that in total we had 11 regressions for each possible interaction (six from Round 4, five from Round 3). We were particularly looking for interaction terms that were significant in both rounds, indicating a robust result that regime type mattered.

The interaction term was insignificant in six of the eleven regressions,¹⁹ but for only one dependent variable—political interest—was the interaction term significant in both rounds. Significant at the ten percent level in Round 4 and the five percent level in Round 3, the coefficient indicated that only in democracies do people react to fear by being more interested in public affairs. While the lack of other robust differences across regime types may at first be surprising, one must keep in mind that the coefficients here are capturing the effect of fear from different baselines of participation. The regime type variable on its own is highly significant in all eleven regressions, indicating that people participate more in politics in democracies, as one

¹⁹ The results are available upon request.

would of course expect. Having taken account of this difference, fear does not seem to have robustly different effects on people in the two regimes, with the exception of interest in public affairs.

Finally, to analyze whether people with past histories of exposure to violence react differently, we interacted fear with a measure developed in recent work by Adhvaryu and Fenske (2014). These authors have geocoded the respondents in Round 3 of the Afrobarometer and (in combination with information on the age of the respondents) developed a measure that captures the respondents' geographic exposure to violent conflict between the ages of 0 to 14. This sort of childhood exposure seems to have long-term consequences on attitudes and behavior (Blattman and Annan 2010). When we interact this variable with fear, however, the interaction is never significant.²⁰

With few exceptions, the overwhelming pattern in these various specifications is that fear is a robust predictor of political participation. People who have felt fear in the past year participate more in their communities, attend more community meetings, attend more protests, have more political conversations, and are perhaps more interested in politics. Interestingly, looking across all of the regressions, the effects of this fear are not easily distinguished from the effects of actually being a victim of crime. Combined with the number of people around the world living in places with cycles of violence and crime, the results suggest that fear has a very large impact on political participation around the world.

IV. Fear and the “substance” of participation

The results presented in the previous section are striking in their suggestion that the fear of crime leads people to participate more in politics. From this perspective, at least, fear does not seem to present as much of a challenge to democratic politics as some people might think.

However, if people who are afraid participate more in politics, what kind of attitudes do they bring to this participation? It might be the case, for example, that people participate more, but that as a result of their fear, they bring “authoritarian” attitudes into the political arena. Fear and anxiety have been found to lead people to be more punitive and less tolerant of other groups

²⁰ The results are available upon request.

(Feldman and Stenner 1997; Marcus *et al.* 1995). If this were to be the case, the interpretation of the above results would be complex from a democratic perspective.

There are reasons to question whether this is the case, however. In her study of the effects of crime, for example, Bateson (2012) found varying effects of victimization on political attitudes across regions. In Latin America, victimization by crime led people to hold more authoritarian views, but in other regions the effect was more ambiguous. Contrary to Fernandez and Kuenzi (2010), she did not find a consistent relationship between crime victimization and authoritarian attitudes in Africa. Skitka *et al.* (2004: 754) have also found less clear-cut results linking fear to tolerance, particularly when contrasted with the emotion of anger.

Fortunately, the Afrobarometer asks questions that we can use to examine the effect of fear on these attitudes. In this section, we follow Adhvaryu and Fenske (2014), aggregating a number of different survey questions from the Round 3 Afrobarometer to analyze several different dimensions of political attitudes.²¹ These dimensions include (1) whether the person believes democratic forms of government are best; (2) how equally the person believes people should be treated under the law; (3) how much the person believes the rule of law should be respected; (4) how democratic the person's political attitudes are; and (4) how much the person trusts particular actors in politics (e.g. the President, the Parliament, etc.). Questions are aggregated into each dimension by converting the answers of each question into a standard normal variable (with higher numbers representing more respect for democracy, more preference for equality, more respect for rule of law, more democratic political attitudes, and more trust in particular actors), and then adding them together to form each of the relevant indices. These indices form the dependent variables of the regressions below (Glennerster *et al.* 2013). For each regression, we use the same control variables as in equation (1).

Table 9 presents the results, which demonstrate that people afraid of crime are more likely to prefer democratic modes of government, more likely to prefer equal treatment under the law, and more likely to have democratic political attitudes. There is no significant effect on attitudes toward rule of law or trust in particular actors in politics. Interestingly, here the results are quite different than those of the victimization variable. It seems that victims tend to have more authoritarian attitudes than those respondents who are merely afraid of crime. Though we cannot

²¹ Appendix 1 presents the questions underlying each dimension.

adjudicate this hypothesis with our current data, an interesting possibility is that when we control for fear, one of the main emotional responses left, due to victimization of crime, is anger, and this may have quite different effects than fear (e.g. Huddy, Feldman, and Cassese 2007).

V. Conclusion

Over the last several years, scholars have begun to document a surprising empirical connection between negative personal experiences and political participation. Initially focusing on violent personal incidences during war, these studies have recently shown that victimization by crime has similar effects, increasing political participation. This paper has expanded the study of this relationship even further, seeing if the mere experience of fear has a similar effect. We have found that it does.

Using data from two different rounds of the Afrobarometer, we have consistently found a positive relationship between fear of crime and political participation, using a variety of different measures of the dependent variable and statistical controls. Accounting for the possibility that this relationship may be due to personality effects, neighborhood effects, or even personal characteristics such as gender, age, socioeconomic status, or education, we have continually found the positive relationship. Furthermore, while one might worry that the people participating more have undesirable attitudes because of their fear, we have found no support for this: there is no reason to think that people who are fearful are any less “democratic” in their attitudes. Indeed, on many dimensions, people who are fearful become more supportive of democratic institutions and behaviors.

In the context of the recent literature, these findings are important for a number of reasons. First, of course, is the robust positive relationship established between fear and political participation. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, there has been scant systematic empirical evaluation of this relationship, while theoretical work comes to contrasting predictions. Notably, when it comes to political participation, the effects of fear in the analysis are not statistically distinguishable from the effects of actually being a victim of crime. Combined with the number of people around the world living in places with cycles of violence and crime, the results suggest that fear greatly affects political participation around the world.

Second, in the context of the literature on the effect of victimization, our results show that the effects of victimization are robust to the inclusion of insecurity. However, the results strongly suggest that previous studies have overestimated the effects of victimization on political participation. In our analysis, the effect of victimization drops by 10 to 23 percent when fear of crime is included.

Third, the findings here suggest that there is an important difference between the effects of fear and victimization on political attitudes. We find that whereas actual victims of crimes have more authoritarian political attitudes, the fear of these crimes has a more sanguine effect. It could be (indeed, it almost certainly is) the case that victimization triggers a variety of emotional responses that feed into political attitudes, the sum of which leads to more authoritarian outlooks. The specific impact of fear, however, does not appear to be problematic in this regard.

More generally, the findings in this paper suggest the importance of continuing to investigate the effect of fear empirically. Important work over the last two decades has shown how negative emotions are not all the same—that, for example, fear and anger often have different effects. However, there has been comparatively little research on the differing effects of these emotions on political participation. The results here suggest the importance of continuing to learn about these effects, and particularly how people might respond to these emotions in different ways. It seems, for example, that people in Latin America might be reacting to fear differently than those in Africa (e.g. Bateson 2012). Continuing to unpack the relationship between fear and political participation is likely to be a worthy and stimulating research endeavor in the coming years.

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Table 1: Questions from Afrobarometer employed in analysis

<i>Concept</i>	<i>Question</i>
Community action	<p>“Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year. If not, would you do this if you had the chance: Got together with others to raise an issue?”</p> <p>0 = No, would never do this; 1 = No, but would do if had the chance; 2 = Yes, once or twice; 3 = Yes, several times; 4 = Yes, often; 9 = Don’t know, 98 = Refused to answer</p>
Community meeting	<p>“Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year. If not, would you do this if you had the chance: Attended a community meeting?”</p> <p>0 = No, would never do this; 1 = No, but would do if had the chance; 2 = Yes, once or twice; 3 = Yes, several times; 4 = Yes, often; 9 = Don’t know, 98 = Refused to answer</p>
Protest	<p>“Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year. If not, would you do this if you had the chance: Attended a demonstration or</p>

	<p>protest march?"</p> <p>0 = No, would never do this; 1 = No, but would do if had the chance; 2 = Yes, once or twice; 3 = Yes, several times; 4 = Yes, often; 9 = Don't know, 98 = Refused to answer</p>
<p>Political interest</p>	<p>"How interested would you say you are in public affairs?"</p> <p>0 = Not at all interested; 1 = Not very interested; 2 = Somewhat interested; 3 = Very interested; 9 = Don't know; 98 = Refused to answer</p>
<p>Political conversations</p>	<p>"When you get together with your friends or family, would you say you discuss political matters:"</p> <p>0 = Never; 1 = Occasionally; 2 = Frequently; 9 = Don't know; 98 = Refused to answer</p>
<p>Group leadership</p>	<p>Now I am going to read out a list of groups that people join or attend. For each one, could you tell me whether you are an official leader, an active member, an inactive member, or not a member: A community development or self-help association?</p> <p>0 = Not a member; 1 = Inactive member; 2 = Active member; 3 = Official leader; 9 = Don't know; 98 = Refused to answer</p>

Table 2: Effect of Victimization using District vs National Fixed Effects

	Community Action	Community Meetings	Protest	Political Interest	Political Conversations	Group Leadership
w/ country fixed effects (Bateson 2012)	0.023 (0.004)***	0.021 (0.004)***	0.030 (0.003)***	0.019 (0.004)***	0.023 (0.004)***	0.024 (0.003)***
<i>R</i> ²	0.14	0.17	0.07	0.08	0.11	0.1
w/ district fixed effects	0.019 (0.004)***	0.019 (0.004)***	0.021 (0.003)***	0.017 (0.004)***	0.024 (0.004)***	0.023 (0.004)***
<i>R</i> ²	0.25	0.28	0.18	0.19	0.21	0.22
<i>N</i>	25,765	25,856	25,178	25,795	25,834	25,779

Note: "Victim" means that the respondent has been the victim of a crime in the past 12 months. Control variables (detailed in the text) and fixed effects not reported to save space. Standard errors clustered by district in parenthesis. *, **, *** Significant at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels respectively.

Table 3: Effect of Fear of Crime

	Community Action	Community Meetings	Protest	Political Interest	Political Conversations	Group Leadership
Victim	0.0151 (0.0042)***	0.0152 (0.0039)***	0.0178 (0.0031)***	0.0144 (0.0044)***	0.0186 (0.0038)***	0.0208 (0.0038)***
Fear	0.0113 (0.0041)***	0.0086 (0.0038)**	0.0091 (0.0034)***	0.006 (0.0046)	0.015 (0.0043)***	0.0046 (0.004)
R^2	0.25	0.28	0.18	0.19	0.21	0.22
N	25,690	25,781	25,109	25,721	25,760	25,706
T-test of victim and fear coefficients	Not different	**				
Change in Victim Coefficient	-22%	-20%	-15%	-13%	-23%	-10%

Note: "Victim" means that the respondent has been the victim of a crime in the past 12 months. "Fear" means that the respondent has been fearful of crime in the past 12 months (see text for question). Control variables (detailed in the text) and fixed effects (at the district level) not reported to save space. Standard errors clustered by district in parenthesis. *, **, *** significant at the 10, 5, and 1 percent levels respectively.

Table 4: Robustness to neighborhood effects

	Community Action	Community Meetings	Protest	Political Interest	Political Conversations	Group Leadership
Victim	0.017 (0.0041)***	0.0194 (0.0038)***	0.0199 (0.0029)***	0.0106 (0.0043)**	0.0161 (0.0038)***	0.0222 (0.0037)***
Fear	0.0095 (0.0041)**	0.0052 (0.0037)	0.0109 (0.0031)***	0.0062 (0.0044)	0.013 (0.0040)***	0.0019 (0.0039)
R^2	0.18	0.22	0.11	0.12	0.14	0.15
N	24,676	24,757	24,117	24,695	24,735	24,676

Note: "Victim" means that the respondent has been the victim of a crime in the past 12 months. "Fear" means that the respondent has been fearful of crime in the past 12 months (see text for question). Control variables (detailed in the text) and fixed effects (at the district level) not reported to save space. Standard errors clustered by district in parenthesis. *, **, *** significant at the 10, 5, and 1 percent levels respectively.

Table 5: Robustness to voting in last election

	Community Action	Community Meetings	Protest	Political Interest	Political Conversations	Group Leadership
Victim	0.018 (0.0053)***	0.0203 (0.0047)***	0.0186 (0.0040)***	0.0201 (0.0056)***	0.022 (0.0047)***	0.0247 (0.0047)***
Fear	0.0118 (0.0051)**	0.0064 (0.0048)	0.0095 (0.0044)**	-0.003 (0.0056)	0.01 (0.0053)*	0.0018 (0.0050)
Voted in last election	0.0574 (0.0051)***	0.0703 (0.0054)***	0.0167 (0.0040)***	0.053 (0.0054)***	0.0473 (0.0049)***	0.0203 (0.0050)***
R^2	0.25	0.26	0.17	0.18	0.2	0.19
N	16,279	16,316	15,959	16,296	16,312	16,293

Note: "Victim" means that the respondent has been the victim of a crime in the past 12 months. "Fear" means that the respondent has been fearful of crime in the past 12 months (see text for question). Control variables (detailed in the text) and fixed effects (at the district level) not reported to save space. Standard errors clustered by district in parenthesis. *, **, *** significant at the 10, 5, and 1 percent levels respectively.

Table 6: Effect of fear on voting in previous election

	Vote in last election
Victim	-0.0164 (0.0080)**
Fear	0.0053 (0.0081)
R^2	0.27
N	16,437

Note: "Victim" means that the respondent has been the victim of a crime in the past 12 months. "Fear" means that the respondent has been fearful of crime in the past 12 months (see text for question). Control variables (detailed in the text) and fixed effects (at the district level) not reported to save space. Standard errors clustered by district in parenthesis. *, **, *** significant at the 10, 5, and 1 percent levels respectively.

Table 7: Robustness to Round 3 of Afrobarometer data

	Community Action	Community Meetings	Protest	Political Interest	Political Conversations
Victim	0.0101 (0.0042)**	0.0101 (0.0042)**	0.0175 (0.0033)***	0.0072 (0.0042)*	0.0199 (0.0039)***
Fear	0.0164 (0.0045)***	0.0125 (0.0042)***	0.0049 (0.0034)	0.0131 (0.0046)***	0.0217 (0.0045)***
R^2	0.23	0.28	0.17	0.21	0.19
N	23,600	23,686	23,171	23,590	23,558
T-test of victim and fear coefficients	Not different	Not different	**	Not different	Not different
Change in Victim Coefficient	-36%	-30%	-10%	-40%	-27%

Note: “Victim” means that the respondent has been the victim of a crime in the past 12 months. “Fear” means that the respondent has been fearful of crime in the past 12 months (see text for question). Control variables (detailed in the text) and fixed effects (at the district level) not reported to save space. Standard errors clustered by district in parenthesis. *, **, *** significant at the 10, 5, and 1 percent levels respectively.

Table 8: Robustness to Inclusion of Political Fear

	Community Action	Community Meetings	Protest	Political Interest	Political Conversations	Group Leadership
Victim	0.0223 (0.0037)***	0.0208 (0.0036)***	0.0299 (0.0028)***	0.0184 (0.0041)***	0.0227 (0.0036)***	0.0244 (0.0034)***
Political Fear	0.004 (0.0038)	-0.0047 (0.0038)	0.0041 (0.0031)	-0.0094 (0.0044)**	-0.0004 (0.0035)	0.009 (0.0042)**
R^2	0.14	0.17	0.07	0.08	0.10	0.11
N	25,142	25,228	24,571	25,181	25,215	25,159
Victim	0.0173 (0.0040)***	0.0172 (0.0037)***	0.0252 (0.0030)***	0.0143 (0.0044)***	0.0173 (0.0039)***	0.0225 (0.0037)***
Fear	0.0133 (0.0041)***	0.0087 (0.0038)**	0.0124 (0.0032)***	0.0111 (0.0044)**	0.0142 (0.0039)***	0.0044 (0.0040)
Political Fear	0.0033 (0.0038)	-0.005 (0.0038)	0.0033 (0.0031)	-0.01 (0.0044)**	-0.0013 (0.0035)	0.0086 (0.0043)**
R^2	0.14	0.17	0.07	0.08	0.11	0.11
N	25,074	25,160	24,509	25,113	25,147	25,094

Note: "Victim" means that the respondent has been the victim of a crime in the past 12 months. "Fear" means that the respondent has been fearful of crime in the past 12 months (see text for question). "Political Fear" means that the respondent has been fearful of political violence or intimidation in the past 12 months (see text for question). Control variables (detailed in the text) and fixed effects (at the district level) not reported to save space. Standard errors clustered by district in parenthesis. *, **, *** significant at the 10, 5, and 1 percent levels respectively.

Table 9: Fear's Effect on Political Attitudes

	Democracy	Equality	Rule of Law	Democratic Attitudes	Trust
Victim	-0.0788 (0.0216)***	-0.0438 (0.0166)***	-0.1068 (0.0172)***	-0.0464 (0.0186)**	-0.1249 (0.0191)***
Fear	0.0914 (0.0220)***	0.0747 (0.0183)***	0.0409 (0.0184)**	0.0814 (0.0203)***	-0.0045 (0.0208)
R^2	0.25	0.20	0.21	0.22	0.54
N	16,256	23,213	20,574	20,444	10,142

Note: "Victim" means that the respondent has been the victim of a crime in the past 12 months. "Fear" means that the respondent has been fearful of crime in the past 12 months (see text for question). Control variables (detailed in the text) and fixed effects (at the district level) not reported to save space. Standard errors clustered by district in parenthesis. *, **, *** significant at the 10, 5, and 1 percent levels respectively.

Appendix 1: Variables used to create attitudes (from Round 3 Afrobarometer)

Democracy: q36a q36b q36c q37 q38 q39 q52a q53b

Equality: q22 q21 q23 q24

Rule of law: q49 q52d q52b q52c q50 q51

Democratic Attitudes: q19 q20 q25 q26 q27 q59 q40 q41 q42

Trust: q55a q55b q55c q55d q55e q55f q55g q55h q55i q5