MIT 17.571
Engineering Democratic Development in Contemporary Africa

Spring Term 2017
Tuesdays 9-11am (room 1-379) / Recitation: TBD
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Overview:
What are contemporary African democracies designed to accomplish, and under what conditions do they operate successfully? Can an "engineering" or "design" approach be useful for analyzing the processes of democratic and human development in Africa?

In this course, we will examine the relationship between democracy and human development in sub-Saharan Africa. We will try to apply "engineering thinking" to the study of politics, and try to better understand which institutions, practices, and technologies have helped, and which have hindered, the achievement of health, education, infrastructure, and other outcomes, including human dignity. We will investigate many of the challenges and dilemmas of democratic practice in poor, diverse, and unequal societies, while inviting students to propose practical interventions.

We will begin by considering contemporary Africa in context: Since the early 1990s, many African countries have undergone quite radical political transformation. Where dictators and militaries once ruled, and where large segments of the population were formerly excluded from power, we now find emerging democracies. A combination of internal and external pressures helped to drive this political change, with the promise of extending greater freedoms and higher levels of development to people living on the poorest continent on the planet.

We will spend several weeks considering the extent to which "ordinary citizens" are able to exercise their political power to influence outcomes. Are they able to hold government officials accountable through the vote? In courts? Through direct political mobilization, including through social media? We will discuss these efforts and processes and continually revisit the question: what might increase the power and impact of citizens to achieve what they want?

Course requirements/ Grading:
- Class participation: 20%
- Quizzes: 10%
- Short papers: 30%
- Final presentation: 10%
- Final paper (or project): 30%

Preparation for class

Please do all readings, attend all meetings, and grapple with the material independently. I would ask you to not "collectively" prepare readings prior to our course meetings… but of course, you should feel free to continue any discussions *after* class. Recitations will follow-up on materials covered in lecture.

Before coming to class, please make sure that you can summarize each reading and provide some critical assessment of the work. Please come prepared to our meetings with questions and ideas. We expect that you will engage during both "lecture" and recitation meetings. Please note that I do not consider the assigned reading workload to be particularly *heavy* in terms of number of pages, but sometimes, it may be necessary to re-read a few times in order to really understand what is being argued / explained.

Quizzes

Throughout the term there will be 5 short (announced), in-class quizzes, the first of which will be a map quiz. (You are responsible only for those countries on the attached map.)

The remaining quizzes will be based on materials covered in reading and lecture. These provide a simple incentive to keep up.

There will be no make-up quizzes. We will drop your lowest quiz grade in the calculation of the quiz component of your grade.

Response papers

Students will write two short essays of approximately 1200-1500 words each. Papers should be written *individually*. Both papers should explicitly cite and briefly discuss at least three readings from the syllabus. More specific prompts will be discussed at least one week before each paper is due.

Final papers (and project option)

Option #1 (Proposal): For your final paper, we invite you to propose a "solution" – a new set of institutional rules, a new technology, an information dissemination platform, a new strategy for mobilization, etc. – that might help citizens achieve a particular set of goals in the setting of a particular African democracy. Your

solution need not be immediately implementable (for example, you could propose a constitutional amendment!) Your proposal should be motivated / informed by what you have learned in the course through (cited) readings and lectures. That is, it should address challenges of democratic development that have been documented.

You will present your proposals in brief in-class presentations (and receive some feedback from colleagues and the instructors), and in a paper (2000-2500 words) that provides detailed discussion of the proposal, your explanation for why it might be needed, and how it ought to work, as well as additional considerations about the possible costs or adverse effects of the proposal were it to be implemented.

Option #2 (Project): Students who wish to propose a "final project" as an alternative to the paper proposal should consult with the instructors early in the semester (no later than the end of the 5th week). For example, we would consider projects that involve interactive computer games that enable users to grapple with key ideas in the course; the collection and analysis of original data; or the development of a website that might be useful for global learners enrolled in the MITx course on Democracy and Development. We will expect a short paper (1200-1500 words) to accompany such projects and the grade will be based in equal parts on the project and the accompanying paper.

Readings:
All of the readings are scholarly articles, news articles and book excerpts and will be available via Stellar or through direct web links.

*Learning to read properly for a social science class is critical. It is different from reading a novel; and from reading a short technical paper. Note that in this course, we will be reading several different types of works: Scholarly articles based on empirical research; primary documents from political actors; review essays and overview reports; shorter pieces and case studies.

KEY dates:
  - First short paper: March 6
  - Second short paper: April 7
  - Consult with instructor about final paper / project no later than: April 14
  - Final paper presentation: May 9
  - Final paper (or project): May 19

Policies

Late papers: will be docked one-third grade (e.g. A becomes an A-) for every 48 hours they are late.

Communication, questions, queries**:** I am delighted to discuss the course materials with you, and you should feel free to come see me in office hours (by appointment).

Academic integrity: We all must take academic integrity very seriously. If you have questions about how to honestly present and to cite the work of others, please consult the instructors – always better to ask first!

Plagiarism: http://integrity.mit.edu/handbook/what-plagiarism

Electronics in class: In general, I would like you to have laptops and phones away during class. On occasion, I might have you complete an exercise electronically, and it would be great to have a laptop available. But there is no need to transcribe lectures and I would like everyone to be *present* for our discussions. It is tough to avoid being distracted with an open laptop or phone.

WEEKLY PLAN… subject to revision!

1. **Introduction: Overview of the course, the key questions, course logistics, introductions. (Feb 7)**

2. **GOALS: Engineering *for what?* Development? Freedom? Wealth? Capacity? Happiness? Peace? Representation? Dignity? The high hopes and normative bases of political engineering. (Feb 14)**

- Nkrumah, Kwame. *Africa must unite*. New York: Frederick Praeger, 1963, introduction and chapter 5. available here.
- United Nations Development Program, *Africa Human Development Report*, 2016: available here. Chapter 2 (pp. 20-34).
- Kahneman, Daniel, and Angus Deaton. 2010. "High Income Improves Evaluation of Life but Not Emotional Well-Being." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 107(38): 16489–93.
- Sen, A. (2001). Democracy as a Universal Value. In L. Diamond & M. F. Plattner (Eds.), *The Global Divergence of Democracies* (pp. 3–17). Baltimore, MD London, England: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Freedom Charter, adopted at the Congress of the People, Kliptown, South Africa on 26 June 1955: http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/freedom-charter
- Brief post on design thinking: http://algoso.org/2013/06/16/politics-and-design-thinking-more-in-common-than-you-think/

    Optional:
- Elbadawi, E, and N Sambanis. 2000. "Why Are There so Many Civil Wars in Africa? Understanding and Preventing Violent Conflict." *Journal of African Economies* 9(3): 244–69. http://jae.oxfordjournals.org/content/9/3/244.

3. **CONSTRAINTS/CHALLENGES: Historical and Geographic legacies for Democracy and Human Development in Africa (Feb 28)**
- Sachs, J.D., A.D. Mellinger, and J.L. Gallup. 2001. "The geography of poverty and wealth." *Scientific American* 284 (3):70-5.
- Herbst, J. (2000). *States and Power in Africa*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, chapters 2-3 (pp.35-96).
- Mamdani, M. (1996). Citizen and subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 3-32.

Optional:

- Nunn, N., & Wantchekon, L. (2011). The slave trade and the origins of Mistrust in Africa. *American Economic Review*, *101*, 3221–3252. http://doi.org/10.1257/aer.101.7.3221
- Young and Turner, The Rise and Decline of the Zairean state, chapter 1.

4. **SOLUTION? The impulse to democratic politics? What is a democracy? What role for engineering / design thinking? (March 7)**

- Bratton, Michael, and Nicolas Van De Walle. 1992. "Popular Protest and Political Reform in Africa." *Comparative Politics* 24(4): 419–42. http://www.jstor.org/stable/422153.
- Ake, C. (1991). "Rethinking African Democracy." *Journal of Democracy*, 2 (1): 32–44.
- Young, Crawford. 1996. "Africa: An Interim Balance Sheet." *Journal of Democracy* 7(3): 53–68.
- Gyimah-Boadi, Emmanuel. 1997. "The Challenges Ahead." *Journal of Democracy* 8(2): 78–91.
- Nic Cheeseman, "How Can We Design Democracy So it Better Fits African Realities," available at: http://tinyurl.com/zlfoj5n

5. **"Knowing the user": The characteristics, preferences and Identities of African citizens (March 14)**
- Gottlieb, Jessica, Guy Grossman, and Amanda Lea Robinson. 2016. "Do Men and Women Have Different Policy Preferences in Africa? Determinants and Implications of Gender Gaps in Policy Prioritization." *British Journal of Political Science, pp. 1–26.*
- Lieberman, Evan and Gwyneth McClendon. (2013). The Ethnicity-Policy Preference Link in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Comparative Political Studies*, *46*(5), 574–602.
- World Bank. (2015). *World Development Report 2015: Mind, Society, and Behavior.* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank). Available here. Read chapter 2.

- In class, but you might review ahead of time: introduction to the Afrobarometer online data analysis tool: http://afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis/analyse-online

6. **DESIGN CHOICES: constitutions and choices about electoral rules and governance -- i.e. Proportional Representation vs. Single Member District; Parliamentary vs Presidential systems; Unitary vs Federal (March 21)**

- Lerner, Making Democracy Fun ch3: http://mitpress-ebooks.mit.edu.libproxy.mit.edu/pdfreader/making-democracy-fun
- Diamond, L. J., & Plattner, M. F. (2006). *Electoral systems and democracy*. *Journal Of Democracy*. Chapters 1, pp.3-15 (Horowitz), 11, pp.121-134 (Reynolds)
- Akech, Migai. 2011. "Constraining Government Power in Africa." Journal of Democracy 22(1): 96–106.
- Cheeseman, Nic. 2015. *Democracy in Africa: Successes, Failures, and the Struggle for Political Reform, New York: Cambridge University Press, conclusion: 202-32.*
- Case study on power-sharing: https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/publications/kenya-powersharing-cabinet?utm_source=March+2016+Power+Sharing+Tunisia+%26+Kenya+US&utm_campaign=March+Newsletter&utm_medium=email

Optional:
- Diamond, L. (1990). Three paradoxes of democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, *1*(3), 48–60. http://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1990.0047

7. **IMPACT? Do democratic systems improve service delivery? Preliminary evidence. How / why (not)? (April 4)**
- Khemani, Stuti. (2016). *Making Politics Work for Development*: Chapters 5, 7 (pp.129-160; 213-42.)
- Harding, R. (2015). Attribution and Accountability: Voting for Roads in Ghana. *World Politics*, *67*(4), 656–689.
- DeKadt, Daniel and Evan Lieberman (2017). "Nuanced Accountability: Voter Responses to Service Delivery in Southern Africa," MIT Manuscript.

Optional:
- World Bank. (2003). World Development Report 2004 Making Services Work for Poor People. World Development Report. (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank), Chapter 3.
- Stasavage, D. (2005). "The Role of Democracy in Uganda's Move to Universal Primary Education." The Journal of Modern African Studies 43(1): 53-73.

8. **Possible "workarounds": Community mobilization, active citizens, and short-route accountability (April 11)**
- Sheely, Ryan. 2015. "Mobilization, Participatory Planning Institutions, and Elite Capture: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Rural Kenya." *World Development* 67: 251–66. (November 20, 2014).

- Mustalahti, Irmeli, and O. Sarobidy Rakotonarivo. 2014. "REDD+ and Empowered Deliberative Democracy: Learning from Tanzania." *World Development* 59: 199–211.
- Bjorkman, M., and J. Svensson. 2009. "Power to the People: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment on Community-Based Monitoring in Uganda." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124 (2):735-69.

OPTIONAL:
- Making All Voices Count, "The quest for citizen-led accountability: looking into the state," available here. (Could be useful for final papers.)
- Bruns, B., Filmer, D., & Patrinos, H. A. (2011). *Making schools work : new evidence on accountability reforms.* In Human development perspectives. (Washington DC: World Bank Publications), Chapters 1-2.
- World Bank. (2003). World Development Report 2004 Making Services Work for Poor People. World Development Report. (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank), Chapters 4 & 7

9. "Digital democracy": Can new media and information technologies provide greater citizen access? (April 25)

Guest Lecture: Tavneet Suri

- Grossman, Guy, Macartan Humphreys, and Gabriella Sacramone-Lutz. 2014. "'I Wld like U WMP to Extend Electricity 2 Our Village': On Information Technology and Interest Articulation." *American Political Science Review* 108(03): 688–705.
- World Development Report 2016, http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/896971468194972881/pdf/102725-PUB-Replacement-PUBLIC.pdf, chapter 3
- Election report for the 2013 Kenyan election, focus on the EVID and ETRS (http://www.eods.eu/library/eu-eom-kenya-2013-final-report_en.pdf)
- Search on the internet and familiarize yourself with:
  - #feesmustfall and #Rhodesmustfall in South Africa
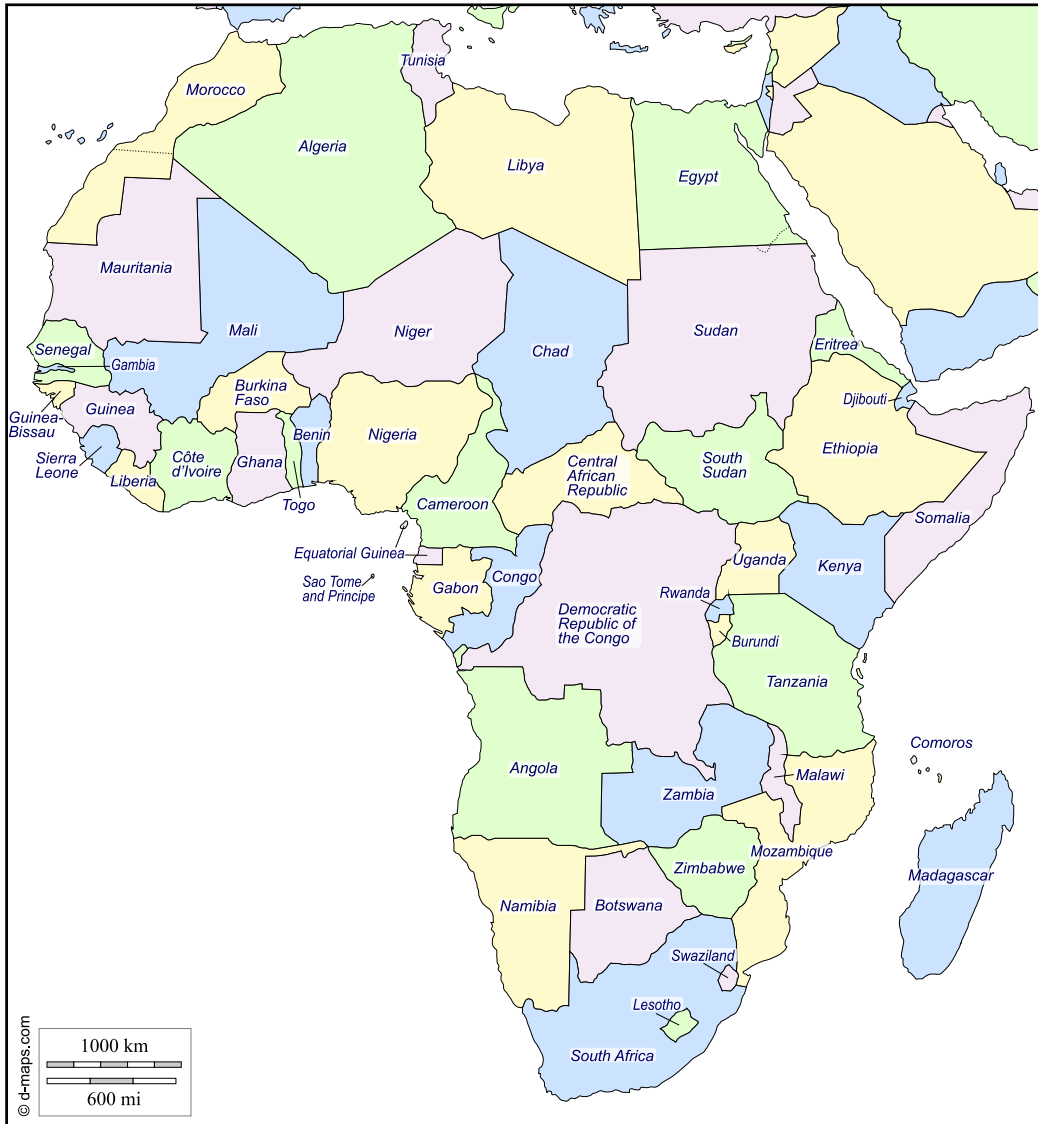 - http://www.ipaidabribe.com/
  - History of Ushahidi

10. Democratic choice (May 2)
As a group, we will decide on April 11th the best focus for this week's classes, in light of student interests and projects. Possible topics to consider include: The role of foreign aid; Gender and sexual politics; Public health; or a deeper dive into a particular country case.

11. Project presentations (May 9)

12. Second and Third Generation Rights and the Strategic Use of Courts (May 16)

- Gauri, Varun. 2004. "Social rights and economics: Claims to health care and education in developing countries." *World Development* 32 (3):465-77.
- Sunstein, C. R. (2001). *Social and economic rights? Lessons from South Africa. U. of Chicago, Public Law Working Paper* (No. 12).
- Johnson, K. (2006). Framing AIDS Mobilization and Human Rights in Post-apartheid South Africa. *Perspectives on Politics*, *4*(04), 663–670.
- Mubangizi, John Cantius. "The Constitutional Protection of Socio-Economic Rights in selected African countries: a comparative evaluation." *African Journal of Legal Studies* 2.1 (2006): 1-19.

(A blank map, useful for studying, is available here: http://www.d-maps.com/m/africa/afrique/afrique34.pdf)