Mobile internet is reshaping how information flows in Sub-Saharan Africa. Rural citizens can now access political information previously limited to the capital city. This shift has implications for how citizens perceive those in power. A rich literature has shown that government approval varies with isolation from capital cities. In weak state capacity settings, national institutions struggle to reach the hinterland, such that isolated areas interact less with national institutions. This spatial decay in information over distance from the center of power creates an opinion gradient: citizens closer to the capital, who have greater access to information about government performance, develop informed critique and skepticism. Meanwhile, those in isolated areas indicate higher government approval, despite their lack of information about institutional shortcomings.

In this paper, we document how mobile internet mitigates this decay of information over distance from the capital city across Sub-Saharan African countries. By democratizing access to information regardless of geographic location, modern communication technology disrupts traditional spatial patterns of political opinion. Mobile internet appears to erase the spatial divide in political opinion by bringing previously disconnected remote areas in line with the more critical assessments found near capitals. We find that this mitigating effect of information technology occurs exclusively in contexts characterized by poor governance and captured traditional media. In these settings, where official information channels fail to provide transparent accounts of institutional performance, alternative information sources become essential in reshaping the relationship between distance and government approval. These results suggest that as information asymmetries diminish, the relationship between distance and political opinion fundamentally changes, with implications for governance, political participation, and institutional accountability.

Confidence in institutions attracts cooperation of citizens to the agreed policies and programmes of the governments.

The most ethnically diverse continent.

Trust in institutions is the involvement in the political life.

Literature has shown that rural areas ect. We focus on information.

Important because of nation-building.

How a nation is built. Distance matters in those countries.

Why the effect should be more important in remote areas.

-> Information frictions depending over distance