

Electoral Accountability: A Conceptual and Empirical Reassessment

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Abstract: Does electoral accountability exist under democracy? Given its normative importance, this question remains central to empirical research. However, scholars do not agree on an operational definition of the dependent variable. For example, Manin *et al.* (1999) insist that voters *reelect* incumbents for good performance or *remove them from office* for bad performance, yet most scholars require only that voters *reward or punish* incumbents for good or bad performance - measured in terms of vote shares - to conclude that accountability exists. This paper specifies the extent to which the economy-votes relationship holds across the range of meanings of electoral accountability: from vote shares through changes in seats and government status to the question of incumbent-party survival in office. We offer three main findings. First, although elections are certainly blunt instruments, accountability exists across the range of potential meanings of the word. Second, political context limits both voters' ability to attribute responsibility and their opportunities to hold incumbents to accounts, again across all operational definitions of accountability. Yet third, the impact of political context varies as a function of the definition of accountability employed. Most importantly, we show that the impact of "clarity of responsibility" is reversed when one moves from a "weak" (vote or seat swings) to a "strong" definition of accountability (changes in government status or party in power). *High* clarity is associated with normatively good outcomes in the former, but *low* clarity is associated with accountability in the latter. These findings have wide implications for understanding the nature and extent of electoral accountability around the world.

1) Introduction

Does accountability for government performance exist under democracy? This question remains one of the holy grails of empirical political science research, given the centrality the question for democratic theory. From Marx's likening of the mass of French citizens to a sack of potatoes to Schumpeter's assertion that politics enhances voters' capacity for stupidity, social scientists have long expressed skepticism regarding democratic accountability. Such pessimism is by no means limited to democracy's critics, but often comes also from its most ardent supporters (e.g. Schattschneider 1960). Still, for decades, scholars have sought to vindicate representative democracy as not just "the worst form of government, except for all the rest," as Churchill might have it, but as normatively superior in offering at least a modicum of both representation *and* accountability (e.g. Sartori 1987; Manin 1997; Shapiro 2003; Urbinati 2006; Maravall 2007).

A major conceptual hurdle scholars confront is defining and measuring accountability (O'Donnell 1999; Schedler 1999). Perhaps surprisingly, scholars cannot even agree on an operational indicator of the relatively narrow concept of "vertical" or electoral accountability. For example, Manin, Przeworski and Stokes (1999, 40) set the bar high by arguing, "Governments are 'accountable' if voters can discern whether governments are acting in their interest and sanction them appropriately, so that those incumbents who act in the best interest of citizens win reelection and those to do not lose them." Before accountability can be said to exist, this definition insists that voters reelect incumbents for good performance or remove them from office for bad performance. This is a demanding requirement, one that moves beyond a minimalist Schumpeterian conception of democracy (Manin 1997, 176).

Yet most empirical research on vertical accountability sets the bar lower. Thus while most scholars who explore accountability for retrospective performance agree that “governments are accountable if voters can discern whether governments are acting in their interest and sanction them appropriately,” as Manin *et al.* would have it, they do not require that “incumbents who act in the best interest of citizens win reelection and those to do not lose them.” Research in this vein does not demand that voters *remove or reelect* incumbents to conclude that accountability exists, only that voters *reward or punish* incumbents for good or poor performance, measured as changes in vote shares when the study is set at the aggregate level. Such theories assume that any form of reward or punishment is a sufficient indicator of accountability, because politicians’ anticipation of not being reelected in the future drives them not to shirk their obligations in the present (Key 1966; Fiorina 1981; Ferejohn 1986).

The lack of agreement on what constitutes evidence of accountability has impeded accumulation of knowledge about two important questions for democratic theory: 1) does accountability exist? and 2) what political and institutional conditions maximize or minimize the possibility for accountability, however defined? Perhaps the answer to the first question is “it depends,” on how we define and then measure accountability. For example, Cheibub and Przeworski (1999) apply Manin *et al.*’s the stringent definition to a global sample and conclude pessimistically, “Governments are not accountable to voters, at least not for economic outcomes” (237). Their conclusion is particularly provocative because it contradicts the conventional wisdom from economic voting studies - which typically employ the looser definition of accountability.

Yet even setting the accountability bar low, recent findings, many of which build on Powell and Whitten’s (1993) notion of “clarity of responsibility,” suggest that any link between

economic outcomes and election outcomes is highly contingent on particular political and institutional contexts (Anderson 2007).¹ In short, at present we can only conclude that democratic accountability *may* exist, but only under certain conditions, and only if we define accountability loosely.

Much is at stake in addressing these questions. If accountability exists only if we set the conceptual bar low - and even then only under particular political contexts - then scholars can hardly claim to possess solid confirmation of democracy's normative value. Of course, even setting the bar low, it is not surprising that accountability would be contingent on institutional and political context. Still, research in comparative economic voting has not answered Manin *et al.*'s implicit questions: Does accountability exist if we set the bar higher? Is incumbent survival in office sensitive to performance in office, and if so, to what degree? Despite the attentions of dozens of scholars to the question of electoral accountability and in particular to reward-punishment theories of economic voting, little research has explored the conditions under which voters can remove or return incumbents at elections, even given the additional hurdles that political and institutional context imposes on achieving such outcomes.²

This paper thus makes a conceptual and empirical contribution to democratic theory. Building on recent research, we specify the extent and conditions under which the economy-votes relationship holds at the aggregate level across the range of meanings of electoral accountability, starting at the low bar in terms of vote shares and gradually raising the bar to assess changes in seats, government status, and incumbent-party survival in power. We can

¹ As well as individual psychology – see e.g., Duch (2001); Gomez and Wilson (2006).

² To our knowledge, Cheibub and Przeworski (1999) provide the only broadly comparative empirical effort that sets the bar at its highest level. Maravall's recent study (2007) is limited to a set of 23 parliamentary democracies and thus lacks perspective on the institutional factors that enhance or diminish electoral accountability.

therefore identify - in global comparative perspective - the “best-” and “worst-case” scenarios for all forms of accountability for economic performance.

Even with the bar set at its highest level, our results produce a more heartening conclusion than Cheibub and Przeworski’s uniform pessimism. True, the vote is a blunt instrument: under all conditions, politicians have no guarantee that voters will reward good performance with reelection and voters have no guarantee that they can remove incumbents deemed responsible for poor performance. Yet in most elections, rulers are accountable in that votes, seats, government status and even the probability of survival in office are sensitive to perceived government performance. However, as we explain below, we find that political context matters in unanticipated ways, depending on the definition of accountability examined.

2) Four Measures of Electoral Accountability

Although theoretical or empirical scholarship rarely recognizes this possibility, accountability has many potential meanings, each assessing a different measure of voter influence over politicians. In the weakest sense, to hold a government to accounts is to signal approval or disapproval. Politicians might take note of voters’ expressed opinions, but they also might ignore the signal altogether. Manin, Przeworski and Stokes’ point is thus well-taken: given that retrospective voting is a blunt instrument to begin with, if the probability of *reelection to or removal from* office is insensitive to government performance, accountability cannot be said to exist, even if the vote is correlated with government performance. After all, for a number of reasons having to do with the complexities of translating votes into seats and then into control over the levers of government, vote shares and reelection or removal are not perfectly correlated.

To address this ambiguity, let us specify the range of observable measures of electoral accountability, from the weakest to the strongest. One can conceive of four distinct forms:

- 1) Accountability as change in *vote share* for the incumbent party;
- 2) Accountability as change in *seat share* of the incumbent party;
- 3) Accountability as change in *government status*, if the incumbent party retains control of the executive;
- 4) Accountability as change in *partisan control* of the national executive.

Assessment of the weakest form of accountability dominates explorations of economic voting: *change in the incumbent party's (or coalition's) vote share* from one election to the next. By this measure, a gain or loss of vote share for the sitting government signals that the electorate is satisfied or dissatisfied with policy outcomes. Because incumbent governments tend to lose votes in elections, regardless of their performance (Paldam 1991), research in this vein seeks to demonstrate that governments gain more or lose more than the baseline expectation, given economic performance.

That this measure has dominated empirical research does not mean that it is the only or the best measure. Indeed, while a decline in the incumbent party's vote share might signal voters' desire for a change in policy direction, such change cannot be guaranteed. Consider a comparison of incumbent party vote change to a change in partisan control. As the black bars in Figure One show, even when parties suffer large declines in their vote share, they are removed from office only about half the time. That is, while a substantial loss of votes might send a strong message to an incumbent party that manages to remain in power, a change in vote support for the incumbent party generally amounts, at best, to sending smoke signals - a distant and potentially vague indication of pleasure or displeasure, one that incumbents may choose to either ignore or interpret independently of voters' intent.

<Figure 1 Here>

Politicians are more likely to respond to voters' message if their livelihoods are placed at risk. We thus raise the conceptual bar when we consider the *responsiveness of the composition of the assembly* to economic performance. The bar is raised simply because depending on the institutional context, a substantial vote shift may not bring about substantial seat shift. More importantly, it is loss of seats, more than votes, which hones incumbents' fear of voters' shifting opinions. Consider, for example, recent elections in Britain. In 1997 the Labour Party won 63% of the seats, a proportion it retained at the 2001 elections. Yet at the 2005 elections Labour suffered an 7% decline in seats, and its hold on power grew increasingly shaky. It stands to reason that where vote shifts directly translate into seat gains or losses, incumbents are more likely to adjust their policies so as to retain power at the *next* election.

Although a change in seat share represents a more stringent measure of accountability than change in vote share, it still represents a relatively low bar. This is because, as the grey bars in Figure One reveal, even substantial seat losses do not necessarily remove the incumbent party from power. To continue with the UK example: following the 2005 elections, despite its shrunken majority, Labour retained a firm grasp on the levers of policy, vis-à-vis any other party's influence. With its parliamentary power unchecked, Labour remained free to be as (un)responsive to public demands as it saw fit - at the risk of a further loss of support of course. Thus even a considerable diminution of a legislative majority hardly amounts to a gold standard for democratic accountability. Even so, few analyses of the relationship between economics and elections raise the bar even this far when testing for evidence of accountability.³

Let us then raise the bar again and consider a third form of accountability: *change in government status*, if the incumbent party retains control over the executive following an election. Change in the status of the government is a stronger notion of accountability than seat

³ Again, Cheibub and Przeworski's (1999) paper is exceptional here.

change: the former implies a necessary change in the ability of any one party to enact legislation or to control the levers of power, while the latter does not. In parliamentary systems, there are two ways in which government status can change. The first is a change from *single party* to *multi-party* coalition government (or vice versa). When voters force a party to share executive power, they have not only sent a strong signal that the governing party should temper its goals; the government party *will* have to temper its goals. The second type of change is a shift from *majority* to *minority* government (or vice versa).⁴ As with a coalition, incumbents heading minority governments require the assent of other parties to survive in office. An election that shifts control of government from majority to minority or from single-party to coalition provides a relatively effective method of holding the incumbent party to accounts, short of their removal from office. Likewise, shifting from minority to majority government or from coalition to single-party government is an effective way to reward an incumbent party that performs well, and thus represents a stronger measure of accountability than simple vote or seat change. Since WWII, over 25% of legislative elections in which the incumbent retains power has resulted in a change of government status of one sort or another.

In pure presidential systems, change in government status focuses on the relationship between separately chosen executive and legislative branches. Elections may leave the incumbent party in control of the executive branch but result in a shift from single-party to coalition control over the legislature (or vice-versa), or a shift from unified to divided government (or vice-versa). As in parliamentary systems, such changes affect executive party's ability to implement its preferred policies. The same can be said of presidents in hybrid or "semi"-presidential systems: their control over the direction of policy is constrained when the prime minister hails from a different party (known as *cohabitation*).

⁴ Both majority and minority governments can be single- or multi-party.

A change in government status represents a stronger notion of accountability than changes in votes or seats because it directly affects the incumbent's ability to implement policy on its own. The strongest form of accountability, however, is a *change in partisan control of the executive* - either the president, the prime minister, or, in the case of semi-presidential systems, both. Przeworski, Manin and Stokes (1999) hold up this notion of accountability as the gold standard. And of the four measures of accountability, this is the only one that assures rotation of elites and carries the strongest hope (albeit still no guarantee) of a change in policy direction.

Apart from Cheibub and Przeworski's 1999 study, we know of no broadly comparative empirical assessments of any of the three "more stringent" forms of electoral accountability. Given that a change in the partisan control of government carries relatively unambiguous implications for the direction of future policy (relative to alternative measures, at least) and given its conceptual importance to our understanding of democratic governance, the lack of scholarly attention to the systematic determinants of this measure of accountability around the world is surprising.

3) Assessing the Layers of Accountability: Party Government, Political Context, and Opportunities for Holding Politicians to Accounts

Does setting the bar higher than scholars normally do - in terms of seat change, status change, or change in partisan control - make it more difficult to find evidence of vertical accountability? Conventional wisdom suggests the answer ought to be yes. After all, vote swings do not translate directly to seat swings; seat swings are not perfectly correlated with control over the levers of government; and even substantial vote or seat losses do not necessarily force the incumbent party from power. Before exploring this question with evidence from

democracies around the world, we first discuss two issues that guide our inquiry: the role of political parties as the principal unit of analysis, and the conditioning effect of political context.

Regarding the unit of analysis, Cheibub and Przeworski's (1999) paper merits some discussion, because they challenge scholars to focus on a higher standard of democratic accountability and because their empirical results contrast sharply with scholars who have set the bar lower. Using a global sample of democracies over 40 years, the authors estimate the probability that an incumbent *head of government* survives a particular year in office, given their length of tenure and economic performance. Their findings are wholly negative, and they conclude, "The survival of heads of governments is independent of economic conditions," (227) no matter how one measures those conditions. Consequently, they assert that accountability for government performance cannot be said to exist under democracy.

Cheibub and Przeworski find this result "surprising and dismaying" given the definition of democracy as a political system in which rulers are accountable to the ruled through elections (222) as well as given the conventional wisdom derived from research on economic voting, which suggests that under democracy "we should observe the survival of heads of governments to be sensitive to economic performance" (229). The authors even found that controlling for institutional context "makes no difference" for accountability (230).

These results would indeed be both surprising and dismaying, but for two troubling choices the authors make. First, Cheibub and Przeworski ignore two key principles of democratic institutional design: endogenous elections in parliamentary systems and fixed terms in separation of powers systems. That is, the authors test for a relationship between economic performance and incumbent survival in office in *every year*, not just election years. It is no surprise to find that incumbents' survival in office is insensitive to economic performance every

year, because no democratic system forces incumbents to face the voters every year. Such an approach is biased towards finding no relationship between survival in office and economic performance, and thus towards concluding that accountability is illusory. Cheibub and Przeworski give a nod in this direction, acknowledging that “our negative results may be due to the fact that we do not distinguish election from non-election years” (235), but even after controlling for fixed terms and endogenous election cycles, they still find that “elections do not enforce economic accountability in democratic regimes” (237).

This finding would again both surprise and dismay those who hold out hope for accountability through elections, if not for a second, more fundamental issue: the authors’ unit of analysis. Specifically, Cheibub and Przeworski’s dependent variable is *the survival in office from one year to the next of an individual person serving as head of government* (225). Survival of an *individual* as head of government is not a useful measure of democratic accountability. Modern democratic theory holds that political parties are the primary mechanism mediating between society and government, not individuals. This has been the conventional view for almost a century; in 1929 Hans Kelsen concluded that “modern democracy is founded entirely on political parties; the greater the application of the democratic principle the more important the parties” (quoted in Sartori 1987, 148). On this side of the Atlantic, Schattschneider (1942, 1) famously affirmed that “political parties created democracy, and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of political parties.”

Accountability should be assessed on the bases of voters’ reactions to incumbent parties’ performance. Przeworski elsewhere (2005, 8) even affirms that *any theoretical definition of*

*modern democracy requires partisan alternation in office.*⁵ Reference to cases where independents occupy the executive does not alter the bottom line: defining accountability as individual survival in office is unfaithful to the principles of modern democratic theory, and to the way in which modern representative government functions, even into our age of allegedly declining parties (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000; see especially Thies 2000). If we mean to test the empirical implications of democratic theory and develop our understanding of electoral accountability, we must explore the relationship between economic conditions and the fate of the incumbent parties. The analysis that follows thus examines the responsiveness to economic conditions of the party controlling the office of the head of government (president or prime minister), in election years.⁶

The second issue we raise pertains to political context. Research strongly suggests that certain political and institutional factors strengthen or weaken electoral accountability. Yet thus far scholars have mostly applied these hypotheses only to the “weakest” form of accountability, vote swings. No one has suggested that such hypothesis should *not* hold when applied to other forms of accountability. However, given the progressively weaker links between economic performance and changes on the dependent variable as we move from weaker to stronger notions of accountability (as Figure One suggests), we have good *a priori* theoretical reason to believe that institutional context may matter differently depending on the threshold of accountability.

Consider the “clarity of responsibility.” This notion, first advanced by Powell and Whitten (1993) and the focus of a great deal of subsequent research, suggests that accountability is strengthened when the political-institutional context enhances voters’ ability to *ascertain*

⁵ The Cheibub and Przeworski chapter uses the same data Przeworski and his colleagues use in *Democracy and Development* (Przeworski et al. 2000). However, in that book the authors define a democracy as one in which *parties* alternate in office via election results (28-29).

⁶ In an analysis of 23 parliamentary democracies, Maravall (2007, 929-31) compares the survival of parties to those of prime ministers and finds economic growth affects the former but (like Cheibub and Przeworski) not the latter.

responsibility for government performance. Empirically, the main indicator of clarity of responsibility is the extent of single-party majority control over the levers of government power (Powell 2000). When one party concentrates control, voters are better able to attribute responsibility. In such situations, we expect heightened responsiveness.

Yet depending on the definition of accountability employed, “clarity” may not necessarily be correlated with “accountability.” Consider again our example from the UK. Over the course of three elections from 1997 to 2005, Labour obtained 43.2%, 40.7% and 35.3% of the votes, and 63.4%, 62.5%, and 55.2% of the seats - yet retained power all along. The voters clearly “punished” the incumbent party, supporting the hypothesized connection between high clarity and accountability for the weaker forms of accountability, votes and seats.

Yet these elections utterly refute the expectation that high clarity should be associated with accountability for our third and fourth measures of accountability, change in government status and/or change in partisan control. In the UK, an archetypical “high clarity” system, the relationship between incumbent performance and incumbent survival in office is relatively *weak* precisely because the incumbent party benefits from the electoral system’s distortion of a plurality of votes into a majority of seats. Clarity of responsibility may, in fact, tell us absolutely nothing about the relationship between incumbent performance and incumbent survival in office. Or we may even find that the more “clear” the responsibility, the *harder* it is for voters to alter the balance of forces within government or actually “kick the bums out.”

Likewise, we have good reason to believe that the relationship between incumbent performance and incumbent survival in office in parliamentary systems is relatively *strong* in low-clarity situations. Consider an incumbent party that begins with 35% of the votes and 35% of the seats, and then loses the same absolute percentage of votes and seats as Labour did from

1997-2005. In contrast to Labour, this hypothetical “low clarity” incumbent party would be more likely to lose power, or at least be forced into a coalition (if it were not in one already). We have good reason to believe, therefore, that the relationship between economic performance and changes in both government status and the party in power might be *stronger* under low clarity of responsibility. Yet if this were true, it would confound the meaning of Powell and Whitten’s intended meaning of the term, because it would imply that *low* clarity situations are normatively superior for more meaningful forms of democratic accountability.

We have also recently suggested (Hellwig and Samuels 2008) that apart from the *ability* to ascertain responsibility, different democratic constitutions also offer voters different *opportunities* to hold incumbents to accounts. For example, under parliamentarism voters do not always have the opportunity to reward or punish the party they empowered at the previous election, typically because a no-confidence vote forces a change in government party or parties in between elections. Scholars (e.g. Palmer and Whitten 2000; Kayser 2005, Smith 2005) have shown that the state of the economy contributes to election *timing*: incumbents call elections when times are good and delay them when times are bad. If election timing is endogenous to economic performance, then electoral accountability ought to be conditioned by incumbents’ ability to choose when they must face the voters, regardless of the clarity of responsibility.⁷

Research has largely ignored the possibility that endogenous election timing might affect the nature or intensity of the accountability relationship between voters and parties in parliamentary systems and in assembly elections. In our previous research we found no clear relationship between economic performance and incumbent *vote shares* in pure parliamentary systems, even under conditions of high clarity of responsibility – and we attributed this finding in

⁷ Even if a *party* retains power over the course of several elections, term limits end most *presidents’* careers and intra- or inter-party disputes end almost two-thirds of all *prime ministers’* careers *between* elections. Cheibub and Przeworski recognize these facts (231, 236) but do not control for them in their empirical analysis.

part to endogenous change in the government party between elections. This perhaps explains why findings in the economic voting literature are sometimes inconsistent in the world's parliamentary systems: not because clarity of responsibility is often low, but because even when clarity of responsibility is high voters lack the *opportunity* to hold those deemed responsible for poor performance to account at elections. In contrast to the clarity of responsibility, we have no reason to suppose that endogenous elections should affect change in government status or change in partisan control differently for higher-threshold measures of accountability.

Our research also suggested that variables specific to separation of powers systems - and unrelated to the clarity of responsibility - also affect voters' opportunities to hold incumbents to account (Samuels 2004; Hellwig and Samuels 2008). First, *direct executive elections* offer stronger opportunities to hold incumbents to account relative to legislative elections, but only when they are held *concurrently* with legislative elections. In non-concurrent presidential elections campaigns turn on personalities rather than party platforms or issues of national importance. And in non-concurrent legislative elections, campaigns tend to turn on local affairs rather than national issues (Shugart 1995; Samuels 2004). We have no reason to expect that concurrence will influence accountability differently across measures of accountability beyond the general expectation of weaker results as we raise the bar.

Finally, in semi-presidential systems, we suggested that *cohabitation*, which is different from coalition government in pure parliamentarism or divided government in pure presidential systems, gives voters the opportunity to *switch* attribution of responsibility. In executive elections, unified government means voters reward or blame the *president's* party, while under cohabitation voters reward or blame the *prime minister's* party. In assembly elections, under unified government voters should reward or blame the presidents/prime ministers' party (one and

the same), while rewarding or blaming only the prime minister's party and not the president's party under cohabitation. We have no *a priori* expectation that cohabitation should matter differently depending on the measure of accountability.

4) Data and Measurement

In what follows we explore progressively more stringent measures of accountability: government-party seats, government status, and incumbent-party survival in office. To do so, we gathered data from every national-level executive and legislative election from the immediate post-WWII years through 2004 in every country with a population of one million or more that ranked six or better on the Polity IV ranking of democracy. All told, 818 elections from 77 countries fit these criteria. (Appendix 1 lists countries and election-years; Appendix 2 provides information on sources.) We then constructed four measures of our dependent variable. The first measure, *Incumbent Vote Share*, is the percent of votes received by the incumbent head of government's party.⁸ Our second measure conceives of accountability somewhat more stringently. *Incumbent Seat Share* is the percent of seats received by the incumbent head of government's party in the lower (or only) house of the national assembly.

Our third dependent variable assesses whether retrospective performance affects the government's control over the levers of political power. For cases in which the incumbent party remains in power, *Change in Incumbent Government Status* considers changes from majority to minority governments (or vice-versa) and from single party to coalition governments (or vice-versa). Changes that *enhance* the government's grasp on power (e.g. from minority to majority government) are coded with positive values and those that *reduce* control over government are coded with negative values. Cases with no change in government status are coded 0. We identify seven possible permutations of change in government status, ranging in value from -3 to +3, as

⁸ For executive elections we use results from the first or only round of elections.

shown in Appendix 3. Due to very few cases obtaining extreme values we collapse the variable into five categories taking on values of $\{-2, -1, 0, 1, 2\}$.

Our final and most stringent gauge of electoral accountability is *Change in Partisan Control*. This variable is scored 1 if the election results in a change in the party of the chief executive and 0 if the incumbent party remained as part of the chief executive, where the chief executive is either the prime minister (in legislative elections in parliamentary systems and semi-presidential systems) or the president (in executive elections in pure and semi-presidential systems). In 405 out of 695 cases analyzed, the incumbent retained control.⁹

Our objective is to determine whether and how government performance affects *Incumbent Electoral Success*, variously conceived. To empirically assess this question, we estimate several models with the basic form $Incumbent\ Electoral\ Success = \alpha + \beta * Retrospective\ Performance + Z\gamma + error$, where α is a constant, β estimates the effect of policy performance on the extent and nature of *Incumbent Electoral Success*, and $Z\gamma$ represents the impact of other variables thought to affect the incumbent's standing, as explained below.

Scholars who investigate voters' ability to influence politicians through retrospective voting typically gauge policy performance in terms of economic performance, on the grounds that the economy is salient, can be measured, and is known with some certainty by most voters.¹⁰

⁹ We code those occurrences where the incumbent party loses the chief executive but the new chief executive comes from within the incumbent governing coalition as equivalent to change in partisan control. This infrequent occurrence (in 54 of 695 elections) means that coding practice has no substantive implications for our analyses; if anything, our coding practice produces more conservative estimates of the impact of *Retrospective Performance* on *Change in Partisan Control*. Results of models with this intermediate category treated as no change in partisan control are available on request.

¹⁰ Notes Anderson (2007, 271), "[o]ver the years, the notion that voters judge democratic governments by how well they manage the economy has taken on the ring of an incontrovertible social scientific fact." A useful discussion on the utility of gauging retrospective performance in terms of the economy is found in Zielinski *et al.* (2005).

We adopt this practice and operationalize *Retrospective Performance* as the annual percent change in per capita GDP.¹¹

The matrix of controls includes the following. For the *Incumbent Vote Share* models we include the party's percentage of the vote in the previous election (*Previous Vote*). Similarly, models of *Incumbent Seat Share* include the parties lagged seat share (*Previous Seat*).¹² In pure and semi-presidential systems, the models include a control for whether an incumbent president was running for re-election, to control for incumbents' advantages in terms of recognition and organization. In addition, to account for differences associated with election in new and mature democracies, we include *Age of Democracy* equal to the election year minus the year in which the country first scores six or above on Polity IV. To the extent that more mature democracies exhibit less electoral volatility, we expect the coefficient on this variable to be positively signed. We also include *Age of Democracy* squared with the expectation that this non-linear term will carry a negative coefficient.¹³ To control for potential heteroscedasticity within country-groups, all models are estimated with Huber-White robust standard errors clustered by country.

5) Analysis

We proceed in two stages. First, we explore a context-less electoral universe for our four dependent variables: we simply pool all the elections and test for the presence of electoral

¹¹ Cheibub and Przeworski use the same indicator. The source is the Penn World Tables v6.2, <http://pwt.econ.upenn.edu/>, last accessed 6/08. Following Hellwig and Samuels (2008), we use GDP change in year "t-1" if the election was held in the first six months of the year, and the change in year "t" if the election was held later in the year.

¹² Including *Previous Vote* or *Previous Seat* in the models requires we omit each country's initial election from regression analysis. Thus, the maximum number of cases we examine statistically is 695: 543 legislative/parliamentary elections (620 elections minus one from each of the 77 countries in the sample) and 152 executive elections (198 elections minus one from each of the 46 countries that held direct presidential elections).

¹³ We examined several additional controls, including the effective number of legislative parties, electoral rules, and presidential powers. However, those variables did not substantively influence the results. Measures to capture differences in income and "level" of democracy were excluded due to collinearity with *Age of Democracy*. Bivariate correlations between age of democracy, level of democracy, and national income are all greater than .6. Models estimated substituting level of democracy or national income for age of democracy do not produce results different from what we report below.

accountability. This provides a baseline assessment of the impact of the economy on incumbent electoral performance across all four measures of the dependent variable. We then introduce measures of political context thought to mediate accountability relationships.

Table One presents results from regressions exploring each of our four measures of electoral accountability. Given differences in how the variables are measured, Models One and Two use OLS, Model Three employs ordered probit, and Model 4 uses binary logit. The results are clear: *Retrospective Performance* matters for incumbent electoral success, regardless of how accountability is operationalized. In all four models, the coefficient on *Retrospective Performance* is precisely estimated and in the expected direction (positive in Models 1-3 and negative in Model 4, since that model predicts the probability that the incumbent party *loses* office as the economy improves). *Age of Democracy* is important for weaker measures of accountability, but not for stronger measures. Finally, controlling for presidents who are running for *Reelection* is important for three of the four measures of accountability.

<Table One Here>

5.1) Political Context and *Opportunities to Attribute Responsibility*

Table One provides encouraging support for the hypothesis that elections can serve as instruments of citizen control over politicians, no matter how “control” is measured. However, such support is tentative because the estimates in Table One do not control for factors scholars have argued condition accountability. As discussed, research suggests two ways in which context mediates the relationship between retrospective performance and incumbent electoral success: through different *opportunities* for voters to hold politicians to accounts and through voters’ *ability* to discern responsibility for policy - the “clarity of responsibility.”¹⁴ Addressing

¹⁴ A third contingency pertains to partisan differences in how economics affects incumbent support (e.g., Hibbs 1977). Space and, more critically, data constraints prevent us from considering this here.

these two sets of factors simultaneously involves multiple interaction terms (Hellwig and Samuels 2008), but space reasons precludes such an analysis across all four of our dependent variables in this paper. To simplify things we re-estimate the models in Table One, conditioning first on *opportunities* and holding clarity of responsibility constant for the moment.

Table Two displays coefficients for *Retrospective Performance* stratified by factors that shape voters' opportunities to hold politicians to accounts.¹⁵ These factors differ according to regime type. For parliamentary cases, we examine the effect of endogenous elections. Nearly all parliamentary regimes allow governments to subvert citizen control by calling early elections, when they believe they will be most successful. Accountability at the polls, therefore, ought to be weaker when elections occur before the end of a term.

<Table Two About Here>

Results in the first two rows of the table support for this expectation. The coefficient on the economy is signed correctly and is statistically significant across all four measures of electoral accountability, but only when the election occurs at the end of the mandate. In contrast, when elections are called early we find no evidence of economic voting for any measure of accountability. Opportunities to hold reward or punish consistently matter -when incumbents short-circuit voters' input, accountability suffers. This occurs almost half of the time.

For pure presidential systems we separate executive from legislative elections, and concurrent from non-concurrent elections. Our results build on Samuels' (2004) findings by showing that the economy matters more when executive and legislative elections are concurrent, no matter how accountability is measured, again holding clarity of responsibility constant for the present. (Concurrence occurs in about 80% of executive elections and about 50% of legislative

¹⁵ We do not present full results for space reasons. These are available on request from the authors.

elections.)¹⁶ To illustrate, using predicted values from the “Change in Partisan Control” model, when per capita growth is 5% the expected probability of incumbent party holding onto the presidency in a concurrent election is nearly .46. Yet when the economy is contracting at a rate of 5%, then the incumbent party has only a .19 chance of holding onto office. As with elections in parliamentary systems, results for pure presidentialism provide grounds for a degree of optimism: the economy affects incumbent electoral performance - no matter how it is measured - in most elections in pure presidential systems.

The results are not nearly so clear, however, for semi-presidential systems. In Table Two we again distinguish between elections for the president and for the assembly. As we argued elsewhere (Hellwig and Samuels 2008), in semi-presidential systems the most important determinant for accountability for retrospective performance is whether an election occurs under unified government or cohabitation (that is, whether the sitting president and prime minister are from the same party or coalition or not). In executive elections under unified government, we expect voters to reward and/or punish the incumbent president’s party. Yet under cohabitation, we expect the relationship between the economy and the vote to be somewhat paradoxically reversed – voters should reward the incumbent *prime minister’s* party when the economy is good, and thus by implication *punish* the incumbent *president’s* party (and vice versa, of course).

Results reported at the bottom of Table Two confirm this supposition for votes as the dependent variable. When the executive is unified a one percent increase in per capita growth leads to a 1.74% increase in the incumbent party’s vote share in presidential elections. Yet when the president and the PM come from different parties, at presidential elections the party of the president actually gains at the expense of the party of the prime minister, as the negative

¹⁶ Recall that cases only enter the analysis for “status change” if the incumbent party retains power. In other cases, electoral accountability has driven the executive from office.

coefficient for executive cohabitation elections shows. (This is consistent with what Hellwig and Samuels (2008) report for a smaller sample.) Voters blame the prime minister's party for government performance under cohabitation, and thus punish the prime minister's party's presidential candidate. Yet we do not find similar results for other measures of accountability in executive elections.

For assembly elections we expect voters to reward or punish the prime ministers' party under either unified government or cohabitation. However, the prediction does not hold under any context. This result is disappointing, given the popularity of this regime type in many newly-democratized countries. We suspect that the weak results in semi-presidential regimes are due to the non-concurrence of elections – something we cannot control for, since so few elections are concurrent. Non-concurrence allows both presidents and legislators to shift responsibility to the other branch of government, or to campaign on non-policy and/or local matters. [We plan to conduct additional analysis here.] In any case, our relatively weak findings in hybrid systems imply that the complexity of political relationships in this regime-type may attenuate accountability relationships to a greater degree than in either pure presidential or pure parliamentary systems.

5.2) Political Context and the *Ability* to Attribute Responsibility

Our consideration of election timing, election cycles, and unified government or cohabitation pertains to *opportunities* for voters to attribute responsibility for government performance. Yet nearly all research on the conditional nature of economic voting focuses on voters' *ability* to make informed attributions (Powell and Whitten 1993; see e.g. Duch and Stevenson 2008). We now consider the impact of the “clarity of responsibility.” Table Three reports parameter estimates on *Retrospective Performance* similarly to Table Two, but with

additional cells reporting results stratified by high and low *Clarity of Responsibility*. Following Powell (2000), we measure clarity of responsibility dichotomously in terms of the majority status of the incumbent government at the time of the election.¹⁷ Elections in which a single party controls the executive and/or legislature suggest the clearest degree of responsibility and are coded as “high” clarity. All other elections are coded as “low” clarity.¹⁸

<Table Three About Here>

Results of this exercise support the suggestion that clarity of responsibility can matter in different ways, depending on the measure of accountability employed. Consider parliamentary elections. In Table Two, we found that early elections short-circuited accountability across all measures. For votes and seats as measures of accountability, results in Table Three are consistent with those in Table Two: in full-mandate parliamentary elections, clarity of responsibility makes no difference. However, when we examine the two “more stringent” measures of accountability, we only observe a relationship in *low* clarity of responsibility elections. This result clearly confounds the standard expectation of the impact of clarity of responsibility.

Variation in the impact of clarity of responsibility is further illustrated when we consider early parliamentary elections. According to our “opportunities” hypothesis, we expect no significant results whatsoever in these elections, no matter how accountability is measured, and

¹⁷ Cross-national studies of economic voting have also included measures of party cohesion, opposition control of committee chairs, and bicameral opposition. We do not do so because for most of the countries in our data set no data exist on party cohesion or opposition committee chairs, and because in preliminary analyses we found that bicameral opposition did not affect our results. More importantly, Powell has found that with the possible exception of party cohesion (which has proven difficult to measure cross-nationally), government majority status captures most of the variance in clarity of responsibility effects.

¹⁸ We initially adopted a three-category measure of the clarity of responsibility, separating elections in which the incumbent party leads a majority coalition (“mixed” clarity) from those where the incumbent head of government’s party heads a minority government, either alone or in coalition (“low” clarity). However, analyses revealed no substantive differences between mixed and low clarity elections.

regardless of clarity of responsibility. Yet again we see a strong effect of the economy at the most “stringent” level of accountability, but again only for *low* clarity of responsibility elections.

These results suggest that clarity of responsibility is more important than election timing in terms of accountability - *but only for this most stringent measure*, change in partisan control, and in a way that confuses the intended implication of “clarity of responsibility and contradicts the claims Powell (2000) and others have made regarding accountability. However, these results make some sense: there is a tradeoff between majoritarian government and reaching different “thresholds” of accountability: in high-clarity situations sending a weak “smoke signal” is easy, but removing an incumbent party is more difficult.

In pure presidential systems, consider first all non-concurrent elections, in which we expect no relationship between economic performance and electoral performance (however measured) in either executive or legislative races. Differentiating by “clarity” does nothing to alter this expectation. As per Samuels (2004) and Hellwig and Samuels (2008), this suggests that concurrence is a key factor shaping accountability, no matter how accountability is measured. This point is reinforced when we turn to concurrent elections. Here, we do find that economic performance has a stronger effect on electoral performance in high-clarity elections for votes (for both executive and legislative elections), seats (for legislative elections only, by definition), and change in government status (for both executive and legislative elections).¹⁹ However, for change in partisan control, splitting the sample of executive elections by clarity of responsibility only reduces the significance of *Economy* in both sub-samples.

In semi-presidential systems, unfortunately we have too few cases to distinguish the impact of high from low clarity of responsibility in all circumstances except unified government

¹⁹ We plan to explore this result further, given that it diverges from our finding in parliamentary systems. Status does not mean precisely the same thing in parliamentary and presidential regimes.

in legislative elections. Significant results on some “low clarity” cells are not helpful, since we lack a sufficient number of “high clarity” cases against which to compare those results. (Sample sizes are indicated in brackets). The factors associated with accountability in semi-presidential systems require further investigation.

6) Conclusion

This paper offers an exhaustive empirical examination of electoral accountability - in terms of geographic coverage, the range of operational meanings of the dependent variable, and the political factors that condition voters’ ability to hold incumbents to accounts. We have three main findings. First, electoral accountability for government performance exists across the range of potential meanings of the dependent variable. Our findings temper Cheibub and Przeworski’s pessimism, but they hardly alter Manin *et al.*’s conclusion that “citizen control over politicians is at best highly imperfect in most democracies” (50).

Citizen control is imperfect because, second, our findings support the notion that political context limits voters’ ability to hold incumbents to accounts, by obscuring responsibility and/or limiting voters’ opportunities to reward or punish those they deem responsible. We build on existing research by confirming that for shifts in both votes and/or seats, economic performance is a good predictor of incumbent electoral performance in full mandate elections in parliamentary systems, in concurrent executive and legislative elections in pure presidential systems, and in executive elections in semi-presidential systems.

Our third main finding suggests a reassessment of the term “clarity of responsibility.” In pure parliamentary systems at least, there exists a tradeoff between clarity of responsibility and voters’ ability to remove incumbents from office: Only in *low*-clarity contexts do we find a relationship between economic performance and this most stringent measure of accountability.

Normatively this is hardly a bad thing, because most parliamentary elections (about 2/3) occur under conditions of low clarity. By Manin et al.'s definition, we thus find that most incumbents in parliamentary systems are accountable because "the probability that they survive in office is sensitive to government performance" (Cheibub and Przeworski, 225).

Yet these findings certainly do not follow Powell's (2000, chapter 3) argument about the relationship between clarity of responsibility and the degree to which elections can serve as instruments of citizen control. Thus if one cares about vote swings (as does Powell, for example) or seat swings, perhaps one should advocate for high clarity of responsibility and the "majoritarian" vision of democracy. Yet if one cares about the probability that incumbents survive in office (as do Cheibub and Przeworski, for example), then one should push for low clarity of responsibility.

Our results appear to vindicate the "proportional" vision of democracy, but only in parliamentary systems – after all, Powell's conclusion (2000) rests on weighing the balance between the representational advantages of the proportional vision against the accountability advantages of the majoritarian vision. Unfortunately for political scientists schooled on Lijphart's (1999) or Powell's (2000) relatively straightforward distinction of majoritarian versus proportional democratic institutional design, we cannot offer a single dimension of institutional variation, and thus cannot offer a simple normative prescription for comparative institutional design. This is because, as we have argued elsewhere (Samuels 2004, Hellwig and Samuels 2008), institutional factors unrelated to the clarity of responsibility also contribute to electoral responsiveness in both pure or semi-presidential systems - direct executive elections, concurrence of executive and legislative elections, and the possibility of cohabitation. Clarity of responsibility matters, but less than these other factors - and apparently not in the same way as it

does under pure parliamentarism, whatever the measure of accountability employed. Our results thus require further investigation and elaboration, but nevertheless point the way towards a reinterpretation of the possibility of different forms of electoral accountability under different democratic institutional designs.

Appendix 1: Cases [TO BE COMPLETED]

Country	1 st Election*	No. Elections	Country	1 st Election*	No. Elections
Argentina	1983		Malawi	1994	
Australia	1975		Mali	1992	
Austria	1975		Mexico	1997	
Bangladesh	1991		Moldova	1994	
Belgium	1977		Mozambique	1994	
Benin	1991		Namibia	1994	
Bolivia	1985		Netherlands	1977	
Botswana	1979		New Zealand	1975	
Brazil	1986		Nicaragua	1990	
Bulgaria	1990		Norway	1977	
Canada	1979		Panama	1994	
Chile	1989		Papua New Guinea	1977	
Colombia	1978		Paraguay	1993	
Costa Rica	1978		Peru	1985	
Czech Republic	1996		Philippines	1986	
Denmark	1975		Poland	1990	
Dominican Rep.	1978		Portugal	1976	
Ecuador	1979		Romania	1992	
El Salvador	1984		Russia	1996	
Estonia	1992		Senegal	1993	
Finland	1975		Seychelles	1993	
France	1978		Slovakia	1994	
Germany	1976		Slovenia	1992	
Greece	1977		South Africa	1994	
Honduras	1985		Spain	1979	
Hungary	1990		Sri Lanka	2000	
India	1977		Sweden	1976	
Ireland	1976		Switzerland	1975	
Israel	1977		Taiwan	1995	
Italy	1976		Thailand	1992	
Jamaica	1976		Trinidad and Tobago	1976	
Japan	1976		Turkey	1979	
Korea, Republic of	1988		Ukraine	1994	
Latvia	1993		United Kingdom	1979	
Lesotho	1998		United States	1976	
Lithuania	1992		Uruguay	1989	
Macedonia	1994		Venezuela	1978	
Madagascar	1993				

*1st election refers to the “t-1” election included in the dataset.

Appendix 2: sources for election results and identification of incumbents:

- Election Results Archive, Center on Democratic Performance, Binghamton University. <http://cdp.binghamton.edu/era/>.
- Parties and Elections in Europe: <http://www.parties-and-elections.de/indexe.html>
- Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Eastern Europe, University of Essex: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/elections/>
- Political Database of the Americas, Georgetown University: <http://www.georgetown.edu/pdba/Elecdata/elecdata.html#data>.
- Elections Around the World: www.electionworld.org.
- Election Resources on the Internet: <http://electionresources.org/>.
- *Keesings Contemporary Archives*, 1976-2004.
- Zárate's European Governments: <http://www.terra.es/personal2/monolith/00europa.htm>
- Zárate's World Political Leaders: <http://www.terra.es/personal2/monolith/00index.htm>
- Rulers: www.rulers.org.
- International Foundation for Electoral Systems' Election Guide: <http://www.ifes.org/eguide/elecguide.html>.
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- Dieter Nohlen (ed.). 2005. *Elections in the Americas: A Data Handbook* (Two volumes). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
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- Panama: personal correspondence, Carlos Guevara-Mann, University of Notre Dame.
- Papua New Guinea:
http://www.worldfactsandfigures.com/countries/papua_new_guinea.php. May 21, 2004.
- Philippines: personal correspondence, Professor Allen Hicken, University of Michigan.
- Taiwan: Government of Taiwan, 2001. "Major ROC Election Results in Recent Years." Download from www.gio.gov.tw/taiwan-website/5-gp/elections/, April 20, 2004.
- Thailand: personal correspondence, Professor Allen Hicken, University of Michigan.
- Ukraine: personal correspondence, Professor Sarah Birch, University of Essex.
- Uruguay: (No author). 2000. *Elecciones 1999/2000*. Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental.
- United States: Norman Ornstein *et al.*, *Vital Statistics on Congress, 2001-2002*. Washington: American Enterprise Institute.
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Appendix 3. Coding *Government Status*

Table A2. Coding *Government Status*

Status Before Election		Status After Election		Gov. Status code	N ^a
Coalition	Minority	Coalition	Minority		
No	No	Yes	Yes	-3	1
No	No	No	Yes	-2	34
Yes	No	Yes	Yes	-2	
No	No	Yes	No	-1	19
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	-1	
Yes	No	No	Yes	-1	324
No	No	No	No	0	
No	Yes	No	Yes	0	23
Yes	No	Yes	No	0	
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	0	33
No	Yes	Yes	No	1	
Yes	No	No	No	1	2
Yes	Yes	No	Yes	1	
No	Yes	No	No	2	33
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	2	
Yes	Yes	No	No	3	2

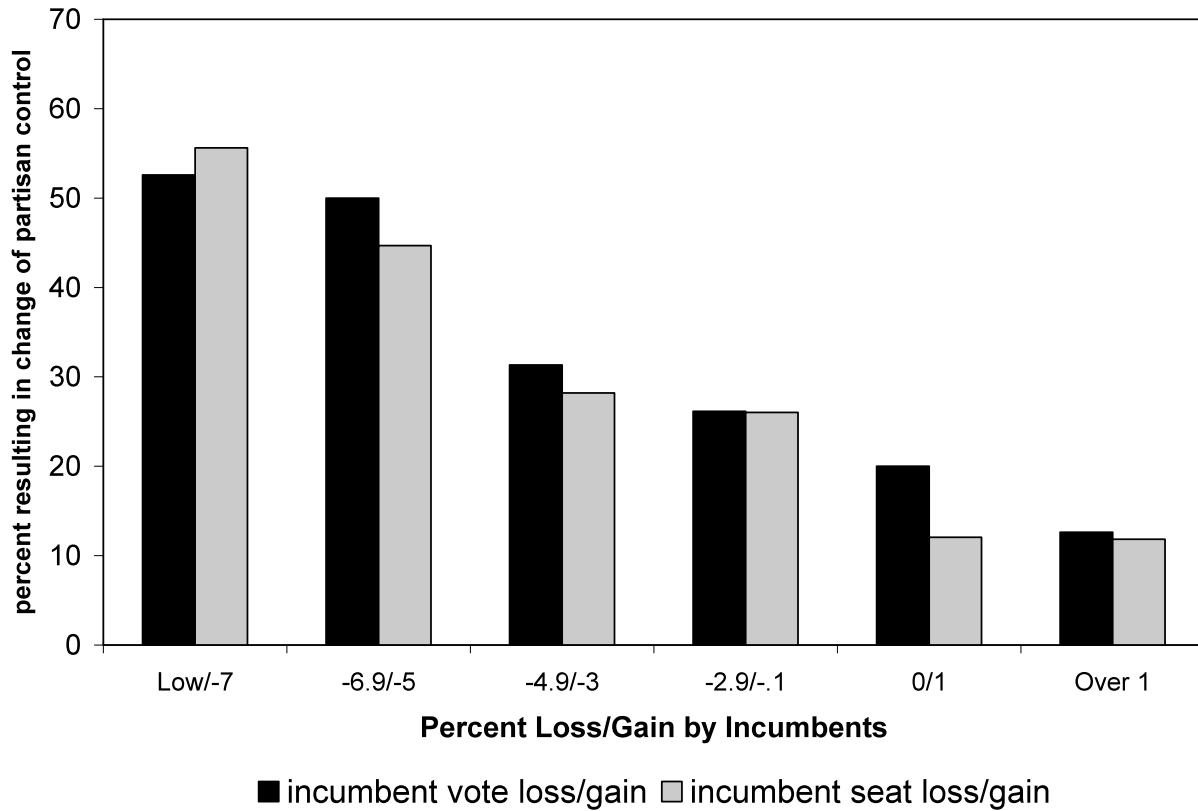
^a. N refers only to cases in sample which election resulted in no change in the party of the chief executive.

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Figure 1. Incumbent Vote Change, Incumbent Seat Change, and Change in Partisan Control of Government



N = 695 for incumbent vote loss (all elections)

N = 529 for incumbent seat loss (assembly elections only)

Table 1. Modeling Layers of Accountability for the Economy, Baseline Estimates

	<u>Model 1</u> Incumbent Vote Change ^a	<u>Model 2</u> Incumbent Seat Change ^b	<u>Model 3</u> Change in Government Status ^c	<u>Model 4</u> Change in Partisan Control ^d
Retrospective Performance Reelection	.32** (.13) 5.25** (2.04)	.49** (.17) 6.27** (2.18)	.04** (.02) .42 (.26)	-.06** (.03) -.78** (.28)
Age of Democracy	.23** (.11)	.05 (.18)	-.01 (.01)	.01 (.02)
Age of Democracy ²	-.004** (.002)	-.001 (.003)	.0002 (.0003)	-.0001 (.0003)
Previous Vote/Seat	.70** (.05)	.64** (.05)		
Constant	3.97* (2.25)	9.88** (3.51)		-.14 (.29)
R ²	.46	.39		
Wald chi-sq.			11.88**	14.60**
N	695	529	403	632

Cells report parameter estimates with robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses.

** $p < .05$, * $p < .10$, two-tailed test.

a. All elections, OLS estimates

b. Assembly elections only, OLS estimates

c. Elections which produce no change in party of chief executive only, ordered probit estimates, cut point parameters not reported.

d. All elections, logit estimates where dependent variable equals 1 if election resulted in change in partisan control and 0 otherwise.

Table 2. Layers of Accountability and Opportunities for Citizen Control

Regime Type	Context	Incumbent Vote	Incumbent Seat	Δ Government Status	Δ Partisan Control
\leftarrow lower threshold of accountability — higher threshold of accountability \rightarrow					
Parliamentary Systems	Full mandate	0.39** [154]	1.03** [143]	0.05** [83]	-0.11** [155]
	Early election	0.16 [147]	0.39 [145]	0.004 [102]	-0.10 [146]
Presidential Systems	Executive, concurrent	0.58* [80]	X	0.09** [31]	-0.12* [80]
	Executive, nonconcurrent	1.97 [24]	X	<i>a</i>	-0.27 [24]
	Legislative, concurrent	0.49* [80]	0.46* [80]	0.10** [34]	X
	Legislative, nonconcurrent	0.24 [63]	0.56 [63]	0.01 [55]	X
Semi-Presidential Systems	Executive, unified	1.74** [33]	X	0.05 [20]	-0.04 [33]
	Executive, cohabitation	-1.47** [15]	X	-0.11 [9]	<i>b</i>
	Assembly, unified	0.25 [77]	0.11 [77]	0.05 [43]	0.04 [77]
	Assembly, cohabitation	0.12 [22]	0.58 [21]	<i>a</i>	-0.12 [22]

Notes: Cells report coefficients on *Retrospective Performance* provided by models specified as in Table 1, conditioned by regime type and context. ** $p \leq .05$, * $p \leq .10$, two-tailed test. Figures in brackets report the number of observations in the dataset which satisfy the given conditions.

X) Not applicable

a) Model does not converge

b) Deterministic model – only one non-zero outcome

Table 3. Layers of Accountability, Opportunities for Citizen Control, and Ability to Attribute Responsibility

Regime Type	Context I	Context II	Clarity of Resp.	Incumbent Vote	Incumbent Seat	Δ Government Status	Δ Partisan Control
Parliamentary		Full Mandate	All	0.39** [154]	1.03** [143]	0.05** [83]	-0.11** [155]
			High	0.39* [45]	1.37** [45]	0.04 [28]	-0.06 [45]
			Low	0.40** [109]	0.60** [98]	0.06** [55]	-0.16** [110]
		Early Election	All	0.16 [147]	0.39 [145]	0.004 [102]	-0.10 [146]
			High	-0.06 [49]	0.40 [49]	0.02 [37]	-0.01 [49]
			Low	0.27 [98]	0.50 [96]	0.004 [65]	-0.17** [97]
Presidential	Executive	Concurrent	All	0.58* [80]	X	0.09** [31]	-0.12* [80]
			High	1.21** [25]	X	0.48** [12]	-0.18 [25]
			Low	0.13 [55]	X	0.01 [19]	-0.08 [55]
		Nonconc.	All	1.97 [24]	X	N/A [13]	-0.32 [24]
			High	N/A [3]	X	N/A [2]	N/A [3]
			Low	1.31 [21]	X	N/A [11]	-0.25 [21]
	Legislative	Concurrent	All	0.49* [80]	0.46* [80]	0.10** [34]	X
			High	1.11** [25]	0.89** [25]	0.44** [13]	X
			Low	0.22 [55]	0.30 [55]	-0.006 [21]	X
		Nonconc.	All	0.24 [63]	0.56 [63]	0.01 [55]	X
			High	1.31 [14]	4.03 [14]	0.18 [13]	X
			Low	0.21 [49]	0.48 [49]	0.07 [42]	X
Semi- Presidential	Executive	Unified	All	1.74** [33]	X	0.05 [20]	-0.04 [33]
			High	N/A [5]	X	N/A [1]	N/A [5]
			Low	2.42** [28]	X	0.06 [19]	-0.15 [28]
		Cohabitation	All	-1.47** [15]	X	-0.11 [9]	N/A [15]
			High	N/A [1]	X	N/A [0]	N/A [1]
			Low	-1.30** [14]	X	-0.11 [9]	N/A [14]
	Legislative	Unified	All	0.25 [77]	0.11 [77]	0.05 [43]	0.04 [77]
			High	-0.62 [14]	-1.99 [14]	0.09** [9]	-0.22 [14]
			Low	0.42 [63]	0.48 [63]	0.03 [34]	0.05 [63]
		Cohabitation	All	0.12 [22]	0.58 [21]	N/A [12]	-0.12 [22]
			High	N/A [2]	N/A [2]	N/A [2]	N/A [2]
			Low	-0.17 [20]	0.27 [19]	N/A [10]	-0.12 [20]

Notes: Cells report coefficients on *Retrospective Performance* provided by models specified as in Table 1, conditioned by regime type and context. ** $p \leq .05$, * $p \leq .10$, two-tailed test. Figures in brackets report the number of observations in the dataset which satisfy the given conditions.

X) Not applicable