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Population density and governance in Africa

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"Population Density and Governance in Africa"

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This study addresses the question of whether variations in population density have a substantive effect on variations in governance quality at the subnational level in Sub-Saharan Africa. This study draws on an existing body of research which is primarily qualitative, but this study differs from this existing research by relying on quantitative methods and spatial analysis. The study encompasses a sample of 43,108 data points taken from 27 countries included in Round 6 of the pan-African survey Afrobarometer as a means of determining whether population density holds meaningful explanatory value when accounting for variations in infrastructure quality, institutional trust, perceptions of the rule of law and satisfaction with government. The study's findings indicate that higher population densities in Sub-Saharan Africa are meaningfully linked with better infrastructure, but are also linked with lower institutional trust, greater cynicism about the existence of the rule of law, and less satisfaction with government. Future research should focus on determining whether these patterns are observable over longer periods of time, and also focus on determining whether these patterns are unique to Sub-Saharan Africa, or are also present in other parts of the world.