

**DOES NEWS CONSUMPTION AFFECT THE PROPENSITY TO PARTICIPATE IN A
CIVIL ACTION?**

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Abstract

News consumption does not always affect the propensity of citizen to engage in civil actions. This finding was a result of regression analysis of the relationship between consumption of media news and its effect on the propensity to engage in social accountability. The purpose of the research was to determine the extent to which citizens are prompted to engage in civil action by news reports containing information on poor governance outcomes such as poor government performance, corruption and the like. The finding was citizens do not participate in civil action but they do so without being influenced by news reports. The impact of this phenomena is that democracy may not be fully enforced when democratic processes are not effectively implemented. The recommendation is that there needs to be civic education for citizens and awareness created on effective participation in civil action.

Declaration

I declare that this report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Governance and Management) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

Bruce Shabangu

Dedication

The degree that I am submitting this report in pursuance of is dedicated to firstly my late grandmother for having encouraged high learning and also to my daughter, Lwaluhle, the champ, who ignited a fighting spirit in me.

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1. Introduction

This research report sought to establish whether news consumption affects the propensity to participate in civil actions on South African citizens. In a democracy, according to the principal-agent theory, once elected officials enter office, they suffer a moral hazard, wherein there is potential for them being found to be in dereliction of their duties and engaging in corrupt activities. While they may be inclined to hide facts, news media do report on such matters across all the mediums of news for citizens to access. When elected officials engage in such conduct, they need to be held to account. What is expected is that since citizens ought to be aware of the moral hazard that exists with regard to political office, they need to keep tabs on the elected officials through accessing information, either through government governance structures or news media and use such to hold the elected officials to account. Once they discover wrong doing, citizens are expected to hold elected officials to account.

Elected officials are delegated the power to run the government through its organisations. They are supposed to form a government that conforms to the principles of good governance and provide a clean administration free of corruption and other poor governance attributes. Government organisations are supposed to be responsive and responsible, their policies centred around serving the interests of the citizens, expected to be transparent about its decisions, actions, and performance (Koppell, 2005).

Citizens are entitled and should hold elected officials accountable for the government's performance against measures of good governance. This is called political accountability. Political accountability is when citizens engage in democratic processes to monitor, and to hold elected officials to account for concerns that citizens may have. Principal-agent theory warns that once elected officials get into political power and get into government, they suffer a moral hazard, wherein they are in position to misuse the power to further their self-interest over the interests of the citizens. It is up to the citizens to enforce political accountability to manage that risk (Gailmard, 2012).

Political accountability, as a political control system available to citizens, and is a safeguard against the potential abuse of power by elected officials. The abuse of power

by elected officials may manifest in them pursuing self-interest goals. Those goals may not be in the best interest of the citizens or even contradict those of the constituents. Elected officials are able to undertake deviant actions due to the asymmetry of information between them and the citizens. As they are in government, they are in full control of the details regarding operations of the government and the dissemination of information. What political accountability does, if implemented adequately is it accesses information about government's operation and in so doing, it manages the incentive that elected officials may have for self-interest goals and limits the room for them to seek rents.

A critical factor for implementing political accountability in light of information asymmetry, is the level of information that citizens have about government's performance. Access and consumption of information by citizens serves two purposes. It reduces the incentive to pursue self-interest goals on the part of elected officials and provides citizens with information that informs their decision on whether and how to sanction the officials (Schedler *et al.*, 1999, Bluem, 2018).

Citizens may enforce political accountability through democratic political control mechanisms such as voting, as a sanction to the elected officials. Elections create a threat to elected officials, the threat of losing the next elections and therefore political power (Ferejohn, 1986; Barro, 1973). Voting is not the only political control mechanism available. There is also social accountability. Over and above voting, social accountability includes citizens accessing information on government conduct, decisions and operations and undertaking civil actions such as protesting, and joining civil movements in response (Ahmad, 2008; Malena *et al.*, 2004).

South Africa is on its 28th year of democracy. One political party has been in national government since democracy took over. A majority of the 60.14 million South Africans (Statistics South Africa, 2021) have access to one or another medium to access news (South African Government, 2021). Information about the government is widely published across all mediums with governance failures being a common feature. The South African Auditor-General, the country's supreme audit institution, publishes audit outcomes of national and provincial government, and municipalities annually. Inefficiencies such as

irregular expenditure are an annual feature (Auditor-General of South Africa, 2021). Politicians themselves have even confessed to poor performance and poor governance systems (Haffajee, 2021). Corruption has been one of the biggest headlines dominating news platforms (Kota, 2021). The Judicial Commission of Inquiry into allegations of State Capture, also known as the 'Zondo Commission', ran for over three years from 2018 and produced oral evidence of corruption, maladministration, and political meddling (Mahlati & Pillay, 2021). Highlights and burning revelations were publicised almost as soon as they occurred (Deklerk, 2021). Despite news reports, it is clear to see that South Africa as a country has not progressed well (Zarenda, 2013; Mlamla, 2020; Tshwane, 2017).

With all the available information, the same party that has been in government since democracy, won the majority in the latest local government elections. This happened despite there having been protests across the country over the years, with some turning violent signalling that citizens are discontented. The same party has continued winning national and municipal elections in the same areas where there have been protests. In the latest election however, their majority margin decreased, but they still got the number highest number of votes of nationally (Independent Electoral Commission, 2021).

South Africa does have civil movements, but those do not seem to receive big support in the country. The few that do exist try to hold the governing party to account. They have gone so far as taking the government to court to access information which the government would not otherwise have released and to challenge government policies. Voter turnout has been declining over the years. The turnout in the last local government election was down by six percent, since 2016 (Independent Electoral Commission, 2021, TimesLive. 2021).

The protesting against and still voting for the same party, inadequate support for civil movements and low voter turnout boggles the mind. On the face of it, all the information that is available indicates that citizens should be influenced to engage in political accountability.

With corruption having dominated news platforms in the country and so much discontentment with government performance, this begs the question, do citizens

consume news on government conduct, decisions, and operations, and how well does that influence them to engage in social accountability?

In this report, the conclusion reached through a probit regression analysis of the relationship between news consumption and social accountability mechanisms showed that South Africans do try to hold their political leaders accountable, however, they do so without being influenced much by information and news on governance issues.

This research will seek to explore how the system of political accountability (Romzek, & Dubnick, 1987), which is central to democratic processes in terms of ensuring responsiveness from elected officials, relates to social accountability as a type of accountability (Lindberg, 2013; Fox, 2015) which implements civil action mechanisms to enforce accountability on account of information on the conduct of the elected officials and state of governance. This will be achieved by determining how news consumption on governance matters, as a way of acquiring information on the conduct of elected officials by citizens affects their propensity to participate in civil action.

1.1. Problem Statement

The high unemployment rate, stagnant economic statistics, and rampant corruption are signs that South Africa is a country in trouble (Tshwane, 2017; Nyoka, 2020). This is indicative that there are governance shortcomings, that the political leadership needs to account for (Glass & Newig, 2019). This calls for effective implementation of political accountability, as provided for by the principal-agent theory. The theory is about how access to information facilitates holding elected officials accountable and sanctioning them for giving into the morally hazardous actions and then hiding the effect and/or poor performance facts facilitated by information asymmetry (Gailmard, 2012; Adsera *et al.*, 2003).

There has been great amounts of research work done on the relationship between information and political accountability (Adsera *et al.*, 2003), information and governance (Bluem, 2018), and social accountability and governance (Danhoundo *et al.*, 2018). but there is a gap that exist in the research on how access to information which include

governance issues and politics through news medium affects the propensity to engage in social accountability.

The literature covers the importance of political accountability in democratic settings and the benefits of social accountability in enforcing accountability through access to information. There are, however, gaps in the literature that explore how access to information through news media facilitates information acquisition, which is a key component of social accountability that in turn affects political accountability. In effect researching the relationship between news consumption and civil actions.

The rationale of the research is to assess whether citizens have sufficient access to news and how consumption of the news about poor government performance, maladministration, inefficiencies, and corruption relates to them engaging in social accountability.

1.2. Research Purpose

The purpose of this research was to assess how access to information on governance by citizens relates to social accountability.

1.3. Research Questions

1.3.1. Main question

The research question is: does news consumption affect citizens propensity to participate in civil action?

1.3.2. Sub questions

- Do citizens access news through the available news mediums.
- Does news consumption influence a change in political participation.
- How do socioeconomic factors influence citizen's propensity to participate in civil action.

1.4. Positionality

As a government employee, I am part of the bureaucrat leg of the government apparatus, which makes elected officials my political principals. This will not bias my position in this report because this research report will not be published, because of that, there will be no fear of reprisal on my part. The topic was chosen not to expose political principals, but more to advocate for civic education in the country to deepen democracy. All the information cited in this report that cast aspersions on elected officials is public knowledge.

1.5. Ethics

The research study was conducted in compliance with the ethics requirements of the University of the Witwatersrand. Afrobarometer data was used. The data was collected more than five years ago. Afrobarometer is a research institution that has been around for quite some time, so it can be assumed that they have figured out a way to ensure the anonymity of participants, thus protecting them from any potential harm. Because of this, an ethics waiver was applied for. The institution's Ethics Committee assessed the ethical risk involved and approved the necessary safeguards provided and that the ethical requirements were met.

1.6. Overview of the report structure

The rest of the report will be structured as follows; section two presents the literature on the main topics of the report, namely, democracy, political accountability, governance, information, and social accountability. The democracy section presents the topics globally and also in the South African context. Section three presents the research methodology. This section presents the research approach and model used in the research, the source of data, and how data was coded for the purposes of the research. The description of the dataset is then presented. Section four presents the analysis and discussion of the research outputs. Section six contains the discussion of the analysis against the literature. Section six contains the conclusions.

2. Literature Review

In this chapter, I will present the democratic processes of electing officials. I will go on to present how they remain accountable to the citizens who appointed them through the system of political accountability. I will further present their responsibilities of ensuring good governance in the administration of public affairs and against which they will be assessed for performance. The role of information in implementing political accountability will be presented to show how it relates to social accountability. Social accountability mechanisms will be unpacked to show how they can be implemented to enforce accountability.

2.1. Democracy

Democratic countries are countries that enshrine freedom of expression, hold free and fair elections, respect the rule of law, has an effective legislature that performs the system of checks and balances on appointed officials and respects the civil liberties of its citizens (Glass & Newig, 2019; Norris, 2012).

In a democracy, as a result of elections, elected officials are delegated to take charge of running the government in the interest of the citizens. Elected officials enter office after winning elections. They win as a political party or as an individual, depending on the prevailing political system of their respective countries. There are also coalition governments, wherein the leader of the government is not automatically from the party that won an outright majority, but they get to be leader because of party political processes.

The government is expected to run an effective and clean government, one that produces positive governance outcomes. The government must inform the public of its policies and plans, and report results achieved concerning those. Information on its operations should be made available to the citizens, the constituents (Adsera *et al.*, 2003, Han and Han & Demircioglu, 2016).

According to the median voter theory, democratic countries have more equal socioeconomic outcomes. This is due to the fact that in such countries, because of the

power that comes with elections, citizens as voters are able to make demands, thus, exerting pressure on politicians to act in the interest of the citizens (Meltzer & Richard, 1981), so as a consequence, political parties or electoral candidates will try to position themselves as close as possible to the median voter. Sustainable development is also another outcome of democratic governments (Halperin *et al.*, 2010).

For democracies to work, the electorate must be informed and willing to participate in democratic processes. When the electorate is informed this gives them the capacity to engage effectively. When elected officials know that the electorate is capable, participate and informed, they are likely to operate in line with the interests of the citizens. This is due to the fact that informed citizens are more likely to hold them to account should they not deliver on citizen's expectations. A capable electorate therefore poses a threat to elected officials (Glass & Newig, 2019; Norris, 2012).

In Africa, as in other parts of the world, some governments fail to appreciate and respect the tenets of democracy. Chief among them is their responsibility to account to the citizens. They also fail to honour citizens' political rights to be answered (McNeil & Mumvuma, 2006). Accountability is usually weak in new democracies and needs to be given a push by the citizens. As horizontal accountability is not always effective, it is up to the citizens to put pressure on the government (Almén & Burell, 2018). The weakness has been attributed to among other things, a lack of political competitiveness, and competency issues on the part of the state (Hickey & King, 2016).

Social accountability can be effective at enforcing political accountability. It is applicable regardless of the political system. Whether it be a democracy or an authoritarian state. However, it does need enabling by a political dynamic that is inclined to provide citizens with access to information, engaging them for consultation in policy development, direction, and allowing them to assume oversight (McNeil & Malena, 2010), this points out to a need for a political will on the part of elected officials to facilitate its operations (Hickey & King, 2016).

Accountability is derived from a social compact between citizens and elected officials of democracies. The social compact entitles the citizens to have the right to demand

answers and presents government officials with the obligation to respond (Malena *et al.*, 2004).

There are different levels of accountability in the democratic public space. It starts at an individual level, whereby every holder of a political office can be expected to account for their actions. This level of accountability is influenced by frameworks of accountability in the micro and macro environment. A conducive environment for accountability is one where there are people who are monitoring political officer's performance and are likely to call on him/her to account for his/her actions, people are informed and knowledgeable and can link deviant actions to the political officers, people base their assessment of political officers against certain normative value systems and political officers are expected to provide reasonable explanations for their conduct (Han & Demircioglu, 2016).

2.2. Political Accountability

Once the elected officials enter office, they suffer a moral hazard problem, wherein a situation is created of potential abuse of power by them, in order to serve their self-interests, facilitated by information asymmetries. The self-interest goals could be goals that are not aligned to goals in the interest of citizens' welfare, or it could be rent seeking behaviour (Ferejohn, 1986). Information asymmetry is when the citizens as voters do not have full details with regard to government operations, as the government controls information dissemination. This creates a situation where the elected and appointed officials can engage in maleficent conduct and hide the facts.

The recourse which citizens have in democracies is engaging in the electoral control system of political accountability, to access the information and to decide on the appropriate sanction (Adsera *et al.*, 2003; Jun, 2012). It is up to the citizens to play a participatory role to enhance their democracy. For that, they need to empower themselves by being informed on pertinent governance information (Fox, 2003).

According to the political accountability theory, the government is regarded as a participant in a game between the politicians as agents and the citizens as principals. The principals delegate agents to run the government in pursuing certain goals, including

goals that the political party promised during the elections, as well as the ones that emerge from consultation processes with citizens. In this game, however, the interests of the principal and the agents are not always aligned. Sometimes they may even be in conflict. Sometimes, while the agent may be pursuing the interests of their target constituents, they may also be pursuing their own interests concurrently. Their interest may be one of self-enrichment. On other occasions, elected officials strategies of pursuing certain goals may differ from those preferred by the citizens (Barro, 1973; Adsera *et al.*, 2003, Jun, 2012, Fox, 2003).

In their pursuit of self-interest, politicians and government executives and other influential stakeholders set a course to facilitate corruption practises which involve inefficiencies, or they may engage in rent-seeking behaviour. This situation is not ideal for citizens because it delays service delivery and/or having their goals not achieved and it also impacts the state of citizens' welfare (Barro, 1973; Adsera *et al.*, 2003).

Political accountability's task is to manage the moral hazard problem and ensure that the government performs and achieves its mandates. It is a type of political control that is strengthened by two important factors, the first is having free and regular elections, and the incumbent ruling political party being convinced of the threat of being removed from office by citizens who are not content with their administration. The second factor is that through being informed, citizens are able to limit self-serving opportunities of elected officials. This is achieved by citizens monitoring the conduct of elected officials to deter them from abusing the power of the offices they hold (Bratton & Logan, 2006; Adsera *et al.*, 2003).

Citizens have a right to hold state functionaries accountable when they are not happy with the government services they are receiving. This is facilitated by citizens understanding their rights and entitlement to services. When citizens know the quality of services they ought to be receiving, they know when there are deficiencies. Citizens equally need to know that they are entitled to get answers from the government on issues of concern to them. This knowledge and awareness lays grounds for citizens to act collectively when

they are not happy with the services they receive (Boydell *et al.*, 2020; Alves, 2014; Malena *et al.*, 2004).

When implementing political accountability, citizens can assess the performance of the government in servicing their needs through its public administration systems. They can conduct social audits to determine if the government achieved what they had set out to achieve. They also should follow up on electoral promises. They achieve this by accessing necessary information pertaining to government operations and getting explanation on decisions and behaviours of government officials (Han & Demircioglu, 2016; Ferejohn, 1986).

There are several different types of accountability systems. For the purpose of this research, a differentiation needs to be made between political and bureaucratic accountability. The difference is that in political accountability, since office bearers hold the offices due to having been voted in by citizens, politicians are then directly accountable to citizens. Citizens have the power to elect politicians into office or remove them from office. Bureaucratic accountability is when appointed officials are accountable to the political structures that appointed them. Citizens have no control over appointed officials (Han & Demircioglu, 2016). Laws and rules relating to service delivery do not always cover every eventuality in detail, there is sometimes room for differing interpretations and discretion in the provision of services. This creates room for potential abuse and unethical practices. In such a situation accountability is not clear cut (Joshi & Houtzager, 2012).

There is a positive relationship between governance and political accountability. Where there is effective political accountability, there are positive governance outcomes (Ferejohn, 1986). Political accountability can encourage politicians to adopt constructive policies which align with the preferences of the citizens; thus, improving governance. The encouragement comes in the form of threats to be removed from government or to be exposed for wrongdoing (Lederman *et al.*, 2005),

2.3. Governance

Governance has an array of definitions. For the purposes of this research, governance, good governance to be precise will be understood to mean a state-centred government, one that is effective and efficient, respects the rule of law, facilitates the participation of its citizens, is accountable to its citizens, transparent in its operations, respects human rights and ensures that there is no corruption (Mashamaite, 2014; UNDP, 1997; Plumptre & Graham, 1999; Bratton & Logan, 2006; Han & Demircioglu, 2016). It manifests in a political will to govern in the interest of the public (Prinsloo, 2012).

Characteristics of good governance include a government that is open and willing to be held accountable, is transparent in its decisions, expects ethical conduct from elected and appointed officials, promotes integrity in the conduct demonstrated by not making false promises, citizens being informed of the role of the government, their rights and their role in a democracy, and a government that achieves its delivery imperatives and operates efficiently (Fox, 2003; Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004). It also includes, having constitutionalism, meaning a rule of law, coupled with an effective legal framework which operates a justice system that is fair and is accessible to all, including poor people, property rights are secured and human safety is ensured. Citizens need to be protected from potential harm from participating in democratic processes, free and fair elections are held, participatory democracy is encouraged, there is media freedom as well as freedom of expression, belief, and the protection of basic human rights (Fox, 2003).

Government is expected to operate in such a way as to respond to the needs and to a certain extent, the wants of its citizens. Servicing all these is not without constraints. Constraints have to be communicated to the citizens so that they are kept in the loop and understand what is possible and what's not (Lodenstein *et al.*, 2018; Lynn *et al.*, 2000). The government is expected to fulfil the mandates and responsibilities of providing economic and social services (The World Bank, 1994).

The sustainable development goals (SDGs) provide good dimensions against which governance can be measured. SDGs are indicators of sustainable development. The success of the SDGs requires all stakeholders to be involved in the implementation and

mentoring thereof. The stakeholders include the government, the private sector, citizens and civil movements. The governance of the SDGs requires that there be an enabling environment for all actors to be able to play their part and be held accountable for it. Governance for SDG is a complex process that involves socio-political processes (Mashamaite, 2014; Glass & Newig, 2019). Good governance is regarded as a pillar for achieving the SDGs (Kanie *et al.*, 2014).

Governance is a complicated process. It comprises of three factors that makes it complex. Firstly, its configuration; the governments are regulated by laws, but they also have policy mandates which they have to implement. They operate under organizational structures with financial constraints, administrative and institutional rules, values and priorities that influence production and service delivery. Secondly, governance is political. It is a game of compromise with winners and losers. Stakeholders are all competing for the limited resources of the state. The winners may not always be effective and efficient public administration. Lastly, it involves multiple stakeholders, formal and informal, all involved in policy development and program implementation (Lynn *et al.*, 2000, (Joshi & Houtzager, 2012). There needs to be institutional coordination between politicians and bureaucrats. Politicians set policies for implementation by bureaucrats. The two parties need to be aligned so that policies set can be accommodated by institutional capacity (Olsen & Zusman, 2014). Political accountability is used to manage the expectations of all stakeholders. Enforcing accountability from elected and government officials strengthens the provision of these services. Access to information on government operations by citizens improves governance (The World Bank, 1994).

The more information citizens have on governance, the higher the state of governance will be (Lederman *et al.*, 2005; Almén & Burell, 2018). The assessment of governance encompasses an assessment of performance at different levels of government. The logic of governance lays out the long-interconnected chain of governance which calls for the assessment to be made throughout the chain (Lynn & Robichau, 2013).

2.4. Information

Information on governance must be factual and credible. This information if accessed and consumed by citizens would give citizens a good picture of government operations and the conduct of elected officials and the state of governance. While most of the information needed by citizens is under the control of the government, information can be accessed from other sources. There are various media from which news about governance, government policy, politics, government performance and maleficence committed by politicians can be accessed (Adsera *et al.*, 2003, Han and Han & Demircioglu, 2016).

The impact of political accountability on governance varies with the level of information that citizens have access to. There is a positive relationship between the two. The deeper the knowledge the electorate has, the more positive the governance outcomes will be (Bluem, 2018). Information also restricts corruption (Toka, 2008). Accessing governance information opens the mind of the citizens to new perspectives that could spur them towards active citizenship (Al-Marhubi, 2005).

Elected officials have exclusive decision-making powers and they, to some degree, also control dissemination of information (Lederman *et al.*, 2005). Governments are not always willing to provide information, especially information requested as part of a political control mechanism. Where they find themselves legally compelled to provide such information, they may resort to either tampering with the information or engaging in delaying tactics (Almén & Burell, 2018). This affects accountability, as it is dependent on availability and reliable information (Malena *et al.*, 2004).

Self-interest goals breed inefficiencies which amount to a governance failure. Not only may it lead to broken promises between the electorate and the politicians but may also amounts to poor governance failures such as corruption and poor government performance (Barro, 1973; Ferejohn, 1986.)

In the pursuit of their self-interest goals, politicians and government executives have to control information dissemination. They might want to hide the details of the information that would expose the non-alignment of interests, the strategies taken when they are in

conflict with those they were delegated to take, the inefficiencies in their operation and the corruption red flags. They may do this to deprive the electorate of information that could prompt the electorate to sanction them (Adsera *et al.*, 2003).

Poor government performance and corruption have devastating socio-economic outcomes such as poverty. It has a ripple effect because as it creates a vicious circle where poverty is also a cause for corruption. Other negative socioeconomic outcomes are underdevelopment, inequalities, and undermining democracy. The effect is that citizens lose trust in the government, become apathetic and participate less in democratic processes (Lederman *et al.*, 2005; Adsera *et al.*, 2003; Makinde, 2013, Barchiesi, 2004; Malila & Oelofsen, 2016).

Citizens need to be aware of roles and responsibilities of public institutions as well as those of public officials, information empowers citizens to be more informed and better able to constructively assess the quality of the services they are receiving from the authorities. Information on the quality of services therefore creates awareness on the part of citizens and improves access to services (Blake *et al.*, 2016, Joshi, 2017). Information also allows citizens to have a full picture of the challenges faced by public officials. Under certain circumstances, performance deficiencies could be systematic and needing systematic solutions which may not be within the capacity of local officials (Blake *et al.*, 2016, Boydell *et al.*, 2020).).

The expectation is for the government to engage in practices that produce good performance and yield positive governance outcomes. When the government falls short of expectations, while it needs to account for deficiencies, citizens also need to be fair in their assessments and remedial sanctioning. Information should be used in such a way that a balance is struck between political accountability and the improvement of service delivery and not abused. Radical and swift implementation of political control mechanisms to achieve this is doubtful (Falisse & Ntakarutimana, 2020).

The information that is needed by citizens is freely available in functional democracies. It is reported by the government or by private organisations and is accessible to citizens. It is provided is to educate citizens about government operations. Citizens also

communicate with the government and politicians. The communication is to raise concerns with the authorities and for the government and politicians to consider when performing their responsibilities and when developing policies so that they develop ones that are effective, efficient and responsive to the needs and concerns of the citizens (Siegle *et al.*, 2004).

The control of information by the government doesn't mean that citizens suffer from total lack of information. There are other ways for citizens to access governance pertinent information or information on politics and political leaders. They can access information through the media, by consuming educational material on pertinent governance topics across all other platforms (Fox, 2003). Investigative journalism is a type of information that is needed for accountability purposes. This type can best be provided by independent media. Independent media may sometimes assume the role of educating citizens and creating awareness (Malena *et al.*, 2004).

Media freedom is an important factor for transparency in public administration (Khazaeli & Stockemer, 2013). Media plays a crucial role in a democracy. News outlets bring forth information about government policy, performance and sometimes exposes government wrongdoing. Some of what is exposed is corruption. The media uncovers wrongdoing that might be ignored by other government agencies whose function is to prevent, monitor and address such issues. The information thus accessed by citizens informs their judgement on politicians and political parties and serves as a source of information that citizens may use to hold elected officials to account (Giglioli, 1996).

The ownership structures and the extent to which media enjoys freedom are contributing factors to how much of a role it can play as an accountability mechanism (Malena *et al.*, 2004). Insofar as media is independent of the government, it is however not always independent of political bias. The attention paid, the ideology of certain media outlets and the tone of reporting may be such that it benefits certain political forces over others, meaning that media can be used for political purposes. Sometimes media houses subordinate the role of educating the public and focus more on commercialisation (Giglioli, 1996).

There is not much literature available on the extent of the effect of news consumption on the different news mediums used as independent variables on civil actions in comparison with each other. Literature shows that the consumption of each does have an effect on civil action. When the results of the literature are presented, they are not presented in comparison with other news media. At most, the literature mentions which age group is most likely to consume which medium and also which group consumes the one, the consumption of which is the base of the study. There is however information on the extent to which some of the news media are consumed in the country. That information will be presented under the literature in the South African context section. In this section, the consumption of each medium will be shown to have an effect on civil actions. While the extent of the effect of new consumption is not empirically known in comparison with each other, a reasonable assumption can be made that it differs. News consumption is largely influenced by factors such as interest, accessibility, affordability, and preference, with our research data population consisting of participants between the ages of 18 – 94, there are bound to be variations in those factors.

2.4.1. Radio news

Radio is regarded as effective at reaching a wide audience due to its local level status. It provides a medium whereby citizens can communicate their concerns and also discuss matters of interest, particularly community radio stations. The platform gives listeners a voice and allows them to participate in the democratic processes. It could also be a way for listeners to mobilise themselves (Malena *et al.*, 2004)

2.4.2. Television News

Television is one of the mediums through which citizens can acquire knowledge about governance issues. In some areas television is the main source of information. The limiting factor about television is that it is mostly found in urban areas. It can give citizens a voice with regard to political participation by allowing citizens to share concerns and opinions (Halim, 2018).

2.4.3. Newspapers

Adserà *et al.* (2003) found that independent newspapers have a positive relationship with governance. As the circulation of newspapers and its readership increases so does government performance, thus improving democracy. The newspaper that they used in their research was independently owned and was given away for free. The research was done under conditions where civil liberties like media freedom were protected and a wide distribution of newspapers was permitted. The newspaper reported on corruption in the public service, as the reports increased, the government was prompted to move in the direction of clean administration.

2.4.4. The Internet

The internet has the potential to contribute positively to good governance. There is a positive relationship between high penetration of internet access and positive governance outcomes. The internet provides access to information on the government's behaviour. Its far-reaching range has the potential of giving a voice to citizens in circumstances where they are not happy with their government. The cries of citizens could prompt governance improvements on the part of the government (Khazaeli & Stockemer, 2013).

2.4.5. Social Media

Social media allows citizens and communities to share their concerns. This is especially important in situations where state-controlled media is inclined to operate a propaganda machine, as opposed to reporting on facts. The sharing of concerns by citizens could be a way for them to mobilise and organize themselves for collective action (Almén & Burell, 2018). Social networks can also be used by the government to communicate with citizens about their plans for service delivery, as well as the status thereof. It can also be used by citizens to demand answers from the government (Shava & Mubangizi, 2019).

2.5. Social Accountability

When citizens are discontent with either their welfare, their socioeconomic state, service delivery, government policies, the direction that their country is taking, general poor governance outcomes and the like, they can engage in social accountability (The World Bank, 2006, Malena *et al.*, 2004, Boydell *et al.*, 2019, Ahmad, 2008). Social accountability is a form of active citizenry which contributes to the government's policy making and implementing processes, and citizens monitoring and assessing the implementation of those policies. All of which is facilitated by access to adequate information (Glass & Newig, 2019).

Social accountability is part of a democratic process of participation. It is done to prevail on the government to provide answers to citizens and for government to respond to the citizen's needs of better service delivery (Ahmad, 2008). As a form of citizen driven vertical accountability, it can allow citizens and/or civil movements to engage the authorities on how the government conducts its business. They engage formally and informally with the authorities in their pursuits. Social accountability can assist horizontal accountability mechanisms by point out issues of concern to the citizens. Horizontal accountability mechanisms are the formal political government systems that exert oversight over government institutions (Malena *et al.*, 2004). They are not always effective at holding politicians to account. This is where social accountability comes in (McNeil & Mumvuma, 2006).

As a citizen-driven, bottom-up approach to political accountability, social accountability, provides citizens with powers to engage in civil engagement mechanisms to hold elected officials to account, directly and indirectly. It can be implemented by individuals or collectively. The state may also initiate the engagements (McNeil & Mumvuma, 2006, Alves, 2014). It improves transparency, governance, contributes to development, improves service delivery, reduces poverty, increases the accessibility of services, reduces wasting of public resources and improves the chances of achieving millennium goals. It is also key to government service reform (Joshi & Houtzager, 2012; Malena *et al.*, 2004; Falisse & Ntakarutimana, 2020; McNeil & Mumvuma, 2006; Houtzager *et al.*,

2021, Boydell *et al.*, 2019). It is a remedy for poor government performance. Through social accountability governance failures can be exposed (Brinkerhoff & Wetterberg, 2016). The exposure of governance failures is however not the end product because the focus is mainly to improve the lives of citizens (Boydell *et al.*, 2020).

There are two approaches to social accountability, namely, tactical and strategic. The tactical approach is based on the belief that access to information by citizens is enough in itself to prompt citizens to organize and that it should make the government take notice and respond to their concerns. The strategic approach is one that is multifaceted, it aims to create a conducive environment for civil activities and organise citizens for collective action through their multiple voices, all to persuade government to be responsive and reform itself. The two approaches have difference efficacy levels. The results have shown the tactical approach to have mixed results, with the strategic one posting better efficacy levels (Fox, 2015).

The implementation of social accountability includes employing a variety of tools of the trade namely; participating in policy making processes, wherein the objective is to influence government policies to be geared towards improving the welfare of the citizens, participatory budgeting to ensure that the government budget is equitable, public expenditure tracking to monitor potential inefficiencies, conducting social audits, monitoring public sector performance against legal rights and government policies and monitoring the delivery of projects for possible corruption (Houtzager *et al.*, 2021). The outputs of social accountability mechanisms are citizens getting to express their voices to influence government, facilitating engagement between state and citizens, getting explanations for government decisions, ensuring performance from the government and curtailing corruption (Malena *et al.*, 2004; Fox, 2015, The World Bank, 2006, Butler *et al.*, 2020).

Factors that impact the effectiveness of social accountability include perceptions that citizens have of the process, political interference, lack of monitoring and valuation by citizens, the state resource constraints, and also the lack of transparency from the government (Nepal & van der Kwaak, 2020). The government may also lack the

proficiency needed for it to facilitate participation of the citizens (Shava & Mubangizi, 2019). Most of all, poor leadership discourages both horizontal and vertical mechanisms from engaging in accountability systems (McNeil & Malena, 2010, O'Meally, 2013).

The environment in which social accountability is being implemented matters, as well as the environment relating to the people and politics on the country. When elected officials account for their actions, the assertions and explanations are received and judged against the citizens' perspective. The benefit of considering the environment is that social accountability tools that will be more effective can be determined, based on the environment. The wins or losses encountered happen against the backdrop of their environment. Choosing to ignore the context is a missed opportunity. Social accountability is a process that builds over time (Joshi & Houtzager, 2012). Discounting the environment under which social accountability is being implemented is an oversimplification. The state machinery is a broad institution with various forces which may or may not support social accountability systems. The state may have its own processes which may not be aligned with accountability systems. There could also be history between the government and certain sections of society that are enforcing accountability systems, that may make the government unreceptive (Brinkerhoff & Wetterberg, 2016).

Social accountability needs an enabling environment, one that is influenced by socioeconomic factors such as culture, the economy, and society with empowered citizens and government support as critical factors (Brinkerhoff & Wetterberg, 2016). Citizens themselves have to be willing to engage with accountability systems. Sometimes citizens fear speaking out because they fear that they will face reprisal from authorities. The reprisal could be of either social, economic, or political in nature (Boydell *et al.*, 2019; Brinkerhoff & Wetterberg, 2016). To stand a good chance at success, the culture of citizens has to be one where they are willing and capable of questioning authorities and pointing out governance issues and unsatisfactory government performance (Muchadenyika, 2017).

Awareness from citizens is counted as one of the capacities that are needed for effective social accountability (Malena *et al.*, 2004). When citizens are weak in terms of knowledge,

they are unlikely to fully engage in processes of social accountability. Once they have acquired the knowledge, they need to use such in properly assessing and monitoring government's performance (Blake *et al.*, 2016; Houtzager *et al.*, 2021; Almén & Burella, 2018). Over and above the knowledge, citizens need to be motivated to act. They need to be willing to act in spaces that allow them to demonstrate their dissatisfaction. Citizens have agency and they need to leverage it for their own benefit. They will need to leverage knowledge acquisition to build their capacity (Brinkerhoff & Wetterberg, 2016). In countries where social accountability is not high, it takes time and effort to get it moving (Falisse & Ntakarutimana, 2020, Boydell *et al.*, 2019).

it is not a zero-sum game. It is not only considered successful when all demands are met. At the basic level, social accountability is embarked upon to get answers from the government. Towards the end of the spectrum, it influences change, whether in government policy or in citizen's welfare. Being short of maximum accountability does not mean that efforts have failed if the government was able to give reasonable answers for their actions or inactions, and if such explanations are reasonable (Almén & Burell, 2018). When assessing the outcome of social accountability, it is advisable to use a multidimensional scale. This scale is more reliable as it does not subscribe to a cause-and-effect model and the control for other variables. This makes it a more reliable measure (Boydell *et al.*, 2020). The mixed outcome model has to be adopted as it is flexible in its expectations, and it allows for unexpected outcomes. The model understands that social accountability operations do not happen in a vacuum. There are always competing interests and other uncontrollable factors (Boydell *et al.*, 2019).

There are numerous possible outcomes such as the authorities may heed citizen's grievances and their rightful claim to services and use such to make policy adjustments or to clean up their house through sanctioning people implicated in wrongdoing. The outcomes from protesting vary, ranging from the protests collapsing and no action on the part of the government, to the government taking cognisance of the purpose of the protest and providing a full response and reforming. The government may also just recognise the citizens' grievances from but take no actions (Almén & Burell, 2018; Lodenstein, *et al.*, 2018; Pieterse, 2019).

Success is not guaranteed to always succeed as it depends on context. It is not a straight forward process, it's complex. This is due the fact that the desired outcome of the social accountability lies largely under the control of the government and the politicians. They have the ultimate power to effect change politically and institutionally. This indicates that for maximum effect, there will need to be coherence between the horizontal and vertical systems (Brinkerhoff & Wetterberg, 2016). Ultimate change comes from broad political processes. Factors that influence success are the perceptions on social accountability actors the authorities. If they are perceived to be legitimate and authoritative, the government is likely to pay attention, to them. The social accountability movements themselves need to be seen by the citizens as credible enough to garner support and they may need support from other movements for strategic alliance purposes. Social accountability rely heavily on information, collated and disseminated to the constituents (Danhouno *et al.*, 2018, O'Meally, 2013).

Social accountability suffers from exposure risk whereby, if its mechanisms continue for too long without any success, the institution from which accountability is solicited, tend to take the social accountability actors less seriously. This results in the authorities responding to the actors in a myopic manner (Frey-Heger & Barret, 2021).

Once the different environments have been identified, context specific tools can be implemented (Boydell *et al.*, 2019). The desired outcome of social accountability lies largely under the control of the government and the politicians. They have the ultimate power to effect change, politically and institutionally. This indicates that for more maximum effect, there will need to be coherence between the horizontal and vertical systems (Brinkerhoff & Wetterberg, 2016). The government can play a role in social accountability through ensuring that their policies are compliant with the laws of the country and that their practices and behaviours are aligned to the laws and policies. They can also make information available and disseminate such information proactively. They can then be responsive to requests for information that is mandated by the law (Houtzager *et al.*, 2021). The government should not only be keen to provide law mandated information, but also information requested for citizen participation purposes.

Social accountability strategies vary and are dependent on the purpose for which they are being implemented. Informal mechanisms are usually implemented to put public pressure on the government to respond. Social accountability mechanisms comprise participation in civil actions such as protesting, elections, and join civil movements. The mechanisms are implemented to reward or sanction political leaders (Ahmad, 2008; Malena *et al.*, 2004).

To be effective, they depend on the knowledge and means of those engaging actors, citizens having access to information about the functions of the government, analysing and disseminating the information, a conducive political system, context and culture, free and independent media, which informs and educates citizens, active civil movements, which are capacitated and resourced, state capacity wherein the state is operational and effective, a willing state to engage citizens, and institutionalizing of social accountability activities (Malena *et al.*, 2004). For positive results, social accountability mechanisms must be well designed and be implemented successfully (Pieterse, 2019). A good understanding of governance allows citizens to have a correct perspective on the functions and performance of the authorities (Grindle, 2004; Falisse & Ntakarutimana, 2020).

2.5.1. Voting

In a democracy, the basic logic of voting says that citizens vote into power a party or candidate that promises them greater utility, utility being the measure of benefits that the citizens stand to get from an electoral candidate or party. The measure of this utility resides in each person's mind. Each person ought to know all of the things on offer and should be able to discern which one of them will be more beneficial to him. They ought to match up the different electoral parties to identify the one that offers the most. This is considered to be a rational way to exercise the power that comes with the right to vote. It is the belief in receiving benefits that is expected to influence how a voter votes on election day. A deviation from this is considered to be irrational (Downs, 1957).

Elections are a competition between electoral parties, with every party making promises through their manifesto. Some parties' offerings can be inferred from their political

ideology. In democracies, the competition is between the ruling party that is in government already, running to retain their political power and other parties seeking to depose of the ruling party. A political strategy of the governing party is expected to be to remind the electorate or show them the benefits that they received from them or how they have delivered on their last electoral promises (Ferejohn, 1986).

Elections are held for four purposes: (1) to determine the preference of the electorate, (2) to indicate which political ideologies are preferred by voters, (3) to provide citizens with the opportunity to elect into office the most suitable candidate or party, and (4) to serve as a mechanism to manage the moral hazard of holders of political office thereby having the power hold them to account (Persson *et al.*, 1997).

Elected officials are considered unlikely to advance public interest over their own self-interest, without being monitored by their constituents. In order for the electorate to secure their interest, they need to apply political control mechanisms. The most common one available is elections. Even they, need to be frequent enough. What elections do is that they pose a threat to the elected officials to lose office through not being voted for. This process has the power to limit the inclination of the elected to pursue self-interest goals, as that will cost them (Adsera *et al.*, 2003, Barro, 1973, Ferejohn, 1986).

The economic theory of democracy posits that people who abstain from voting in elections are rational people who decide that by not voting, there will derive more benefits than they will suffer due to not voting. The theory continues to say that when there are no costs to voting, and there is a potential to get benefits from voting, it is irrational not to vote. Abstaining from voting is mitigated when the electorate have no differentiation between the parties running for the election (Downs, 1957).

Periodical elections as a political accountability mechanism are not always regarded as effective in ensuring governance accountability as they only happen at certain times and there are gaps in between elections. As a sanctioning mechanism they are not the most effective because citizens have to wait a long time to see changes being implemented (Downs, 1957). This is where social accountability comes in. as it provides a more effective solution for democracies (Hickey & King, 2016).

In Africa, there are ethnic voting patterns, which do not fall in line with the basic logic of voting which calls for voting to maximise utility (Bratton & Logan, 2006; Downs, 1957). According to rational choice theory, this way of voting would be justified only if it would lead to the most utility for the citizens (Ferejohn, 1986). Africans participate in elections, but in between elections they do not participate much in other democratic activities. This could have something to do with the democratic processes that prevail in their respective countries (Bratton & Logan, 2006).

2.5.2. Protesting

Protesting is a political control systems. It's done to exert social pressure on the government. Protests pursue two objectives, namely, to get the government to answer to the concerns they are bringing forward and to pursue legal claims. The success of protest could be to achieving one or both of the objectives. When the protests are done in an organized manner, they stand better chances of success. (Almén & Burell, 2018, Newell & Wheeler, 2006, pp).

Protests usually happen at the local level because that is where the responsibility for service is based. While this may be the case, the national government gets to escape accountability. Government policies that are implemented at local level link up to national policy (Tong & Lei, 2010).

Media coverage of governance issues, poor government performance or matters that indicate that the government is not adequately fulfilling their responsibilities prompt protests, which lead the government to actually get up and remedying the situation. This sought of receptive relationship between society and the government is needed to facilitate social accountability. The state as the authorities with power, they need to allow citizens to protest when they feel under serviced. There also needs to legal system that protects the rights to protest (Smulovitz, & Peruzzotti, 2000, Newell, 2006).

For news media to be able to report without fear, there needs to be media freedom which allows its investigating journalism to expose issues of governance. This includes corruption and poor government performance. Protest themselves also gets reported on, sometimes depending on the size of the protest (Newell, 2006, Almén & Burell, 2018).

Protests vary in intensity. The intensity is linked to the type of the people who are involved in it (Houtzager et al., 2020). Protests may be either violent or non-violent. Violent ones have disruption costs for the government, which may force the government to react. The higher the stakes, the more the government is inclined to intervene. The government reaction is also prompted by whether the actions of the protestors is in conflicts with prescripts or not, or whether the protest has a valid legal claim (Almén & Burell, 2018) Protests almost always run the risk of repression, even in democratic countries. (Robertson, 2009).

2.5.3. Civil movement

Civil movements, because of the power of numbers, can prompt action from horizontal accountability mechanisms to act on those whose actions have been found wanting (Alves, 2014). They are regarded as being in a good position to drive social accountability because they have the capacity to effectively implement necessary mechanisms such as lobbying, court challenges, mobilisation, activism, and strategies to bring about change (Houtzager *et al.*, 2021; Almén & Burell, 2018). They are an important element of democracy. Their work leads to the government being accountable to the citizen for public affairs and are a driving force for participation (McNeil & Mumvuma, 2006).

Civil movements are facilitated by access to information. Information is disseminated to citizens for mobilization. A critical success factor in the use of information is that what is being communicated needs to be understood by the citizens for it to resonate with them. Lack of information, therefore, does affect the work of civil movements. There needs to be legal frameworks that facilitate their access to information (Malena *et al.*, 2004; Almén & Burell, 2018).

Information when made available should be disseminated widely via far reaching media (McNeil & Mumvuma, 2006). Civil movements are effective at social accountability because they can enforce legal and political claims on the government when demanding answers. They are instrumental in researching and identifying which legal rights are not being provided by the government. They have resources to analyse policies and service delivery frameworks to identify where their communities are getting short-changed. They

can lead the charge on the government to address the situation (Malena *et al.*, 2004; Almén & Burell, 2018).

New democracies have fragile political systems that can make it hard for individuals to engage and get response from authorities. Civil movements are able to get governments to react and possibly get them to comply with the laws of the land. They increase the cost for the government wherein when the government is not being responsive to the citizens, since civil movements have sway in the communities and can mobilise against it (Alves, 2014), consequently forming a threat to the politicians. Civil movements need to be legitimate and representative in order for them to be impactful (Malena *et al.*, 2004).

Their role is amplified by the fact that low-income and uneducated communities do not always have access to social accountability mechanisms and therefore require others to do their bidding for them; and civil movements can play that role (Hickey & King, 2016). The net effect of this is that the disadvantaged end up not using their civil rights to address power distribution (Houtzager *et al.*, 2021). The solutions here are civic education and citizens' awareness of their civil and social rights. When citizens understand governance outcomes, in respect of the quality of the services they should be getting according to their civil rights, there is noticeable accountability and the citizens have access to services (Malena *et al.*, 2004; Boydell *et al.*, 2019; Huque, 2011; O'Meally, 2013, Boydell *et al.*, 2019). When citizens are empowered with knowledge, that serves as a deterrence of malfeasance on the part of elected officials (The World Bank, 1994).

Social accountability can increase citizens' empowerment. Citizen empowerment is when mechanisms are directed towards empowering marginalised and disadvantaged communities. It empowers communities to be vocal and to know their rights. Civil movements can play this role. They were found to be highly active in low-income areas. The intensity with which they raise their concerns and the strategies deployed vary. (Houtzager *et al.*, 2021). They can create awareness and educate citizens on political control systems. They can even simplify things for citizens to understand easily, through such tools as the issuing of scorecards and citizen's reports (Houtzager *et al.*, 2021). They are, however, not always successful in their quests (Malena *et al.*, 2004, Almén &

Burell, 2018). In Africa, it was found that skills training and access to information by civil movements does not always improve the efficacy of social accountability as services don't always improve thereafter (Falisse & Ntakarutimana, 2020).

Civil movements operating in Africa have their work cut out for them. They lack skilled people who are able to perform the work needed and funding to be financially sustainable (McNeil & Mumvuma, 2006). Civil movements need to be able to build capacity, advocacy and technical skills, as well as ensure that the movements are organisationally sound (Malena *et al.*, 2004). They are more successful when supported by trans-local institutions (Houtzager *et al.*, 2021). Governments can and does resist them (Malena *et al.*, 2004, Almén & Burell, 2018).

2.6. Literature in the South African context

South Africa is a country with unique characteristics. While some may be similar to those of other countries, it is indeed a unique country. I will unpack the variables used in the research, in the African and South African context.

South Africa has four dominating races, namely, Africans, whites, coloureds and Indians. The extent of political activity differs across racial lines. Whites and Indians participate less in civil activities like voting and other group activities, with the coloured community participation measured as an average of the other three races (Glenn & Mattes, 2011).

South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world, meaning that it has people of varying socioeconomic levels, with levels of education and income being the factors that contribute most to the interests and focus of people. Some people are concerned about bread-and-butter issues, rather than some elusive academic concept such as governance. The most they are willing to do is vote, and just hope that the party they vote for delivers on its promises and makes things better for them and improves their wellbeing. This is expected, as while some members of the citizenry have benefited from democracy, the majority remains poor and unemployment and inequality levels are high (Alexander, 2010). Democracy is achieved when everyone who is entitled to participate and does so in decisions pertaining to how their country is governed. Citizens don't always

fully exercise this right. Some are unable to enjoy this right of participation because they lack knowledge. Some do have the knowledge, but simply choose not to participate. The lack of knowledge could be a result of citizens not having access to adequate information on governance and government performance. This leads to citizens not being aware of how elected officials are fulfilling their responsibilities, and what recourse they have in cases when they are discontented with the services they receive from the government, save for voting (Friedman, 2011).

2.6.1. Understanding governance in South Africa.

Understanding politics, governance and government policies is important; especially for citizens to be able to pick up when the party they voted for, based on its ideology, goes in a different direction once it is in office. This helps citizens to be able to tie the consequence of negative social outcomes to the decisions and policies of the party, and then be in a position to hold them accountable (Habib & Padayachee, 2000).

The lack of political knowledge can be addressed by civic education. Civic education is a feature of democratic nations. It is intended to strengthen democracy by educating citizens on political affairs, thus keeping them well informed. Civic education helps by ensuring that its students learn the history of issues, the pertinent facts and recourse that is available to them as citizens. It also teaches about party ideologies, public policies and the consequences thereof (McAllister, 1998). This issue of a lack of civic education in South Africa is just an elephant in the room that is being ignored. The life cycle of the rise and downfall of the ruling party has happened without civic education ever happening.

It would have made a lot of sense for civic education to have been implemented in the early days of democracy. The reason for not introducing it at school level is suspicious. The knowledge that citizens lack, benefits certain political forces, but I will not venture into that space. I'll leave it for a conspiracy theorist to comment on. However, even though political knowledge and efficacy influences people to engage in political discussions, this is not always the case. Somehow, people still engage regardless (Jung *et al.*, 2011).

News media is an important source of much-needed political knowledge for political participation (Kaid *et al.*, 2004). In South Africa, Information on the performance of the government can be sourced from various mediums such as newspapers (Wicks, 2020), television, the internet (Cowan *et al.*, 2021), social media (Special Investigations Unit, 2021), and the radio. The distribution of the information is, however, uneven. The uneven distribution of information deprives those who don't receive as much as the ones more fortunate. The ones who receive the most are in an opportune position to make the right calls when it comes to social accountability and are also clued-up on current issues.

News media are used by civil movements to mobilise communities and members. When a community does not have access to adequate news, members may struggle to gather and discuss their issues and concerns, which affects their operations (Kivikuru, 2006).

2.6.2. News consumption through news media in South Africa

South Africans do not fully understand the role of news and its benefits (Mokgosi, 2021). Mass media can play a role in educating citizens about their roles in a democracy and provide information that they can use when participating in democratic processes (Bosch, 2010). The South African Broadcasting Corporation is required by law to provide educational programming that is varied, comprehensive and meets the needs of the citizens of the country. The content should be designed to suit the background, the age of the citizens and their interests (Broadcasting Act No. 4,1999). Through comprehensive education and awareness citizens can learn that sometimes the government fails to deliver because of its own policies and a lack of political will to do what is required (Alexander, 2010).

The consumption of news by the youth is a cause for concern. They mostly consume more non-politically related content. At the top of their list of interest is popular culture, followed by education and health related news. At the bottom of the list of interest is politics and governance related topics. They consume a significant amount of news from the radio and newspapers, the mediums they trust the most, but they find the content of those media to be irrelevant. However, the perspective is better for youth between the ages of 31 to 35 (Malila & Oelofsen, 2016).

Media publications in South Africa are almost always headlined by government-related information. When citizens access news, it is unlikely that they will not see information relating to government policy, performance, or corruption at one government institution or another. Politicians are a common feature in news outlets as well (Tandwa & Ferreira, 2021). South African journalists have an inclination towards reporting on politics, whether it be on political parties or political leaders. They do this after monitoring and scrutiny of political parties and leaders. This role is regarded as a watchdog role. In this role, journalists report on societal problems and instances where there has been abuse of power such as corruption and the like. News are reported at regional as well as national level. Journalists not only report on negative things, but they are also not against reporting in support of government development policies (De Beer *et al.*, 2016).

The reporting of misdemeanours keeps politicians on their toes. Knowing that someone is watching is supposed to make them cautious when dealing with public affairs (Sebola *et al.*, 2014). However, that is not always the case, some have been implicated in millions of rands worth of scandals and got away with it with impunity. The most punishment they got was a loss of privileges that came with holding office, due to them resigning from their positions.

The Internet and social media provides platforms where government information is available. South Africa has a variety of online news outlets. Every big media house in the country has a website where its publications are available in digital format. The same publications also have a presence on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. All this access to information provides a good repertoire for discussions about governance (Grindle, 2004).

Media freedom is important for democracy (Friedman, 2011). Mainstream commercial media in South Africa assumes the role of keeping tabs on the government in order to hold the government accountable and criticize when there are instances of abuse of power. Civil movements have also played a role in promoting media freedom (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018).

Media in South Africa can be classified into different tiers. The first tier contains the big names who are opinion leaders. The higher the tier the less prominent the media is. Due to common ownership structures, different mediums owned by the same people synergise their content. The top tier media are influential as they control the narrative. The content of these media is usually aimed at the most well-off target market. The other less prominent media get their cues from the top tier. They carry similar content but from different perspectives. They mostly don't report from a pro-poor angle (Jacobs, 2011).

Privately owned media, almost like the public broadcaster, also do not give the public the opportunity to influence editorial content. The angle of the stories reported is as directed by journalists and media houses. This means that the news media do not always report news genuinely, genuine in the sense that they report from perspectives linked to the interest of the target audience (Sebola *et al.*, 2014). For media to be really genuine, it needs to report on the social experiences of everyone, across all classes and socioeconomic levels. It needs to reflect the social experience of as many citizens as possible (Jacobs, 2011).

The independent variable analysis was used to identify the extent to which each medium is used to access information.

2.6.2.1. Television news in South Africa

By 2011, 60 percent of the population of South Africa had access to a TV. The state broadcaster has three channels, and there is one privately owned station. All are free to air channels. There were a million subscribers to satellite TV (Jacobs, 2011).

Satellite TV, mainly Multichoice has a couple of 24-hour new channels. All of whom have political segments. The channels usually unpacks news headlines in detail. They also have programs, where experts and political commentators are invited to discuss particular topics, mostly politics and governance type stuff. It also has a parliamentary channel. The channel airs parliamentary sessions. Some sessions have been flighted where political parties displayed unsavoury conduct (Martin & Solomon, 2016).

TV news is second to radio in terms of being the most consumed medium. There are racial disparities with regard to the consumption of TV news. There is a further racial divide between the consumption of SABC news, as opposed to satellite TV news (Glenn & Mattes, 2011).

The state channels are selective in their reporting. Content that has to do with discontentment with public services is underreported or facts and details are misrepresented. This is done to peddle propaganda in an effort by the state to legitimize itself. The net effect of this type of reporting is that it manages the relationship between the state and the citizens (Sebola *et al.*, 2014).

Privately owned TV news channels outperform the state broadcaster in terms of robustness in reporting on governance and politics (Glenn, & Mattes, 2011). ETV which is privately owned, has fierce investigative journalistic content. They report on a whole host of poor governance committed by politicians and government officials, such as corruption and self-enrichment; and they also report on instances where there is dereliction of duty (Sebola *et al.*, 2014).

The flighting of negative and violent content was found to have psychological effects on viewers. Some viewers prefer not to consume violent content (Havrylets *et al.*, 2013). This has implications in South Africa because some protests have been violent and reporting on them amounts to negative content. People have lost their lives at these protests. Property has been damaged and people sustained injuries. TV news in South Africa is normally flighted during family times, with small children watching. This could mean that they may not be shown frequently.

This could potentially have an effect on civil movements mobilising communities. Flighting of such content works in favour of civil movements and the community at large. Some protest are successful. The government does respond to the protestors and the protestors do get their demands. By not seeing the positive results, citizens would be robbed of a chance to see that protesting works sometimes.

There is segmentation of the audience along racial and socioeconomic lines by broadcasters. This leads to inequalities in terms of the quality of the information received by the different target markets. Of the three TV stations controlled by the state broadcaster, one is a cash cow in terms of revenue and coincidentally receives better quality news bulletins. It is worth noting that this channel's target market is from a higher socioeconomic class, compared to the other two stations. The same station serves a small segment of the population (Jacobs, 2011). African youth are the group that consumes news on Television the most (Malila & Oelofsen, 2016).

2.6.2.2. Radio News in South Africa

By 2011, radio frequency was available to 90 percent of the population (Jacobs, 2011). Radio is the most effective medium to engage in political activity, especially community radio. This is the case because radio allows the usage of local languages, but it's also uninhibited by illiteracy and poverty (Kivikuru, 2006). South Africa has 11 official languages. The national broadcaster has radio stations which broadcast in all the official languages. While some radio stations almost exclusively broadcast in their respective languages, traces of English can be found in all of them. There are privately owned radio stations, all of whom broadcast news. There are also talk radio stations who more often than not cover current affairs. Some of the other non-talk show radio stations, have current affairs segments as well. Lastly there are also community radio stations. Community radio stations operate and broadcast within certain locales. There are 18 radio station under the SABC (Mokgosi, 2021). The listenership of the big radio stations is from 674,000 and upwards. The one with the most listeners has 7,670,000 listeners, all of whom are under the SABC (Staff Writer, 2019) and around 90 community radio stations (Kivikuru, 2006).

Talk radio not only provides a platform for callers to contribute to discussions on public policies, socio-politics, and service delivery or lack thereof, it also serves as a platform where listeners can learn about such subjects (Bosch, 2010). Talk shows regularly have experts coming into the studios or calling in to contribute to discussions.

The South African community radio stations' original idea was to give a voice to the voiceless and marginalised communities. This was meant to facilitate democracy. However, they have been found not to be effective in enforcing democracy. While the radio stations do allow callers to call in and speak about issues which bother them, service delivery issues included, the radio stations do not usually have government structures to receive the issues and the callers do not call with the purpose of organising as an affected community (Kivikuru, 2006). Radio broadcasting in native languages is meant to bridge the hurdles that limit citizens who are not able to express themselves, in languages other than their mother tongue. It puts them in a position where they can enter discourses over socioeconomics and politics. This facilitates the element of participation in democratic processes (Mokgosi, 2021). The youth are an elusive market segment for community radio station (Kivikuru, 2006).

A study was conducted by (Mokgosi, 2021) to examine the extent to which a weekday current affairs programmes aired by the state broadcaster in one of the African languages contributed to the citizens playing a role in democratic participation. The study sought to establish the extent to which the programmes created platforms for the public to discuss issues that concerned them and how they mediated engagements on governance issues to hold government officials to account. Deficiencies were found in that critical rational discussions were not always held. The framing of citizen participation was found wanting. The study found that the audience had limited or lacked political capital.

2.6.2.3. Newspapers in South Africa

South Africa has a variety of newspapers, catering for different market segments. The market segmentation has created a risk that certain media outlets in their profit-making efforts cater for certain classes of society more than others. This market segmentation has the consequence of democracy being portrayed differently on a continuum of negative to mixed results, and also protests being portrayed on a continuum of negative to positive, depending on the market segment (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018). There is a risk here in that since newspapers are not marked to indicate their target market, a person may buy a newspaper but end up with a skewed take on issues simply because they are

not target market of that particular newspaper. While what they would have read may be true, the possibility is that if the reader is not the target market, the content in the newspaper may not adequately report the issues pertinent to him/her.

An issue with newspapers is their availability. South Africa has a lot of newspaper options, but not all are available throughout the country. Newspapers are normally delivered in urban towns (Kivikuru, 2006). There are racial disparities with regard to consuming news from newspapers. The disparity is fuelled by economic and education inequality (Glenn, & Mattes, 2011). While the majority of first-tier newspapers have white English speakers as their target market, they are equally consumed by the youth of different races. When it comes to community newspapers, Africans are the biggest consumers (Malila & Oelofsen, 2016).

A tabloid newspaper whose target market is low-income people reports on service delivery protests the most. They even beat political newspapers in that area (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018). Tabloid newspapers are considered to not have much value in terms of political importance (Glenn & Mattes, 2011). South Africa in its uniqueness, defies the common definition of a tabloid, or maybe the newspaper itself is misclassified. It would be interesting to know why protests would be such an interesting topic to low-income people more than to the more affluent and also to what end is such information being consumed.

Newspapers that are dominant in the country today are those that exclusively served the white minority population in the past. While the staff complement at these newspapers have been transformed, they are still pretty much targeting the white minority, due to the fact that they have the most buying power. The implication of this is that it feeds the notion that media is biased and not inclusive. The ramification of this is that the content of the newspapers is unlikely to be diverse. The sad thing is that the newspapers that are targeting so narrowly, are the ones that are considered to be the leaders of opinion media (Jacobs, 2011).

South Africa has a good selection of investigative journalism newspapers that reports religiously on poor governance issues (Plaut, 2018). However, these newspapers are

mostly available in English. A privately owned newspaper which was once regarded as an anti-apartheid newspaper (Gicheru, 2014) is still available now and reporting on democracy, and corruption is a common feature (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018), in fact, south African newspapers routinely cover corruption and other malfeasance (Martin & Solomon, 2016). Newspapers are to some people sources of knowledge. In South Africa, newspapers are not without fault. Their coverage is not always clear enough to communicate the role of citizens. This is concerning because newspapers have the power to shape the readers understanding of matters, they are reading about (Campbell & Gibbs, 2008; Wasserman *et al.*, 2018). Some newspapers may adopt an inclination to not be too critical of the government, depending on their ownership structure (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018).

Newspapers have a special role in the African context. While their roles include monitoring the performance of the government and exposing malfeasance, they also have a duty of educating citizens on their civil rights and responsibilities and engaging them in politics (Gicheru, 2014) this also applies to South Africa. South African newspapers are fulfilling this duty and report frequently on democracy, governance and government institution. The role of society and participation is also moderately covered (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018).

2.6.2.4. Internet News in South Africa

South Africa has good internet infrastructure (Banda, 2013). Citizens can access most internet search engines in the country. Google being one of them, is even available in local languages. The search engine allows users to search any topic of interest to them. A google search of “governance in South Africa” returned About 227,000,000 results in 0,75 seconds. The internet can be used for a variety of reasons other than to access news. The investigation agency, the Public Protector has reports available on their websites for download. In the recent past, they have held press conferences where they announced the publication of their reports. The reports were available on their websites thereafter.

Web based information on governance is also available (Bohler-Muller & Van der Merwe, 2011). Accessing the internet may be an issue with regard to devices and reliable network for some citizens. South Africa is still in a far better situation compared to other African countries like Uganda, wherein some poor rural citizens have to share devices in order to access the Internet (Burrell, 2010). While there may be cost implications related to the internet, the cost of using the internet may sometimes be less than cost involved in other forms of participation. The internet brings with it, the convenience of time and effort spent in its use (Jung *et al.*, 2011). The anonymity of the internet comes with risks and opportunities. The opportunities are that people may share information without any fear of reprisal. The risks relate to the credibility of the information being shared. Anonymous people cannot be held responsible for misleading and/or misinformation. The risk also include the possible targeting of certain audiences to influence or attack. Since the internet is an equal ground, each voice being equal and everyone is allowed to give their own opinion, whether informed or not. Another risk is that some users must just simply be unreasonable in their arguments and push through irrational points (Jung *et al.*, 2011).

There are investigative blogs that are available for political news and information (Plaut, 2018). This shows that the internet has really grown as a medium. In 2009, only two percent of the people surveyed said that they accessed news from the internet (Glenn & Mattes, 2011). The internet is the medium which the apathetic youth uses the most to engage in political processes. Most of the youth are active on online forums. They post their views on blogs and other online groups, with the white youth participating more. They also use the internet for news the most, followed by the Indians and coloureds with Africans being the least (Malila & Oelofsen, 2016).

2.6.2.5. Social Media in South Africa

Due to its wide availability, social media allows citizens to be connected and to have a voice to communicate their issues with others. It therefore facilitates citizenship for most citizens who are on social networks and use them for such purposes. This includes the poor and marginalised. They too, get to be in the position to get the attention of authorities, unlike conventional media, who are influenced mostly by those with economic power or belong to a certain socio-political class, social media levels the playing field. Everyone

has equal access (Sebola *et al.*, 2014). There are no restrictions as to who can use the platform save for the limitations due to infrastructure and resources. Everyone's voice is equal, however some are more influential than others.

Facebook and Twitter have played a crucial role in African countries. In Egypt and Tunisia, they are credited to have brought about political and social change in those countries. Citizens used these mediums to engage in political discussions, governance issues and to mobilise. Economic conditions, living conditions, corruption and how change was needed were discussed, as well as how to pursue the changes needed (Bohler-Muller & Van der Merwe, 2011).

Social media has created a good platform for journalism by citizens. This has led to a concept called citizens journalism (Banda, 2013). This is when ordinary citizens record and share content on social media for anyone to consume. In South Africa, it is common to have people sharing pictures of potholes in communities, flooded streets or other frustrations such as renewing their drivers licenses or other government services.

South Africans regard elected officials as unresponsive to public opinion (Mattes, 2002). It is up to citizens to access and use tools like social media to communicate with the authorities. One of the nice things about social media is that it leaves a digital trace. When the government is not responding to the issues being raised by citizens, others can see it. Similarly, to the internet, not all those voices and content on social media are factual. Social media is where it is easy to find information on where the author is basing his/her content and information on irresponsible hearsay, with the effect of spreading misinformation. Social media is full of uninformed opinions given, and information shared (Sebola *et al.*, 2014). While the youth has access to a wide range of media to access news, the one they use the most is social media (Malila & Oelofsen, 2016).

2.6.3. Participation in civil actions in South Africa

Corruption is a worldwide problem, it has been reported in Europe, Asia (Han & Demircioglu, 2016), and in Africa. Corruption has a big impact on socioeconomic growth. This affects development and has led to high rates of unemployment and poverty. Africa

lags behind in terms of infrastructure development, and service delivery is dismal due to corruption. For these reasons, social accountability is important on the continent and must be enforced to improve governance (McNeil & Mumvuma, 2006).

In Africa, social accountability is improving over time, with citizens engaging more than before. Africans are now reacting after they realized that political leaders are not delivering as per their citizen's interests (Bratton & Logan, 2006). South Africans understanding of democracy is modest. It is modest in the sense that they understand the benefits that are to be derived from it, however despite not being satisfied with the socioeconomic goods and services from the government, they do not fully engage in all the democracy processes available to them, to hold the government to account. They don't adequately participate in the processes that enhance it (Mattes, 2002). An understanding of governance and its relation to democracy seems to be the missing link (Kivikuru, 2006). A lack of understanding is one of the major components of democracy which is required for participating in political processes and active citizenship. There is a lack of understanding of the duty of citizens to keep themselves informed about current affairs and monitoring how elected officials are fulfilling their responsibilities and expressing themselves on matters of governance (Banda, 2013).

Newspapers sales have plummeted in the country over the years. The trend has been more evident in newspapers that cover more governance and political news than other news. Tabloid newspapers have weathered the storm better. This could be an indication of low levels of interest in political and governance content (Glenn & Mattes, 2011).

A dependent variable analysis was done to show which social accountability mechanism citizens engage in the most and also to determine which medium has the most influence on social accountability.

2.6.3.1. Voting in South Africa

South Africa is a constitutional democracy. Each citizen age of 18 and above has the right to vote. The country has a multi-party system and holds election at national, provincial and municipal election level every five years. When citizens vote for a political party to be

in government, it is understood that the citizens are giving the political party the power and rights to govern the affairs of the country (Parliament, n.d).

Elections provides citizens the opportunity to vote out of power a political party in government should they not be happy with how they are governing the country. This is, however, not the only reason why they may choose to vote the party out. They are free to exercise their vote however they like. The party which gets the majority number of votes is the party that is considered the winner of the elections and it can then form the government (Parliament, n.d). A majority is more than 50 percent of the total number of votes.

At a national level, Parliament is the institution that creates the laws of the country and monitors the executives. It is constituted by means of the proportional representation system. This system is where the members of parliament are proportional to the percentage of votes won by particular parties. Parliament elects the president. Parliament also has the power to remove the president. The president then elects his cabinet, who then serve as the Executive. The Executive are commonly referred to as ministers and they hold executive authority powers over the national government departments. The executive is responsible for implementing the laws passed by Parliament (Parliament, n.d).

South Africans participate in general elections. The uniqueness of South Africans was evident in the 2006 local government elections where citizens engaged in protests across the country for two years and when it came to elections, the ruling party they were protesting against still won the elections. This suggests that the party enjoys blind support. The party still gets voted for by people who are not happy with its performance (Booyesen, 2007; Mattes, 2002). This raised eyebrows because the ruling party had been linked to corruption and poor governance in many instances (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018) and it has been suggested that they are subordinating the needs of citizens to politics (Alexander, 2010).

It is interesting that while South Africans do participate in elections, some citizens do not always know who the parliamentarians are. This is concerning because news headlines

publish the names of people who are implicated in wrongdoing. Citizens who don't know those names may miss important news. This, coupled with the fact that they don't participate much outside of voting, points to a need for citizens to be infused with the culture of active citizenship (Mattes, 2002).

Voting is not the most effective mechanism because there is a strong possibility that elected officials are in it for themselves. Once they are in office, they pursue self-serving interests and thus improvement in livelihoods will be minimal for citizens (Alexander, 2010; Sebola, Tsheola & Molopa, 2014).

The South African youth, like youth everywhere, are posting low voter turnout numbers (IEC, 2021; Kaid, Tedesco & McKinney, 2004). This has been attributed to their limited political knowledge which negatively affects their confidence to vote. The youth have cited that their reason for not participating in elections is due to their not knowing much about the election candidates and not being clued up on issues (Kaid *et al.*, 2004). This is not surprising as there is minimal clarity in terms of differences in political and economic ideology between the various political parties who stand for elections (Glenn, & Mattes, 2011).

People of the African race in South Africa, have been found to be more active, compared to the other races. They attend more election rallies and community meetings and join others to raise issues. However, it was also determined that when it comes to contacting the elected officials as individuals, there is less action (Glenn, & Mattes, 2011).

With the situation in Africa where citizens are prone to vote along racial lines (Bratton & Logan, 2006). This and the fact that African youth are reported to be under pressure to vote for the same party as their elders (Malila & Oelofsen, 2016), It is worth mentioning that in South Africa, the country's citizens are predominately Africans. The race is highly unequal, featuring along a spectrum of income groups (Glenn & Mattes, 2011).

The youth in the country, while they are willing to engage in civic life, are not keen on political life. Voting is part of that political life. The youth feel that they can contribute more to society through social institutions. The feeling was attributed to the possible distrust

the youth have in politicians. The youth feel that politicians do not keep their promises and do not account to the public (Malila & Oelofsen, 2016). Young people below the age of 35 are the biggest age group in the country. The voting population comprising the youth is substantial, compared to the population who are above 35 years (Statistics South Africa., 2021, IEC, 2021). This could explain the relationship between unemployment and marginalised communities with voter apathy and absenteeism (Barchiesi, 2004).

The economic theory of democracy does not support the stance that the youth are taking, especially in a country where clearly a lot needs to happen to change things. Where there is unemployment and marginalised communities, the cost of voting cannot be zero. This is because a vote is an instrument of change and failure to use it wisely is a cost to the potential voter. Unless if a person who is eligible to vote is likely to suffer consequences if they vote, if that person stand to benefit in any way socioeconomically should they vote a certain way, if they abstain from voting they are being irrational (Downs, 1957).

The first ruling party since 1994, did not get an outright majority of the votes in South Africa's last election campaign. With major losses noticeable, mostly in urban areas. While they got the largest share of the votes nationally at 46%, they failed to get an outright majority at 70 municipalities across the country (Cele, 2021)

With voting being such an important thing due to its implications for the citizens, when the party that is elected into government fails to deliver, it's the citizens who suffer the consequences. Because of this, it could be expected that everyone who is entitled to the privilege of voting, would be invested in the political process of elections where the party to govern is chosen. However, this is not the case. Some people abstain from voting in the elections.

2.6.3.2. Protesting in South Africa

The Constitution gives citizen the right to demonstrate, peacefully and unarmed (The Constitution, 1996). The right to demonstrate enshrined in the Constitution is akin to protesting that I am using in this research as a dependent variable.

There were 4,320 protests in South Africa between the period 22 January 2011 to 22 January 2018. The period started before the round of data I am using for this research. The reasons for the protests ranged from social services such as municipal services, electricity, education and housing, to quality-of-life issues such as unemployment, crime, socio-economic reasons, transport, disruption and land. They included protests relating to corruption and governance and business practices (IssAfrica, n.d). Some of the protests were violent. The intensity of protests has on certain occasions reached insurrection levels (Alexander, (2010). Of late, a significant number of violent protests over water and sanitation are being recorded in medium size towns across all the nine provinces in the country (Polity, 2022). There also has been niche protests like the ones for free education at tertiary level or when the soldiers protested and went to the offices of the president (Death, 2010). Protests were sometimes prompted by the perception of inadequate service delivery rather than the actual quality of services provided (Nleya, 2011). It is amazing that a country that had experienced so many protest action, some of which been violent, did not have enough academic literature on the subject in 2008 (Marais, Matebesi *et al.*, 2008) 14 years into the democratic government.

The poor usually find themselves at the back end of service delivery. They are often marginalised and for this reason, they are more likely to engage in protests (Marais *et al.*, 2008). Service delivery and comfortable living conditions are not experienced equally in South Africa, with most of the citizens being deprived (Mashamaite, 2014). The youth were noticeably present at many protests, most of whom were unemployed (Alexander, 2010)

Service delivery protests can be traced back to before the democratic dispensation came in. This means that citizens being discontented is not a democracy problem, it's not a problem unique to the ruling party that has ruled since democracy. The difference that occurred between the time period before and after democracy is that after democracy, the country became a constitutional democracy. The Constitution entitles citizens to basic services (The Constitution, 1996). The democratic government as a legitimate government, is expected to deliver services to citizens equitably, so protests against service delivery and lack of accountability have more weight (Alexander, 2010).

There are at least two types categorised for protests in South Africa. Those that happen in informal settlements and townships and those that are spearheaded by civil societies. South Africa in its uniqueness somewhat complicates this categorisation by having geographical locations that are regarded as poor urban areas (Nleya, 2011). I regard this as a complication because urban areas are normally expected to be well developed with residents enjoying comfortable living standards while rural areas are expected to be backward and poor. Poor urban areas then then puts that categorisation into a tailspin.

News of social protests are usually reported on news media across the country in varying extents (Nleya, 2011). Protests are so common in the newspapers that they are not headline news anymore. They no longer occupy front pages (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018)

Protests are conducted by communities coming together or affected parties getting together (Nleya, 2011). Over and above service delivery issues, some have rose from broken promises by the government (Ngcukana, 2018). This is understandable because election campaigns have become very familiar over the years. Political parties have been promising jobs and housing to citizens for many years. The promises of jobs and houses from political parties is a strange concept, because governments are not normally in the business of providing jobs. Providing a house to every qualifying citizen, sounds financially strenuous. Then the big promise has been stamping out corruption. This has clearly not happened (South African Government, 2022, Special Investigating Unit, 2021). Water provision has been a problem in rural communities in the provinces of Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape for many years.

Some South Africans have states that, they do not engage with the government to voice their unhappiness because they don't believe that their concerns would be addressed (Glenn, & Mattes, 2011). Poor or complete breakdowns of communication between elected officials and communities have also resulted in protest action. This happens when governance structures at government institutions do not handle complaints from citizens appropriately (Marais *et al.* (2008). This should be reason enough to encourage citizens to sanction the elected officials. Being non-responsive to the concerns of citizens is poor governance. Communities don't only protest over non-delivery of services but also over

not being engaged in participating in governance and the affairs of the municipality (Mashamaite, 2014). This failure by the government does the opposite of building democracy.

Protesting in South Africa signifies that citizens are not happy with the current political leaders. It's a sign that communities are starting to realise that what they hoped would come with democracy is not coming soon enough. Citizens are not happy about the socioeconomics and politics in the country (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018). Mattes (2002) considered protesting to be the opposite notion to that of apathy or of being passive. Whilst some protests can turn out to be violent and disruptive, they are however, an important element of social transition (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018). Protest efficacy is hampered by the fact that it can be ended by the government doing the minimum to appease the protesting citizens, or if people do not get their way, they fall into apathy (Alexander, 2010).

2.6.3.3. Civil movements in South Africa

In a constitutional democracy, citizens are entitled to equal civil, social and economic rights as citizens. As individuals, it is harder to hold the government and government executives to account due to power dynamics. The manifestation of this is that the minorities and the poor are marginalised. Horizontal accountability fail also. The failure by horizontal accountability systems, could be due to a host of reasons including failure by constitutional institutions to levy their powers and conduct the necessary oversight over government institutions, or maybe some executives in government are too powerful to be held accountable. All these failures could be linked with the deficits that come with patronage systems. This is when civil movements rise to the occasion. This is when citizens come together as a collective and mobilise in pursuit of their rights and in the spirit of citizenship. In South Africa, civil movements are formed as issues develop or in response to government failure. They take up the challenge whether it be political or constitutional (Ballard *et al.*, 2005). They take the government to task for not delivering on the socioeconomic rights of citizens that are enshrined in the constitution (Madlingozi,

2007). Civil movements not only go up against the government. They also take on corporations whose practices affect their communities (Ballard, 2005).

For the purposes of this research, civil movements, civil society and social movement are understood to be synonymous. In South Africa, civil movements also include non-profit organisations. There is an act called the Non-Profit Act, which was passed, recognizing them. With the act, the government was fostering a partnership with civil movements in matters pertaining to policy development and service delivery. Civil movements are not only made up of formal organisations but also include informal, community-based organisations or association of people dealing with matters of survival. The government expects civil movements to keep a close eye on how the government is managing in terms of public goods and service provision and to make sure that the marginalised and disadvantaged communities are adequately catered for. The state's openness to civil movement is good for governance and democracy (Habib, 2005).

Civil movements were instrumental in the fight against apartheid in South Africa and its transition into a democracy. From then until now, civil movements have not been homogenous, they differ in ideology, pursue interests which may be beneficial to certain societies over others and may serve different classes of society (Habib & Kotze, 2002).

There are other niche interest social movements that seek to challenge government policy on certain matters of interest to them such as labour, the environment, economic policies and gender issues (Marais *et al.*, 2008) Having said that; to summarise, they serve interests which do not always benefit everyone but only a certain group at a certain time (Habib & Kotze, 2002). There are variations in civil movements. Some operate across party political lines, focusing on the developmental needs of their members. They engage with role players on behalf of their communities. They are others, which are mostly grassroots movements and then working-class movements. As civil movement membership is voluntary, there has been reports of political party affiliated members joining civil movements in order to capture them for the party purpose and influence their agenda (Pieterse & Oldfield, 2002; Ballard *et al.*, 2005).

Some movements' purposes emanate from a range of influencing factors which include public opinion and rumours (Marais *et al.*, 2008). This phenomenon can be explained by conclusions reached by Polletta and Jasper (2001) on what collective identity is. They concluded that collective identities develop when communities bond over certain perceptions or constructed realities, resulting from fluid and relational consumption of certain sources of information or anecdotes. From this it is clear that people may join together to pursue political, social or economic issues. For that reason, a careful look needs to be focused on every collection of people to determine their cause, so that they can be correctly classified (Ballard *et al.*, 2005).

Civil movements have been around for a long time in South Africa. They operate in both rural and urban areas taking up fights against the government and practicing democracy (McKinley, 2006). There are however weaknesses in civil movements, in that they are also localized, they don't share common purposes and there is no unity among them they fail to work in unison for the much need effect of big numbers for effect (Chiumbu, 2012, Sinwell, 2010). In South African cities, the localised civil movements organise to pursue issues affecting their local communities. The localisation of civil movements keeps them vibrant as they focus on matters that are of interest to their communities (Pieterse & Oldfield, 2002; Ballard *et al.*, 2005).

The efficacy of civil movements is limited by the uneven power relations between the movements and the government. Civil movements struggle with getting capacities to mobilise and access to resources. As civil movements are located outside of party-political structures, they are disadvantaged in terms of the influence they can yield. The government has state resources that they can use against civil action (Pieterse & Oldfield, 2002; Ballard *et al.*, 2005). Be that as it may, civil movements are the biggest hope to supply the needs of the communities at political level (Ballard *et al.*, 2005).

Civil movements in Africa are weak. They face challenges involving finances, due to insufficient funding, they also have organizational and operational problems. Some of these problems stem from cultural and social conditions in the continent (Makumbe, 1998). They use media coverage for mobilisation in the hope of achieving maximum

impact. When they protest or engage in demonstrations, they need news media to capture the news and report on it. They also engage the media on their reasons for protesting and demonstrating (Cottle, 2008). Civil movements that are pro-poor only get coverage by big media if the issue they are pursuing is not counterproductive to the interests of the main target of the media house (Jacobs, 2011)

They are not always constructive in their engagement, and they are not always progressive in their agenda. In South Africa, some civil movements take stances of alternate politics and engage in revolutionary and radical ways. In such situations, the authorities pass off the issues that civil movements are raising as emanating from a lack of understanding of the Constitution (McKinley, 2006). They are powerful at driving protests. They are able to go against the ruling party, which in a way enforces democracy. They also contribute by educating communities on their rights, including the right to engage in protests (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018). Just as in the adult population, non-white youth are disadvantaged, compared to their counterparts. They are concerned and dissatisfied about social services and are affected more by crime than their white counterparts. This could explain why they are more active in civil movements than their white counterparts are (Malila & Oelofsen, 2016).

2.6.4. Socioeconomic influence on participation

There are socioeconomic factors that influences the relationship between the consumption of news and the propensity to engage in civil action. Those factors can be treated as control variables when an estimation of the influence is determined. The ones chosen in this report were chosen because they were thought to be the ones that mostly represented the socioeconomics of the population of the country.

2.6.4.1. Education

Participating in social accountability mechanisms varies depending on levels of education and geographic location. Accountability activeness is positively related with levels of education (Glass & Newig, 2019). The education system in the country was ranked as one of the worst in the world (The Economist, 2017). This could have implications for this research because a weak system of education may not work as expected. The level of

awareness that citizens have about the rights and entitlement services, knowledge of their role in the governance system and the concept of accountability influences their public participation (Nepal & van der Kwaak, 2020). A well-informed electorate is a crucial element and has been found to be negatively related to poor governance outcomes such as corruption (Bratton & Logan, 2006; Adsera *et al.*, 2003).

2.6.4.2. Age

The youth has less political knowledge and efficacy than their elders. Political efficacy theory posits that knowledge on politics is accumulated over a period of time and from a variety of sources of political information (Kaid *et al.*, 2004). This puts the older generation at an automatic advantage because they have existed for longer than the youth. Exposure is a more weighted factor that influences one's political attitude more than political knowledge that is taught (Lee, 2007). Political knowledge is deep and broad, it involves complex concepts that could not be learnt through exposure. The youth needs political knowledge for themselves because they end up getting political education or perspective from their elders or at church, or even from their peers (Malila & Oelofsen, 2016).

Active participation in civil activity, especially by young people is called upon to boost democracy and effective governance (Mbanyele & Desai, 2021). Leal *et al.* (2016) suggested that engaging in civil activity relates to demanding change from hardships and inequality and is an attempt at getting accountability for poor governance, to yield benefits of good governance. South African youth, especially from rural are at the receiving end of poor governance (New24, 2020).

2.6.4.3. Gender

Political accountability is the manifestation of the participation pillar of democracy. To deepen democracy, citizens should participate fully in democratic processes. The implementation of political accountability depends on the values and culture of the citizens. Some citizens do not have the predisposition to hold government officials accountable. A factor that affects the effectiveness of social accountability includes gender norms, where in some societies, females are not empowered to participate in

governance systems. In those instances, they are a marginalised group that do not always participate fully (Nepal & van der Kwaak, 2020). In South Africa, while females have the same civil rights as men. Culturally, there could be limitations on how females may be prone to approach and demand answers from a male public official (Boydell *et al.*, 2019). This might not apply in all the different cultures across the country. It could also depend on geographical location. This points to a need to engage in community behaviour changes. Some females are not inhibited to demand accountability from government officials

2.6.4.4. Level of income

Social accountability does not operate in a vacuum. Its success rate is dependent on the context in which it is being applied. The public sector is a highly politicised environment. The provision of services by the government is not always a simple public affairs matter. Sometimes, there are political considerations. The poor bear the brunt of such as they often find themselves lacking political capital (Joshi & Houtzager, 2012). Poverty is real in South Africa. Poor people are the group who ought to be engaging all the social accountability mechanisms to get the change that would improve their state of wellbeing. Since they are marginalised, their agency could be compromised.

Participating in social accountability is sometimes limited by social structures whereby participation is regulated according to one's position on the socioeconomic ladder. This situation is when there will be people whose participation is weighted higher than that of others (Nepal & van der Kwaak, 2020). This is exclusionary and should not be happening in a democracy. In South Africa, there are public participation structures, and laws to manage such practises. Citizens, however, do not participate equally in political control processes for their own reasons. Positive socioeconomics are some of the elements which are a pre-condition for active participation in social accountability (Almén & Burell, 2018). In an unequal country as South Africa, with high rates of unemployment, could mean that a lot more people would be disadvantaged.

2.6.4.5. Geographic location

There are power imbalances between citizens and government officials. In certain instances, citizens respect government officials so much that they are not inclined to question them. This is more likely to occur in rural areas (Nepal & van der Kwaak, 2020), but could also be happening in well-developed communities.

Mainstream media was found to target the urban middle class. The consequence of this is that news is reported in a tone and manner that resonates with that target market. Mainstream medium see the world from a middle-class vantage point. When the focus is a certain section of society, reports do not report from a full spectrum of social experience. This flaw is tantamount to a professional flaw (Friedman, 2011). A bigger issue is that citizens who are not the target market of mainstream media are then deprived of gainful information. South Africa has a large contingent of non-urban middle class people. These two classes co-exist and may consume the same media. The difference is that the non-target market gets less value.

Another issue is that when citizens are exposed to a one-sided viewpoint, they tend to adopt that viewpoint over time. However, that danger is mediated by the fact that the audience is likely to be more agreeable with a certain viewpoint if they already leaning towards it. This is due to the fact that people are people and are likely to be influenced by ideologies and value propositions that are consistent to theirs. This happens even when the audience is exposed to balanced coverage (Lee, 2007).

2.7. The relationship between democracy, political accountability, information and social accountability

Citizens in a democracy have the right to hold elected officials accountable for how they are running the government and their behaviours (Kluvers, 2003). According to the political control theory, when the electorate is perfectly informed, rent seeking behaviour would be curtailed and the informed electorate produces honest and reliable politicians. The electorate should not only be well informed but should also be politically mobilised and willing to engage in the democratic process of political accountability.

For the electorate to be informed concerning how elected officials have erred, or are engaged in maleficence, they need to consume information, inclusive of political and governance information. The quality of public servants is positively related to the availability of information about their performance (Adsera *et al.*, 2003; Barro, 1973; Ferejohn, 1986). Social accountability mechanisms are implemented for citizens to get to express their voices to influence government, facilitate engagement between the state and citizens, be given explanations for government decisions, ensure performance from the government, curtail corruption and ultimately sanction the elected official (Malena *et al.*, 2004; Fox, 2015, 2020; The World Bank, 2006; Butler *et al.*, 2020).

The position of this research study is that citizens are not holding elected officials to account (Booyesen, 2007; Mattes, 2002). There is enough news available that indicates that not only is the government failing at some of its functions but elected officials are not doing enough to prevent poor governance outcomes such as corruption (Alexander, 2010, Kota, 2021). All this speaks mostly to a lack of political will to do what's needed (Hickey & King, 2016). It is up to the citizens to ensure that when the officials they elected into office are not performing, they hold them to account, by either getting them to tell the public, facts about their conduct or voting them out of power (Malena *et al.*, 2004).

With news about poor services at government clinics, potholes, poor services at licensing departments, poor water quality and disruptions, power outages, maladministration and corruption at the local government level, the ruling party which was responsible for the provision of services and under which some of the municipalities with issues fall, won the last local government election.

While citizens have access to all the news information, they don't seem to be influenced by it, to act against the powers that be. When they vote, they continue to vote for the same party that has failed, despite ongoing news of its failures.

2.8. Hypothesis

- 2.8.1.** H0: News consumption by citizens does not affect the propensity to participate in a civil action.
- 2.8.2.** H1: Access to news consumption by citizens affects voting.
- 2.8.3.** H2: Access to news consumption by citizens affects protesting.
- 2.8.4.** H3: Access to news consumption by citizens affects joining a civil movement.

2.9. Summary

From the literature, it is clear that the tenets of democracy are regular elections and full participation. Democracy is enforced when full participation is by an informed electorate. The electorate is regarded informed when they are fully aware of their political rights and vote to advance their other rights such as social and economic rights. The political accountability section shows that citizens, as they are the principals in a democracy, need to hold the elected officials as the agents, accountable for the responsibilities they delegated to them. Chief amongst the responsibilities is clean, effective, and efficient administration. The governance section explains the values against which governments and its performance can be assessed. The highlights of governance are service delivery and curtailment of corruption. The information section shows that access to information through media news is an important element of political accountability. Media news is robust, through its investigative journalism it is reliable and almost free of political interference and reports freely on how the government is performing with regards to their responsibilities. The three social accountability mechanisms used in this research are balanced and the implementations of all of them will enforce democracy. Voting elects the politicians who take overall accountability for the running of the government, civil movements, or individuals who play an oversight role, when they are discontent about service delivery or governance outcomes, they demand answers, protest or vote out the politicians

3. Research Methodology

In this chapter I will present the research approach I used to analyse the data and explain why I chose the method I used. I will give details about the source of the data used. The data was sourced from Afrobarometer, so I will explain who they are and what they do. I will explain the model used and how the data was coded. Lastly, I will present the variables used. The variables will be explained in a literature and theory format in the South Africa context.

3.1. The Research Approach

The research was conducted using a quantitative research method and probit regression analysis was employed (Crook & Garratt, 2005). Post-positivism is a pluralistic approach. It strikes a balance between the positivist and interpretivist approaches (Panhwar, Ansari & Shah, 2017). It has certain characteristics such as acknowledging that there is a broad range as to what can be classified as research, it recognises the close bond between theory and practice. It argues that theory cannot be ignored on account on what seems to be apparent facts (Ryan, A2006). It further argues that a researcher is not free of bias. It posits that, what the researcher observes and concludes is influenced by their ideas and to a certain extent their identity. The paradigm then strives to get objectives answer in spite of the biases by balancing the work that theorists develop with theory and knowledge (E-International Relations, 2021).

The approach was chosen because the purpose of the research was to measure the relationship between independent variables and outcome variables, where the dependent variable is binary. Probit Regression analysis allows that and it also allows the inclusion of control variables. It uses statistical techniques to give the results. When analysing the outputs, it is assumed that there were no missing values in the dataset, the data was on a normal basis with no extreme circumstances or values and the variables are linear. The results show the relationship of the relationship (Uyanık,& Güler, 2013, Gibbons & Hedeker, 1994, Horowitz & Savin, 2001).

The dependent variables used are voting, protesting and civil movements, and independent variables used are five news mediums, which are television, radio, newspapers, social media and the internet. Location (urban, rural), employment status, education, age and gender were used as control variables.

Since the probit model was going to be used. All the dependent variables were coded to be binary. This was done to allow for comparisons to be made between the dependent variables to determine which one is implemented the most by citizens and the least.

The validity of the research is ensured by the fact that it will be based on credible and reliable data. While the results of the research could be useful for countries with socioeconomics and a political landscape similar to South Africa, it should not be considered as transferable (Polit & Beck, 2010). South Africa has most of the conditions for social accountability, so the results will point to the citizen's behaviours being unhindered by an oppressive system. The research was conducted using data from the Afrobarometer. While the data is credible, there is however a risk of social desirability bias, especially when it comes to voting, one of the dependent variables. Participants may have given incorrect answers out of fear of reprisal. Previously, there have been talks that in some areas you would not get serviced at the municipality if you were found not to have voted. In South Africa, the government used to paste a sticker on voters identity documents. The sticker was proof that the person did register to vote. It did not however, show whether they voted or not. So, municipal officials would ask for the voter to present an identity document to check whether he/she had a sticker before they serviced that person. Since the advent of smart card identity documents, the need for stickers has lapsed.

3.2. What is Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer conducts research projects through public attitude surveys on governance and society in several countries, South Africa included. They have high quality data on the perceptions of African citizens about their respective countries. The information is collected and published freely. The data is in statistical format, the data sets and

codebook are available for downloading. For this research, the information was accessed from the Afrobarometer website.

Seven rounds of the Afrobarometer data is available on the website. Each project ran over three years, and the periods of the projects are referred to as rounds. They have data from 1999/2001 to 2016/2018. There are gaps in between, there is nothing for the years, 2004, 2007 and 2010. This research used the 2016/2018 round for South Africa. The 2016/2018 is around seven, the latest dataset available. When accessing the information via the website, survey topics were presented. The research falls under the participation – civic engagement survey topic. This topic is relevant because participation and civic engagement are outcomes of social accountability (Malena *et al.*, 2004).

In the collection of data, Afrobarometer used a locally based national partner. The partner was responsible for data collection, analysing, and dissemination of the data. The partner was trained by Afrobarometer in their standard methodology and quality standards. The surveys are conducted face to face. The sample comprised of adult citizens who were national representatives. The sizes of the sample were aimed to be between 1200 and 240. The sample population was distributed by demographic factors such as location, gender, and region. The sample location was randomly selected with the aim for distribution to be across the country. The surveys are conducted in the language the respondents are fluent in. Strict controls are implemented to ensure the quality of data. There is an error margin of +/- 2 % points at 95% confidence.

Statistical significance was established to determine the probability of the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables. The P values were used. P values were regarded as statistically significant when they fell below the cut off of 0.05. P values were chosen because they measure the probability that findings are due to sampling errors which therefore identifies the chance that the effect produced by the analysis may be due to sampling errors (Held & Ott, 2018, SpringerLink, 2022)

3.3. Variables

On the models, I eliminated answers of participants who did not give a definite answers. The model thus presents a clear perception of South African citizens. From the results, I was able to determine how much citizens consume news, the medium that was used the most and the extent of statistical effect news consumption has on engaging in social accountability. The results also showed how much influence and socioeconomics affected the results. All mediums of information used as independent variables provide news on governance almost daily, especially when there has been poor governance. As more than one medium is available to most citizens at any given time, all of them were used run against each dependent variable. All the models employed control variables. Results were presented in the order of voting, protesting, and civil movement.

3.3.1. Dependent variables

The dependent variables that were used were voting, protesting, and civil movements. These three were chosen because they are the most commonly used mechanisms for social accountability.

3.3.1.1. Voting

For the voting dependent variable, the question that was posed to the participants was, understanding that some people were unable to vote in the most recent national election in 2014, which of the following statements is true for you.

There were 10 possible answerers that participants could choose from. They were, you were not registered to vote, you voted in the elections, you decided not to vote, you could not find the polling station, you were prevented from voting, you did not have time to vote, you did not vote because you could not find your name in the voters' register, did not vote for some other reason, you were too young to vote, don't know/ can't Remember. The could also chose not to answer the question.

When the data was coded for regression analysis, the responses that were negative and responses indicated that the participant did not vote for whatever reason was coded as

0, and the yes response was coded 1. Where the participants refused to answer or there no answer was captured, that participant was removed from the analysis.

3.3.1.2. Protesting

For the protesting dependent variable, the background given and question posed to participants was, here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens when they are dissatisfied with government performance. 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, have you participated in a demonstration or protest march?

There were six possible answers to choose from, they were, no, would never do this, no, but would do if had the chance, yes, once or twice, yes, several times, yes, often, don't know. They could refuse to answer.

When the data was coded for regression analysis, the responses that were a no, were coded as 0, and all the ones with yes, were coded 1. Where the participants refused to answer or there no answer was captured, that participant was removed from the analysis.

3.3.1.3. Civil movement.

For the civil movement dependent variable, the question that was posed to participants was, here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens when they are dissatisfied with government performance. 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: Joined others in your community to request action from government?

There were six possible answers, they were, no, would never do this, no, but would do if I had the chance, yes, once or twice, yes, several times, yes, often, don't know. They could also refused to answer.

When the data was coded for regression analysis, all the responses that started with a no, were coded 0, and all the yeses were coded 1. Where the participants refused to answer or there no answer was captured, that participant was removed from the analysis.

3.3.2. Independent variables

For the independent variables, the question posed to participants was the same. The only variation was the medium of news the question sought the answer on.

The question that was posed to participants was, how often do you get news from the following sources. There were six possible responses, they were, never, less than once a month, a few times a month, a few times a week, every day, don't know, they could also refuse to answer.

When the data was coded for regression analysis, the only one coded 0 was where the participants answered never, the rest were coded as 1. Where the participants refused to answer or a response was never captured the participant was removed from the data

3.3.3. Control variables

For the location variable, the question posed to participants was, do you come from a rural or urban area. While Afrobarometer acknowledges that are other categories such as peri-urban and semi-urban, these options were not given to participants and there were no responses with these categories. Urban was coded as 0 and rural was coded as 1.

For the employment status variable, the question posed to participants was, do you have a job that pays a cash income, if yes, Is it full-time or part-time? If no, are you presently looking for a job? The options for answers were, no, not looking, no, looking, yes, part-time, yes, full time, don't know. They could also refuse to answer. The answers were coded with the no's being 0 and the yeses being 1.

For all the control variables the responses where responses were captured as don't know, refused to answer or missing were removed from the dataset.

3.4. Descriptive statistics

Table 1 below presents a numerical description of the variables that made up the dataset. I will describe the variables further-on in this section.

On the Afrobarometer website more information is provided on the frequencies of the responses. That information will be cited here. The information will be used because the model ran for the purposes of this research had binary dependent variables so the same frequencies could not be run.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Voting	1720	0	1	.59	.493
Protesting	1720	0	1	0.28	.447
Civil movement	1720	0	1	0.37	.483
Radio news	1720	0	4	2.89	1.550
TV news	1720	0	4	30.31	10.305
Newspaper news	1720	0	4	1.76	1.619
Internet news	1720	0	4	1.75	1.817
Social media	1720	0	4	1.80	1.859
Age	1720	18	94	380.20	14.594
Gender	1720	0	1	.50	.500
Location	1720	0	1	0.31	.463
Employment status	1720	0	1	0.39	.488
Level of education	1720	0	9	4.64	1.770
Valid N (listwise)	1720				

The dataset initially had 1829 participants. It came down to 1720 after it was cleaned to exclude participants who did not provide answers that were suitable for regression analysis.

3.4.1. Consumption of news

Of the participants 57 percent get news from the radio every day, with 1five percent getting it a few times a week. This indicates that 57 percent of the population could possibly be hearing all the daily radio news bulletins. The portion that gets news a few

times a week also stands a good chance of staying up to date on the burning issues. It is unlikely that burning issues would have a very short news cycle. About 23 percent of the participants said they either never got news or only got news less than once a month. As shocking as this looks, it is moderated by the fact there are multiple news media in the country so it is likely that people who don't get news from the radio still get news from elsewhere. However, I am not discounting the possibility that there are people who do not consume news at all. I have first-hand knowledge that there are.

More than 80 percent of the participants get news from television. Fewer than 14 percent said that they never got any news, or only got news less than once a month from TV news. Less than seven percent said they got news from radio and television news a few times a week.

There are more people who never read newspapers for news than ones who do daily. Of the participants 39 percent said that they never did, with a further seven percent saying they did but less than once a month. This means that almost half of the representative population don't read newspapers. Of the participants 21 percent do read newspapers for news daily, and a further 19 percent do so a few times a week.

The internet is not a popular medium for news. More than 50 percent of the participants never used the internet to get news, or they did so less than once a month. Of the participants 33 percent used it every day, nine percent used it a few times a week. Similar numbers were recorded for social media.

3.4.2. Correlation matrix of the independent variables

The consumption of the different mediums is not mutually exclusive. Therefore, the researcher needed to determine how they correlate with one another. Table 2 determined the relationship as well as the significance thereof. It is clear that news consumption co-vary. The relationship is significant across the board with more relationship between radio, TV, and newspaper than other media. These two media also happen to be the most economically accessible. Newspapers are not as cheap to consume as TV and radio but are probably cheaper than technologically based media. They can also be shared amongst people. Because of the relationship of the independent variable, models were

run on each independent variable against dependent variables in separate regression models.

Table 2: Independent variable coefficient

		Radio news	TV news	Newspaper news	Internet news	Social Media
Radio news	Pearson Correlation	1	0.285**	0.265**	0.139**	0.128**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
TV news	Pearson Correlation	0.285**	1	0.211**	0.116**	0.127**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000
Newspaper news	Pearson Correlation	0.265**	0.211**	1	0.301**	0.269**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000
Internet news	Pearson Correlation	0.139**	0.116**	0.301**	1	.722**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000
Social Media	Pearson Correlation	0.128**	0.127**	0.269**	.722**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3.4.3. Population socioeconomics of the participants

The youth were well represented in the research sample. Out of the total sample of 1720, youth participants, meaning respondents between age 18 to 34, were 51.9%. The sample was roughly evenly distributed across all age groups. Adults, meaning respondents between age 35 59, accounted for less than 40% of the sample, while elderly, meaning respondents age 60 and above, made up 10.8%.

The genders were almost equally represented with males slightly more at 50.2 percent. Of the participants 69 percent were from urban areas, only 38.9 percent were employed either part-time or full-time. Of the rest that were unemployed, 2five percent were not looking for employment.

Of the participants 23 percent had post-secondary education with 34 percent having finished secondary education and the rest of the participants having less than secondary education. It is worth noting though that 11 percent of the participants had no formal schooling or just some primary schooling.

3.5. Summary

Civil participation is low. Voting is the most civil action that participants engaged in, followed by joining civil movements and lastly protesting. It is worth mentioning that civil movements have to some degree traces of protesting but with less judgement. While the two are closely linked, protesting in the South African context attracts more judgement than joining civil movements. The effect of this is that participants may not have been truthful. Some protestors, especially in protests that have been highly intense and violent, have participated with their faces covered.

The descriptive statistics show means of 3.31 and 2.89 out of a 4-point scale for TV news and radio respectively, indicating that radio and TV news are the most used compared to the other mediums. Above a median of 2, mean that people use the medium from a few times a week to every day to access news. The mean for newspapers is 1.76, almost equal to means of 1.75 for the internet and 1.80 for social media. The three are almost coming across as mutually exclusive, in the sense that readers of newspapers don't use the internet and social media for news and vice versa. This is obviously not the case as the three co-vary as seen in the correlation mix.

The participants in the dataset are presentative of the population. The socioeconomic status reflects the same as what is commonly known to be prevailing in the country through the statistics that are regularly presented by the government. The majority of the population is under the age of 35. Females are slightly more than males by less than two percent. Participants were only given two options for location, urban and rural.

4. Analysis and Discussion of the Research Data

In this chapter, I will present the analysis of the research data and the discussions that arise from it. The conclusion will be a separate chapter. The research outputs will be presented and discussed.

Change is needed in the country. Governance outcomes and service delivery leave a lot to be desired. The change that's needed is mostly in the hands of the citizens. It is up to the citizens to keep up with the state of affairs in country and fully participate in democratic processes. For this happen, citizens need to have access news and information. When that happen, they are likely to encounter information that should propel them to engage in social accountability.

What makes all this confusing, is that news about the issues in the country is readily available. Daily, there is news on television, radio, internet, social media, and newspapers regarding service delivery problems or corruption; usually relating to the ruling party. With this information being available, one's expectation is that citizens would make the effort to hold the ruling party to account. Many citizens don't even have to have access to news to have the propensity to pursue change through social accountability mechanisms, as they are suffering the consequences of poor governance daily; highlighted by their living experiences.

4.1. Analysis of the research

In this section, the data will be presented, analysed, and discussed. Here, the researcher analysed how much citizens participated in civil actions after consuming news from various media. The analysis included the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables and with the control variables. The results of the data analysis showed that there was a relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The outcome control variable also influenced the results. This showed that South Africans access news from all the mediums of information that were used as independent variables, and they do participate in civil actions. The relationship is significant in with three models but not substantial.

4.1.1. Propensity to vote

Regarding the voting dependent variable, the model tested whether news consumption influenced the propensity to vote. The five mediums of news were used as independent variables to confirm that the participants did have access to the news before, they cast their votes. The objective was to establish how access to news related to their propensity to vote. The model was controlled for all five control variables. Five different models were run. Table 3 presents the results. The first thing to notice was that the relationship between voting and access to news was statistically significant at the five percent level with three news mediums.

Here I will present the results of the analysis between voting and accessing news through all the five-media used as independent variables. I will present all five accompanied by brief discussions and then I will discuss the analysis.

Table 3 : Relationship between news consumption and voting

	Voting				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Constant	-0.030	-0.033	-0.012	0.004	0.025
	(0.052)	(0.055)	(0.051)	(0.052)	(0.053)
Radio news	0.015**				
	(0.007)				
TV news		0.011			
		(0.009)			
Newspapers			0.015**		
			(0.007)		
Internet news				-0.008	
				(0.007)	
Social media news					-0.014**
					(0.007)
Age	0.013***	0.013***	0.013***	0.013***	0.013***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Gender	-0.048**	-0.044**	-0.051**	-0.044**	-0.046**
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Location	0.070***	0.073***	0.079***	0.069***	0.067***
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)
Employment status	0.073***	0.076***	0.073***	0.080***	0.081***
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)
Level of education	0.011	0.012*	0.010	0.016**	0.017**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
R Square	0.155	0.153	0.154	0.153	0.155
Adjusted R Square	0.152	0.150	0.151	0.150	0.152
Observations	1720	1720	1720	1720	1720

*<0.1, **<0.05, ***<0.01

Standard errors in parenthesis

At a p-value of 0.032, radio news is a significant variable at five percent level indicating that it does influence the propensity to participate in civil actions. However, at a coefficient of 0.015, the relationship between voting and radio news is a weak positive. The weak relationship is glaring because radio is second to TV news in terms of the media used the most for news. Of the participants almost 70 percent watched the news at a minimum of a few times a week. Governance issues are a daily thing in the country, so no matter what day of the week they watched TV they would have seen something of concern.

The positive coefficient was expected based on research by Jacobs (2011) and Kivikuru (2006), who regard radio as instrumental in enforcing democracy, due to its wide reach and inclusive nature. The weak relation is concerning though, considering the listenership numbers of radio. The results showed that the consumption of news has almost no effect on how citizens vote at.

At a p-value of 0.218, the relationship between TV news and voting is not significant. The coefficient of the relationship of 0.011 is meagre, considering that more than 60 percent of the population had access to TV, including satellite TV. ETV was available then and there is a likelihood that they would have reported on governance issues that were going on then

The SABC, together with the other news outlets ran segments on their 24-hour channels wherein they unpacked the report further. Eleven days later, a YouTube video of the ten-minute segment had 5,143 views. While it is possible that some people might have watched the programme when it aired or when it was repeated on the channel, it is worth noting that the 24-hour channels are only available on satellite television. Not everyone has satellite TV, but a lot of people do. Multichoice, one of South Africa's satellite TV providers has almost 21 million subscribers (Ferreira, 2021).

At a p-value of 0.041, newspaper news is significant at five percent level to influence the propensity to engage in civil activities. The relationship with voting is positive but small at a coefficient of 0.015. It is interesting to note that while the variable is significant, it is less so than radio news. Radio news is at a significant at a p-value of 0.007. It is interesting because South Africa has a wide variety of newspapers to choose from.

Newspapers are available in print and digital format. They report on poor governance, unhindered and uncensored (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018). Some contain high-impact stories in detail, with people's names, political affiliations and the amounts involved.

The relationship between voting and the internet is not significant with a p-value of 0.256. This could have something to do with more than half of the participants never using the internet for news, and with a further 20 percent being infrequent users. News cycles are short on the internet. Unless one is there consistently, one is bound to miss a lot of things. The low usage of the internet indicates that people still haven't really adopted using it for news. The negative relationship rate of -0.008 is unexpected. The internet is one media that probably gives the users information and news on demand. Endless amounts of information is available on any topic. It even allows the user to search in basic and unintelligent ways and will still give credible results. So, it is confusing how information on the state of affairs in the country and who the responsible parties are does not prompt the user to want to sanction the responsible parties.

The negative relationship is against the expectation of the literature (O'Meally, 2013). The poor progress on the National Development Plan is a testament to how the government has not done much to serve the citizens (Matlou, 2019), and this information is available on the internet. South Africa has been on a decline in major matrixes (Staff Writer, 2021). The negative relation could be due to the youth, who are the most users of the internet and but are the ones who are staying away from the poles the most. Maybe another way to look at the results is that they are better off the way they are, considering the risks of misinformation involved in the usage of the internet (Jung *et al.*, 2011).

There is a negative relationship of -0.014 between voting and social media. The relationship is significant with a p-value of 0.033 (below the five percent level). These results are similar to the internet ones except here the relationship is significant and the relationship is higher. Just like with the internet, information is available on social media like Twitter to everyone to access (Sebola *et al.*, 2014). The negative relationship doesn't make sense, even more because of its significance.

Even citizens' journalism have some news value (Banda, 2013) and social media has been proven to be effective in enforcing political change (Bohler-Muller & Van der Merwe, 2011). When citizens stay away from social media, they stand to miss news on non-responsive public servants. That is newsworthy (Mattes, 2002), and a good reason to vote against them.

There are three possible explanations here for the low relationship between news and engaging in civil action. One is that news media do not adequately report on governance issues, two is that citizens do not understand the intricacies of governance, and lastly, it's due to voter apathy.

The first possibility is not far-fetched, considering that the dominating radio stations are government-owned; and the possibility of censorship (Glenn & Mattes, 2011, Sebola *et al.*, 2014, Eyewitness News, 2016, Plaut, 2018), or that governance is not being fully reported on. This would not be unexpected, it would be counterproductive for the ruling party under which political leadership the broadcaster is, to fully report on governance; thus, naming and shaming those implicated in the wrongdoing when there could be a figure pointing back at them in the process. But since reporting on governance falls under what is required to be reported on by law, the next best thing for them is to under-report. If that is the case, accountability is being subverted.

TV news is the preferred medium for news for everyone, youth included, likewise for 70 percent of the participants. If full reports had been there, the TV viewers would have had access to them. However, I'm not sure what good this would have been for the youth, since politics is their least interesting topic (Malila & Oelofsen, 2016).

The first thing to note about newspapers is that not all of them have a political agenda or are prone to report on governance-related matters. There are also tabloids, but even tabloids do have some democratic value. Be that as it may, there is still a good range to choose from for politics and governance-related news (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018). Another way to look at this is tabloid news is news to the targeted readers. The frame of news is not universal. While newspapers sell news of interest to their target market and also

pursue profitability motives, they are still expected to adequately report on democracy in a manner that is eye-opening and educational (Gicheru, 2014, Campbell & Gibbs, 2008).

The newspaper news market segmentation similarly to TV news that they do, could be the reason for the weak correlation. The different messaging by newspapers (Wasserman et al., 2018) may be a failure of their educating duty. When newspapers fail to adequately report on the state of democracy or fail to report substantially on democratic processes, they are negating on their information provision role to enforce social accountability. This role is best carried out when citizens after consuming news on democracy, politics, and governance are left understanding what the issues are, how they are impacted, and what they can do to change the situation. The weak relationship proves that this is not the case.

On the second possibility, news bulletins are broadcasted every 30 minutes on most radio stations, during prime-time slots like morning and afternoons. The SABC does this the most. So, news is there, the question might be, how much of it is fully understood by listeners in terms of impact and accountability. Such understanding would require a listener to connect the dots. This is not an easy process to do and is certainly not for everyone (Kluvers, 2003, (Han & Demircioglu, 2016, Boydell *et al.*, 2020, Alves, 2014, Malena *et al.*, 2004).

A talk show on an SABC station was found wanting on the effectiveness of moderating the political discussion and empowering of listeners (Mokgosi, 2021). Such a show could assist listeners to understand pertinent topics as far as politics, democracy, and governance is concerned. This is pertinent as the youth have mentioned that their the lack of political knowledge impacts their voting patterns (Kaid *et al.*, 2004). It is possible that the segmentation that's happening on TV could have impacted viewers' knowledge of issues. This is a consequence of having high-quality news bulletins being reserved for the station that serves a small section of society (Jacobs, 2011). Another issue is that there is better packaging of news on the satellite channel, as opposed to the free to air channels. This is a problem because not everyone has access to satellite TV. Racial disparities in news consumption could be at play here (Glenn & Mattes, 201), where the

different quality news being accessed by the different races have different impact levels on their propensity to engage in civil actions.

With the mainstream high-impact newspapers targeting less than eight percent of the population (Jacobs, 2011), it is possible that even when the non-target market accesses these newspapers, the perspective from which news is reported does not give them much information value. The fact that investigative journalist newspapers report in English in a country with more than 80 percent non-English speaking natives cannot go unnoticed. However, it is a fact that non-English first language speakers can read, write and understand English.

As for the last one, voter apathy. This may very well be the case and it is understandable (Barchiesi, 2004). The voter turnout has been dropping in the last three elections, at both national and local levels. However, the issue is not so much the declining voter turnout as it is about voters not applying the theory of democracy when they do. Their voting patterns are against the rationality of voting as suggested by (Down, 1957) and (Ferejohn, 1986).

The relationship between age and the medium of news is the same at 0.013 for all of them. It's a weak positive relationship. The relationship is significant at 0.0. While the relationship is significant, the rate is concerning. This means that age has a very low impact on voting. The rate of the relationship would have been expected to be much higher (Kaid, *et al.*, 2004). Of the participants 58 percent voted, more older people voted than those below the age of 35, the youth. This indicates that the older participants voted more but their voting was not influenced much by news consumption or political knowledge acquired as suggested by literature (Kaid *et al.*, 2004).

The majority of the participants are youth but only 33 percent use the internet for news. The relationship between internet news and voting is -0.008 and significant at the five percent level. These results were expected as the majority of the participants were from the youth age group, the group that is expected to be technologically savvy and to use the internet platforms more (Malila & Oelofsen, 2016; Jung *et al.*, 2011) than the older generation. The result indicate that the age of internet users does not substantively

influence the relationship between internet news and voting. While they do indicate that the tech-savviness youth uses the internet to access information more but this should not preclude the older generation from doing the same. This is especially because no other medium has a substantial effect.

The Youth's technological inclination (Khazaeli & Stockemer, 2013) could be hampered by the cost involved in using the internet. In African countries cost factors affect the usage of the internet (Burrell, 2010), and South Africa is not immune to it. While costs may not be very high (Jung *et al.*, 2011), affordability is subjective. The concern here is, what happens to the youth without the means to access social media and the internet for news who are not prone to reading newspapers. While TV news and radio are available as options, those are not useful mediums.

There is a positive relationship with employment status at a rate of as high as 0.081. While the positive relationship is consistent with the expectation that employed people participate more in democratic processes (Falisse & Ntakirutimana, 2020), in this case, the expectation was that the relationship was substantially negative. Employment status is the major contributor to one's living conditions and bridging inequality. A substantial negative relationship would have indicated that unemployed people vote for change after accessing negative governance reports and a range of poor social outcomes (Lindberg, 2013).

There is a strong relationship between voting and employment status. It is highest at 0.081 and significant at five percent level with social media news as the medium. This may be proving that it is mostly people with positive socioeconomics who are likely to vote (Almén & Burell, 2018), this may only be applicable under different contexts to South Africa. However, with the unemployed sitting at 70 percent of the participants, the results would have been expected to be influenced by this variable much more (Fox, 2015; Glass & Newig, 2019). While the age group of the unemployed and the model of the radio station is not clear from the datasets, community radio is known not to be a particular favourite of the youth (Kivikuru, 2006), thus leaving the youth to be potential consumers of the regional and commercial radio stations. Those two models report enough about

government mismanagement to have prompted the youth into civil actions, the youth were expected to have voted more as they are the biggest victims of unemployment (Downs, 1957). Unemployment is not only for the youth, but other age groups are also affected (Statistics South Africa, 2021).

More females than males voted. This is a positive for South Africa. It means that in the country, women's civil rights are protected and that women do exercise those rights, free from inhibitions that have been found elsewhere in Africa. This is a win for democracy. However, the question can be raised as to why females are voting more. Gender were equally represented. What is influencing females more than males. The coefficient go as high as -0.044.

Rural centres vote more than urban centres at a coefficient of up 0.79. which is significant at a five percent level. The medium here is newspapers news. This was expected as rural centres are usually under developed than urban areas (Bhengu, 2021), so it makes sense that underdeveloped centres would vote more in hope for better outcomes (Glass & Newig, 2019)

The newspaper news relationship with location is very interesting, it is 0.073, indicating that people from the rural centres read newspapers for news more than the urban centres. This is interesting because the availability of newspapers is scarce in rural areas. Even more interesting is that the high impact mainstream newspapers usually target people with high levels of education, and most are in English (Glenn & Mattes, 2011, Malila & Oelofsen, 2016). This brings about the question – which newspapers are the rural centres reading? This question is pertinent because some newspapers don't report on burning poor government issues (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018). Due to the low economic activity in rural areas, it is likely that the geographical location is a target market for tabloids (Glenn & Mattes, 2011).

4.1.1.1. Summary of findings

The effect of news consumption on voting is generally significant but not substantive. We can, therefore, accept the null hypothesis to be probably true and reject the alternative hypothesis.

Three-news medium have an effect on voting: radio news, newspaper news and social media news. They have a positive relationships. The co-efficient of the relationships are statistically significant at the five percent level, they do not however have substantive effect. For all three, the propensity to vote is affected by less than two percent with news consumption, controlling for age, gender, location (rural/urban), employment status and level of education.

The gender variable has a negative coefficient, meaning more females than males voted. The substantive effects are limited to 0.044.

Age, location and employment status appear to have a positive effect meaning the people vote more as the get older, rural centres vote more than urban centres, and that people with jobs vote more than people without jobs. The substantive effects are limited to 0.013 for age, 0.079 for location and 0.081 for employment status.

The results on the voting behaviour do not resonate with political accountability and social accountability theories that expect citizens to participate in elections to sanction elected officials for poor governance outcomes. This is irrespective of gender. While the age and employment status relationship resonate with literature but they don't with theory of democracy. The age finding is consistent with the literature that says that the youth suffer voter apathy. The employment finding is consistent with theory that says that people with positive socioeconomics like employment participate more.

The relationship between voting and rural centres is on the right track in as far a social accountability is concerned.

Overall, the analysis does support my argument that South African are not influenced to vote by news on governance issues that is accessible in the media.

4.1.2. Propensity to protest

For the protesting dependent variable, the models tested whether news consumptions influence the propensity to have attended a demonstration or a protest march in the past year. Access to the news was used as the independent variable to confirm that participants did have access to news at around the same time. The objective was to

establish how access to news related to their propensity to demonstrate and protest when they were dissatisfied with government performance. The model was controlled for all five control variables. Five different models were run for each of the voting independent variables. On each, a different news medium was used. Table 4 presents the results. The first thing to notice was that the relationship between voting and access to news was statistically significant at the five percent level with all news mediums.

The co-efficient of the relationships are statistically significant at the five percent level, indicating a significant relationship between news consumption and protesting. In the South African context, this is consistent with the literature (Almén & Burell, 2018). South Africa is a country that is due for a change. The pursuit of change has been evident at different levels of intensity of the protests (Houtzager *et al.*, 2021). While there has been a large number of protest action in the country, 34 percent of the participants surveyed stated that had never protested but would do so if they had a chance. What is interesting here is the lack of clarity about where the chance would come from. What are they waiting for? Could the non-responsive governance structures be discouraging citizens to protests (Glenn & Mattes, 2011). Could it be possible that some citizens are not engaging in democratic practices because they believe that not much will result from it.?

Table 4 : Relationship between news consumption and protesting

	Protesting				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Constant	0.269***	0.247***	0.289***	0.279***	0.254***
	(0.051)	(0.054)	(0.050)	(0.051)	(0.052)
Radio news	0.018***				
	(0.007)				
TV news		0.020**			
		(0.008)			
Newspapers			0.021***		
			(0.007)		
Internet news				0.016**	
				(0.007)	
Social media news					0.020***
					(0.007)
Age	-0.002**	-0.002**	-0.002**	-0.001	-0.000

	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Gender	0.055**	0.061***	0.051**	0.055**	0.058***
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Location	0.045*	0.050**	0.058**	0.051**	0.052**
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)
ES	-0.026	-0.023	-0.027	-0.029	-0.029
	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)
LoE	-0.004	-0.003	-0.005	-0.007	-0.007
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
R Square	0.013	0.012	0.014	0.012	0.014
Adjusted R Square	0.009	0.009	0.010	0.008	0.011
Observations	1720	1720	1720	1720	1720

*<0.1, **<0.05, ***<0.01

Standard errors in parenthesis

There is a positive relationship between radio news and protesting. The rate of the relationship is 0.018 and it is significant at a p-value of 0.009 at five percent level. These results are surprising because the most active age group here is the youth age group, the expectation would have been that the mass of youth numbers would have made the relationship much more substantial. The low relationship can be explained by the understanding that the type of radio that communities use to discuss their frustration and possibly mobilise for protests is mostly community radio, and that's the one the youth uses least (Kivikuru, 2006).

There is a positive relationship of 0.020 between TV news and protesting. The p-value is 0.019, which means the variable is significant at the five percent level..

There is a positive relationship between newspaper news and protests. The rate of the relationship is 0.021 and it is significant at a p-value of 0.003 at a five percent level. The low relationship could be due to newspapers not being available in rural centres as much as in urban centres and most demonstrations and protests are in rural areas. There are newspapers in rural centres, and those are the newspapers that cover protests the most

(Wasserman *et al.*, 2018. Access to all the newspapers may not have much influence due to the market segmenting that newspapers do. For some newspapers, protesting is not a 'hot potato' news, so the news may either not be covered at all, be barely covered or covered from a perspective that would unlikely have any influence (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018; Jacobs, 2011' Gicheru, 2014).

There is a positive relationship between internet news and protesting. The rate of the relationship is 0.016 and it is significant at a p-value of 0.023 at a five percent level. The relationship and level of significance are the least compared to the other media. The low-level relationship and significance are noteworthy since it's the youth who are involved the most in protest action and their preferred medium for news is the internet (Malila & Oelofsen, 2016). Even though the protests are happening in rural centres, the low numbers cannot be blamed on internet infrastructure because the internet signals are good in the country (Banda, 2013), only then leaving financial implications as a possible explanation (Jung *et al.*, 2011). However, since protests mostly have to do with service delivery (Nleya, 2011), the people affected should not need to consume news to know the issues, which somewhat reduces the importance of accessing news to influence the propensity to protest.

There is a positive relationship between social media and protesting. The rate of the relationship is 0.020 and it is significant at a p-value of 0.002 at five percent level. The significance of the rate could have something to do with the effectiveness of social media for connecting communities, giving them an opportunity to voice and share issues of concern (Sebola *et al.*, 2014). The information thus shared constitutes news amongst the worst affected communities. The youth are the biggest user of social networks for communication (Malila & Oelofsen, 2016), so this could have also added to the significance of the correlation.

There is a negative relationship between age and protesting. The relationship is significant with most of the news media except for the internet and social media. The news medium that has the most relationship is TV news and the coefficient of the relationship is -0.002. The negative relationship with age indicates that the youth

participates more in protest action. This could explain the intensity of some of the protests in the country. The high-spirited and violent nature of some of the protests are physically taxing, they are a young person's game. This is in line with the literature (Alexander, 2010). Even on TV, the people that are seen the most on many of the demonstrations and protests are young. The insignificance of relationship between age with the internet and social media news means that these mediums don't matter when it comes to participating in protest action. This indicates that neither age nor news matters, citizens will protest, no matter what.

Males participated slightly more than females. The highest relationship rate was 0.061, where TV news was used as a news media. The over-representation of males may also be talking to the physicality of protesting. For the voting dependent variables, the representation disparity was similar, but females were the majority.

The age relationship with protesting is significant but not when news is consumed through the internet and social media. This indicates that people's ages are not always relevant when engaging in protest action. This is perhaps due to the fact that news consumption through those mediums may not be for every age group. The older generation also participate in protests.

The negative relationship with the level of employment is aligned with the literature that expects people who are going through economic hardships to participate more (Marais *et al.*, 2008). The relationship is however not significant to the maximum p-value of 0.316. On the face of it, this rate is a curveball. It does make sense for unemployed people to participate in demonstrations and protests to hold the powers to account for not doing enough to improve the welfare of all citizens. It will also make sense that because they are unemployed, they would be available to join protest action. (Lynn *et al.*, 2000; Kluvers, 2003; Lawson & Rakner, 2005). But the low coefficient of -0.029 is surprising considering that more 60 percent of the participants were unemployed.

Participants from rural centres protested more than urban centres. There is a positive relationship coefficient as high as 0.058 in relation with newspaper news with a p-value of 0.016 which is significant at five percent level. This is consistent with the literature that

says that most protest happen in townships and informal settlements in South Africa (Nleya, 2011)

There is a negative relationship between employment status and protesting, the rate is highest at -0.029 in relation to both internet news and social media news. This is consistent with the school of thought that says that one of the drivers of protest is broken promises (Ngcukana, 2018), the creation of jobs is one of such promises. While curtailing corruption is also a broken promise, since it doesn't have as much personal implications as employment, it's unlikely to have as much influence. The relationship between employment and protesting, in any case, is not significant at p-value of 0.0861 minimum. The less fortunate, in terms of having employment are protesting more judging by the negative relationship with employment status. The relationship is however not significant at the p-value of 0.427.

4.1.2.1. Summary of findings

The effect of news consumption on protest is significant but not substantive. We can, therefore, we can accept the null hypothesis to be probably true and reject the alternative hypothesis.

All five news mediums have a positive relationship with protesting. The co-efficient of the relationships are statistically significant at five percent level, they do not however have substantive effect. For all five, the propensity to protest is affected by less than three percent with news consumption, controlling for age, gender, location (rural/urban), employment status and level of education.

Age appears to have a negative effect meaning that younger people are protesting more than the older generation. The substantive effects are limited to 0.002 for age

Gender and location appears to have a positive effect meaning males attend demonstrations or protest marches more than females and that demonstrations or protest are more in rural centres than urban centres. The substantive effects are limited to 0.061 for gender and -0.058 for location.

The results on the propensity to protest do not resonate with political accountability and social accountability theories that expect citizen to protest in effort to hold the government to account for poor governance outcomes or prompt the government into action.

The location finding is consistent with the literature that says under developed areas participate more. The age finding also, literature says younger people are prone to protest action more older generations. Be that as it may, the low rate of participation speaks of elements that affects participation in democratic processes.

Overall, the analysis does support my argument that South African are not influenced to attend demonstrations or protest marches by news on governance issues that is accessible in the media.

4.1.3. Propensity to join civil movements

For the civil movement dependent variable, the model tested how active participants were in democratic processes of joining with other in their communities to raise issues. Access to the news was used as an independent variable to confirm that participants did have access to news at around the same time. The model was controlled for all five control variables. Five different models were run for the voting independent variables. On each, a different news medium was used. Table 5 presents the results.

The first thing to notice was that the relationship between civil movements and access to news was statistically significant at the five percent level with three news mediums.

Table 5: Relationship between news consumption and civil movements

	Civil movements				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Constant	0.287***	0.300***	0.327***	0.316***	0.302***
	(0.055)	(0.059)	(0.054)	(0.055)	(0.056)
Radio news	0.030***				
	(0.008)				
TV news		0.013			
		(0.009)			
Newspapers			0.019**		
			(0.008)		
Internet news				0.015*	
				(0.007)	
Social media news					0.015*
					(0.007)
Age	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	0.000	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Gender	0.087***	0.094***	0.085***	0.089***	0.092***
	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.023)
Location	0.081***	0.085***	0.093***	0.087***	0.087***
	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)
ES	0.000	0.005	0.002	0.000	0.002
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)
LoE	-0.005	-0.003	0.006	-0.007	-0.006
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
R Square	0.025	0.017	0.020	0.018	0.019
Adjusted R Square	0.021	0.014	0.016	0.015	0.015
Observations	1720	1720	1720	1720	1720

*<0.1, **<0.05, ***<0.01

Standard errors in parenthesis

There is a positive relationship between radio news and civil movements. The rate of the relationship is a coefficient of 0.030 and it is significant at 0.0. at one percent level. These results are not surprising because there are quite a number of civil movements in the country (Ballard *et al.*, 2005) with a correspondingly large number of radio stations (Staff Writer, 2019). This is the highest rate of a relationship, compared to other news media. This high rate of relationship could be linked with the effectiveness with which radio can connect communities, especially community radio. Community radio is one of the mediums which communities can use to mobilise. The fact is that radio broadcasts in local languages make for an inclusive medium (Kivikuru, 2006; Mokgosi, 2021). Talk radio could have also contributed (Bosch, 2010) because that is where one would find a representative of a civil movement coming into the studio or calling to talk about the work that their civil movement is doing. In as much as the relationship is higher than others, it is still weak.

There is a positive relationship between TV news and civil movements. The rate of the relationship is 0.013 and it's not significant at a p-value of 0.140. The weak relationship and the insignificance thereof are not surprising. The state of under-reporting on TV news (Sebola *et al.*, 2014) makes TV not to be a medium that is likely to prompt citizens to join civil movements. The rate of insignificance is quite high though, considering that there are also privately owned channels as alternatives to the state channels. Even the state broadcaster does offer some news value.

There is a weak positive relationship between newspaper news and civil movements. The rate of the relationship is 0.019 and it's significant at a p-value of 0.012. at a five percent level. The relationship here is the second highest. While newspapers are the freest in terms of state interference and have the most detailed reporting (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018), there is still the market segmentation that could have led this medium not to be the one with the most effective reach. Considering the fact that it's mostly people from rural areas who are joining civil movements, the first-tier mainstream newspapers are unlikely to adequately cater to this segment.

There is a weak positive relationship between internet news and civil movements. The rate of the relationship is 0.015 which is however not significant at a p-value of 0.050. The insignificance rate of the relationship was not expected. This comes from the understanding that civil movements operate on information and the internet is the medium for that. Information is available on-demand on the internet.

There is weak positive relationship at 0.015. with social media news, it is significant at a p-value of 0.039 which is significant at five percent level. The positive relationship was expected because social networks like Twitter do have a lot of news content. The weak relationship is however confusing as social media is used by civil movements for mobilisation (Alves, 2014, Almén & Burell, 2018).

There is a weak negative relationship between age and civil movements at the rate of - 0.001. The low extent of the relationship could be explained by that, while community radio is instrumental for mobilisation for civil movements, the youth were not the greatest users of the medium. The relationship is not significant at a p-value of 0.282. This does make sense because the scope of civil movement is broad. It not only issues that affect the youth that are being pursued (Ballard *et al.*, 2005; Madlingozi, 2007). Also, the rate of relationship is so small, that it's almost non-existent. There is the same weak relationship between TV news and civil movements. Even the fact that the youth gets news from the TV didn't help.

There is a positive relationship between location and civil movements at a rate as high as 0.093. This extent of that relationship makes sense in the South African space and also with a broad definition of civil movements that I am using for the purpose of this research. A variety of different associations of citizens fits the definition of civil movements. There are different associations of citizens joining together to go up against the government on all sorts of issues, thus, making the location irrelevant. The relationship indicates that it's civil movements are joining more in rural centres.

More males than females are joining civil movements. This could be as the result of cultural inhibition on females to confront men, especially men in positions of power

(Boydell *et al.*, 2019). Men have historically been more represented in political positions in the country in the past.

As the location relationship is significant, it is important to note that while civil movements operate throughout the country, not all newspaper options are available throughout the country. Newspapers are normally available in urban areas which are not where the majority of people who are joining civil movements are (Kivikuru, 2006). This leaves the tabloid newspapers to be a source for newspaper news in that space.

There is a positive relationship between employment status and civil movements. It is however not significant, with p-value as high as 0.995 with all the news media. This indicates that while employed people are likely to join a civil movement more than unemployed people, employment, however, is not a material factor. The positive relationship is in line with the literature that says that participation in political accountability is positively correlated with a person's socioeconomic status (Nepal & van der Kwaak, 2020),

The insignificance of the employment status does make sense because, since poor governance outcomes affects most people irrespective of their employment status, the employment status is not significant factor with regards to joining a civil movements. Civil movements are localised and pursue different causes and therefore cater for a wide range of people (Joshi & Houtzager, 2012, Pieterse & Oldfield, 2002; Ballard *et al.*, 2005).

4.1.3.1. Summary of findings

The effect of news consumption on joining a civil movement is significant but not substantive. We can, therefore, accept the null hypothesis to be probably true and reject the alternative hypothesis.

Two news medium have a positive relationship with joining civil movements. They are radio news and newspaper news. The co-efficient of the relationships are statistically significant at five percent level, they do not however have substantive effect. For both, the propensity to join others to raise issues with the government is at a coefficient of less than four percent.

Location appear to have a negative effect meaning that rural centres join others to raise an issue more than urban centres. The substantive effects is limited to 0.093.

Gender appear to have a positive effect meaning that males join others to raise an issue more than females. The substantive effects is limited to 0.094.

The results on joining others to raise an issue do not resonate with political accountability and social accountability theories that call for citizen to join civil movements in order to hold the government to account for poor governance outcomes. The location finding is consistent with literature that says under developed areas participate more.

Overall, the analysis does support my argument that South African are not influenced to join others to raise an issue by news on governance issues that is accessible in the media.

4.2. Summary of chapter findings

This section will summarise the findings in the chapter. The summary will cover the extent to which citizens consume news. Thereafter, a summary on relationship between news consumption and civil action will presented. Lastly it will be a summary of the effect of socioeconomics on the relationship between news consumption and civil action.

4.2.1. Extent of news consumption by citizens

All the tables in the chapter show that participants have access to most of the mediums used as independent variables and use them to a varying extent to access news. The most used mediums are TV and radio. It is noticeable that the least used are the ones with logistical and financial implications. Newspapers, the internet, and social media are the least used. There are financial and logistical implications in their usage. TV and radio are once-off expense items. TV sets and radios are to some extent reasonably durable, so they don't have to be purchased regularly. Those who have them, usually have the power to run them and they are also not expensive to run. This could explain why they are the preferred mediums. Some newspapers are daily and some weekly. The daily newspapers don't cost as much as the weekly ones and the weekly ones are quite highly priced. High prices usually have an exclusionary effect. Newspapers also require some

form of commute to get them. Social media and the internet require an electronic device, with a network connection and network data to access. All those items don't come cheap.

It is worth noting that TV news and the biggest radio stations in the country are under a state-owned entity. The broadcaster has been reported to have suffered political interference and to have avoided airing content that would have put the ruling party in a bad light. It has been said that the broadcaster has manipulated the news agenda and neglected to report social and economic problems facing the citizens. The biased reporting of the broadcaster is an old thing, it dates back to when it was used by the apartheid government as a propaganda tool (Glenn & Mattes, 2011; Sebola *et al.*, 2014). There were reports of censure at the entity around 2016 (Eyewitness New, 2016). This resonates with reports on the credibility of broadcasters being compromised and it being used to further party purposes (Plaut, 2018). There has not been much information as to whether the situation had changed over the years.

Of the radio listeners 80 percent do so over their home radios (Maggs, 2021). This somehow speaks to the socioeconomic status of the listeners and the implication thereof. Listening to the radio from home can be linked to unemployment. So, the 80 percent could be indicating a percentage of unemployed people who are listening to the radio from their homes. I am mindful of the possibility of people working from home. In South Africa that was not a major trend around the time the survey was conducted. Employment status is one of the control variables being used in this research. It has certain implications on participating in democratic processes.

It needs to be borne in mind that radio is consumed passively and so is the news coming from it. Having the radio playing in the background and news bulletins coming in spontaneously is not the same as actively listening to the news to get information. Radio news in South Africa is usually programmed in between other segments, except for talk radio. The state broadcaster has a talk radio station, which is available nationally. The station broadcasts mostly in English which may have the potential of limiting access for some members of society. The passiveness of radio news differs from the other mediums, with regard to the conscious effort involved. With the other mediums, a person has to

deliberately access specific news segments to access certain information. TV news is similar to radio news in terms of the passiveness with which it is consumed. TV news comes on while people are seated in front of their TV sets. While viewers may sit in front of their TV sets in anticipation of the news, there exists a possibility that as the news starts splaying, a person switches off mentally or pays less attention to the news playing, with the possibility of missing certain details in the reporting.

Newspapers, the internet, and social media have slightly more than half of the participants using them for news. While their usage numbers are low as well as the coefficient of relationships, but considering that news on poor government performance is almost a daily occurrence across all the mediums and the fact that elections are every 3 years, between the national or local government elections, the little bit each participant would have accumulated between elections should have been enough for them to form a concrete assessment of electoral parties, equally, the news should have been enough for them put the pieces of the puzzle together to work out the source of lack of service delivery in their communities to propel them to engage in protest action or joining others to form a civil movement.

While the quality of reporting especially by the broadcaster may not be the best or the most comprehensive, there is still some value in the amount that gets reported. Except for people without means, if the majority of the participant is really from urban centres, that will mean that 70 percent of the participants had access to all the news medium. Even the research findings prove that more than more half of the participants reported to be consuming news at a minimum a few times a month across all the news mediums. As it was established that the news medium co-vary, so, it can be assumed that participants use all the mediums, whatever they miss in one they would pick up in the other. This brings us to a conclusion that low participation was neither due to lack of access to news nor consumption of the news. What needs to be deciphered is what happens once the news has been consumed, why is the propensity to engage in civil action not ignited thereafter.

4.2.2. The relationship between news consumption and civil action

Participants did vote but only 58 percent of them, this number is low. Voting is the most effective sanctioning tool for political accountability. It is immediate and has the most threat potential on elected officials. The low voter turnout could also be explained by voter apathy and lack of awareness of governance (Lederman *et al.*, 2005; Adsera *et al.*, 2003; Makinde, 2013). This is what normative democracy theorists would regard as non-logical (Downs, 1957). The decline is, however, in line with his view of party support fluctuating according to the assessment of historic party performance. It is not the position of this research that the government has not done anything. They have done a great deal (Nleya, 2011). It is just that with such high levels of corruption and so many issues and concerns the citizens have, much more could have been done and still needs to be done. The government has of its own accord alluded to this fact (Mashamaite, 2014).

While protests are common in South Africa, the majority of the participants had not attended a protest within the year they were interviewed. Of the participants, 38 percent mentioned that they would never do it, 27,4 percent had done so, and six percent had done so often. While 27.4 percent and six percent are not big numbers, they are a step in a direction away from citizens' apathy with democratic processes. However, there have not been enough news reports about the successes of protests but there has been reports in the news of government officials meeting with protesters to accept a memorandum of demand from protestors and the protest ending afterward. It is doubtful that this mechanism would yield the required change. Protests are known to have poor outcomes (Alexander, 2010).

Of the participants 60 percent have never joined others to raise an issue against the government. With the potential that civil movements have and the results that they could produce in the country, low number of people who have is not satisfactory.

The low participation numbers are dismal considering the state of the country, the fact that new reports are available, are being consumed and there is no repression on any of the civil actions. The lack of the propensity on the citizens to engage points to bigger factors other than news consumption.

This phenomenon implies that governance is unlikely to improve when citizens are not exerting pressure on elected officials when they have information that they are worthy of a rebuke. When elected officials don't feel the threat of losing political power there is no incentive for them to change for the better. The status quo will be maintained. The implication of this is that the downward trajectory will continue. If this happens, the positive socioeconomic outcomes expected to be derived from democracy will not be derived.

4.2.3. How socioeconomics effected the relationship between news consumption and civil action

As for the socioeconomics of the participants, the median age of the participants was 38, the oldest participant was 94, which shows that more people under the median age participated than those above. The median age in the country is 27.6 (Worldmeter, 2021), which means that the population of the participants is inclusive of a lot of youth. The youth are a particularly interesting section of society. They are infamous for being apathetic when it comes to politics (Khazaeli & Stockemer, 2013; Mbanyele & Desai, 2021). As mentioned in 4.2.2 above, their critical mass could have had a reasonable impact on the weak relationship between news consumption and civil action. However, the youth is not homogenous. Between the youth who are not apathetic and the adult population, the relationship should still have been more, we can therefore surmise that the findings are representative of the population and that, the low participation cuts across all the age groups.

Participants were mostly people residing in urban areas. Living conditions are much better in urban areas than in rural areas. Inequality is understood to be one of the factors that influence social accountability (Leal *et al.*, 2016). This means that more than 30 percent of the participants would have been people with incentives to participate in civil activities for better living situations (Down, 1957). The results did not show this. Instead, they show that people who ought to have the incentive to engage in civil actions, don't appear to be engaging as more as they should be. The results showed a weak positive relationship with rural centres.

With the high rate of employed participants, the result were expected to show high levels of participation. Employed people are considered to be more participatory when it comes

to social accountability (Falisse & Ntakarutimana, 2020, Fox, 2015, Glass & Newig, 2019). In this case, the unemployed participated more in civil movements and protesting but not voting. As it was alluded to earlier in this report, voting is the most effective mechanism for change than the other two. In South Africa, there have been very few protests for jobs or big civil movements that are taking the government on for job creation. This indicates that these two civil actions may have missed the mark. As for the unemployed, it is unlikely that citizens are choosing unemployment and non-optimal living conditions by choice, and therefore should sit and do nothing about their situation. The lack of participation in social accountability is probably linked to the lack of knowledge and benefits that could be derived from social accountability (Blake *et al.*, 2016; Houtzager *et al.*, 2021).

The average level of education among the respondents is secondary education. This has implications because, the higher the level of education the higher the level of abilities for participation (Hickey & King, 2016). Higher levels of education are expected to lead to improved discernment and proof of that would have been for citizens with decent levels of education voting in numbers. This was not the case here (Blake *et al.*, 2016; Houtzager *et al.*, 2021, Almén & Burella, 2018). The fact that only 58 percent of the participants voted is a possible indictment of the quality of education in the country. The level of education only showed a positive relationship with voting. It was negatively related to protesting and civil movements. As it has been mentioned in the report that the type of protests that have happened have been for legitimate reasons like poor service delivery but, also for disconnections for non-payment of municipal services like water and lights which may not entirely be considered to be legitimate reasons for protesting (South African History Online, n.d).

5. Conclusion

This section is the conclusion. The research question will be answered. The methodology used, the extent of news consumption and its effect on citizens' propensity to participate in civil actions will be unpacked. I will comment about the quality of news in the country. I will present the findings based on theoretical argument and a possible reason thereof.

The conclusion is that news consumption does not affect citizens' propensity to participate in a civil action. This is despite the news being available in the media. Media reports on poor governance are informative and of the type of information that is supposed to prompt citizens into civil action. The access to news and the consumption thereof don't however seem to have the effect of influencing citizens to engage in social accountability. The relationship between news consumption and the propensity for civil action, where there is one, is too small to be valid. This indicates that South Africans do participate in civil actions, however, they do so without being influenced by news reports.

The methodology used was to estimate the relationship between news consumption and civil action to establish how citizens' consumption of news related to their participation in civil action. News media do report on poor governance issues regularly but the extent and adequacy differ according to the medium. Citizens do consume news sufficiently, for the news to have had an effect. Despite the news reports, the voter turnout has been declining, less than half of the citizens have protested and just over half the citizens have never joined civil movements. While there are civil movements in the country, there doesn't seem to be enough of them to pursue the different issues. There have been many protests in the country but not large-scale protests against any of cross-cutting regional, provincial even national issues, most have been locally based.

Some attention needs to be paid to media news in terms of equal accessibility, quality issues, and financial and logistical implications to assess how some news media could have contributed to the low relationship between news consumption and the propensity to engage in civil actions.

Radio as a news medium that most people have access to and used the most, does not always adequately report on issues of governance and democracy. It is also one that

cannot be relied on to inform citizens of burning issues due to the passive nature in which news is consumed through it. Some who use the radio find its content to be irrelevant. This applies mostly to radio stations other than talk radio. It has already been established that community radio is not an effective medium for accountability other than for communities to share their concerns. It looks like it even fails at leveraging its potential to mobilise citizens, looking at the low level of participation in civil movements. Civil movements are more effective than citizens acting as individuals.

Newspapers while most are very good at reporting issues in detail, they are not equitably accessible to everyone. That notwithstanding, they are significant in influencing all three types of civil actions. This could mean that the market segmentation practices do serve the purpose of reporting issues of interest to their target market segments. There still exists the issue of accessibility, the lack of accessibility of newspapers by everyone equally, leaves the option to access them by some to be through the internet, but the internet was found to be a news medium with the least relationship with civil actions. It was only significant in influencing citizens to protest. The consequence of this is that it leaves certain sections of society deprived of information, information which could have contributed to the level of participation.

It is noteworthy that news consumption had more effect on protest than other civil actions. This was the case, even with TV news having an inclination to moderate reporting of protests and most newspapers no longer running protests news as headlines. This is particularly noteworthy because it could be indicating that citizens have a preference when it comes to civil actions. Voting is more effective than protesting in the South African context, so when it is not the civil action of choice, this fact could be indicating a lack of awareness of the efficacies of the different civil actions.

There is a very close connection between civil movements and protests in the country. That is even evident in the data results. The data indicates that joining of community members is happening the most in rural centres so as protests. This could indicate that its same people who are represented in the results. Protests in the country may have been suffered the exposed risk as they do seem to receive much response from the authorities.

There is poor citizen participation in civil actions. This cannot be regarded as being only due to citizens' lack of interest. Poor participation may be attributed to factors such as a lack of understanding of democracy, politics, and governance. South Africans are not immune to this possibility. While citizens can acquire such understanding on their own, the state also has the responsibility to educate citizens on such matters.

The problems in the country can be addressed fairly successfully through social accountability. Since this is not happening, a reasonable deduction can be made that people may not be fully aware of their social, political, and economic rights. The poor participation in voting is the biggest sign of a lack of understanding as voting is the most effective sanctioning tool for political accountability, it is convenient to participate in, has immediate results, and is one that has the most threat potential on elected officials. The lack of understanding is further evident in people without jobs not voting that much and the youth who can be thought of as the most beneficiaries of the development not being interested in voting. This is evidence because there is a positive relationship between democratic acts such as voting and good governance outcomes, meaning that voting could improve their situations and brighten the futures, but when they do not do so, justifies the deduction because the alternative is that there are choosing the hardship associated with unemployment, which is unlikely.

In the case of the youth, the lack of understanding and awareness sounds more plausible as they do consume news from all the news medium yet they are the ones famous for participating less. The results showed that a negative relationship level of education and the protesting and civil movements dependent variables, the same depended variables where the youth is most represented. Levels of education are closely linked to awareness.

Even if news consumption is not effective in influencing citizen's propensity to engage in civil actions, their lived experiences should have done so. The fact that it did not, points to factors other than lack of access to media news to be the reason. The gender disparity in civil actions could be pointing out to other influencing factors such as culture where females are underrepresented or different perceived potential benefits where males are unrepresented.

The higher participation of rural centres in protests and civil movements is a good sign, however, in the South African context, this may not be the case, as protests have been disruptive to communities but without much success, in as far as having their demands being met by the authorities. In certain cases, the legal claim of the protests had been suspicious. This is something awareness on social rights could address, it will have to be supported with appropriate reporting by the media.

Social media was found to be significant in influencing voting and protest actions. This presents an opportunity for the government to both get an insight on the issues of concern to the citizens and also to create awareness on the democratic, social and political rights thus educating them. The potential outcome of education and awareness could be higher voter turnout, more people joining or forming civil movements to pursue different causes and issues and protests of the necessary scales and protesting for valid legal claims.

Further research needs to be conducted to come up with interventions on the relationship between news consumption relationship and social accountability. That is the stuff that deepens democracy. There need to be solutions to manage the risk of news media not adequately reporting on governance issues, citizens' lack of understanding of governance, and voter apathy. Particular attention may be put on creating awareness for citizens on democracy, governance, and politics. A focus would probably have to be on the dissemination of quality information, cost-effectively. The information will have to be educational, on governance, politics and democracy.

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