HOW DO ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AFFECT THE WAYS IN WHICH CITIZENS HOLD THEIR GOVERNMENTS ACCOUNTABLE?

EVIDENCE FROM AFRICA.

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**Theoretical Framework**

How does the electoral system affect the different forms of political participation?

In *majoritarian* systems, disillusioned citizens have a higher likelihood of seeking out their MP as the most efficient way of resolving their grievances. A closer and more responsive connection between citizens and representatives reduces the costs of engagement between the actors, making it an efficient “safety valve.” By contrast, in PR systems, disillusioned citizens are less likely to access representation. The safety valve mechanism is unavailable, or at least inefficiently known to most citizens (in a PR system). Consequently citizens are more likely to use protest as a way through which they hold their government accountable.

**Discussion: Contacting**

**Data**: Top 4 variables (betas)
- Electoral system (national): 0.17
- Contacted elected representative: 0.11
- Social capital: 0.15
- Cognitive Engagement: 0.17

Preliminary interpretation: Electoral system is important for contacting, suggesting that citizens in majority systems are more likely to interact with their elected representatives, rather than those alienated from it. Cognitive engagement also influences contacting, suggesting that citizens who are engaged are more likely to contact their representatives.

**Methodology and Data**

Public opinion survey data from 35 African countries is analysed using binary logistic and multiple linear regression techniques.

**Discussion: Protesting**

**Data**: Top 4 variables (betas)
- Electoral system (national): 0.17
- Contacted elected representative: 0.11
- Social capital: 0.15
- Cognitive Engagement: 0.17

Preliminary interpretation: This model is not driven as strongly by a small set of variables. Protesting is not affected by the electoral system, while also significant for contacting, suggests that the electoral system is not the only factor influencing citizens' engagement with their representatives. Instead, it is influenced by factors such as social capital and cognitive engagement.

**Going forward**

Robustness checks with alternative variables.
Multiple imputations to try and address the large number of cases lost through listwise deletion.
Electoral systems vs. District magnitude (National vs. Local level).