African Development

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This class provides an introduction to, and interpretation of the social scientific and historical research on African development. The focus is on economic and political development in the longue durée and trying to understand how Africa fits into the comparative picture. The focus of much research on contemporary African development is of course on poverty, famine, civil war and the immense economic challenges that the continent has faced since independence. We shall study these and their roots and also many of the political correlates that go along with them, such as the weakness of African states, their corruption and problems of autocracy and democracy. But to get a deep understanding of these phenomena entails understanding Africa society, how it is organized, why it is organized as it is, and how it has come into collision with global forces in the past 500 years.

My own perspective, that will emerge as the course proceeds, is that historically African society, though there is a great deal of variation, was organized around a few pivotal trade-offs. The most important was around the problem of creating and controlling hierarchy. Notably, African lagged Eurasia in the creation of centralized state authority and instead society was organized in a number of different ways: through kinship, age, or other types of corporate groups such as secret societies. Though states did emerge they did so relatively recently and they differed in key ways from European states. The reason for this very different historical pattern for political development is that Africans came up with very creative ways of both stopping centralized authority emerging and also finding substitutes for what it could achieve. This equilibrium, however, left African societies very vulnerable to some of the pernicious forces unleashed in the modern era, particularly the slave trade and colonialism. The combination of these two things, along with the historical legacies of African institutions, have created a very difficult terrain to create prosperity and peace in the post-colonial world.

The course is open for Masters Students, undergraduates and doctoral students. For the latter, I have added a more in depth reading list which relates the lectures to the more detailed social scientific literature on Africa.

There is no real textbook for this course.

Lecture 1: Some Puzzles and Questions

Lecture 2: An African Society

Lewis, Ioan (1961) A Pastoral Democracy, New York: Oxford University Press.

Little, Peter D. (2003) Somalia: Economy without State, Oxford: James Currey.

Lecture 3: Another African Society

Northrup, David (1978) Trade Without Rulers: Pre-Colonial Economic Development in South-Eastern Nigeria, New York: Oxford University Press.

Meagher, Kate (2010) Identity Economics: Social Networks and the informal economy in Nigeria, Oxford: James Currey.

Lecture 4: A Fundamental Problem

Bohannan, Paul (1958) “Extra-processual Events in Tiv Political Institutions,” American Anthropologist, 60, 1-12.

Lecture 5: Political Orders

Southall, Aidan (1956) Alur Society: A Study in Processes and Types of Domination, Cambridge: W. Heffer.

Vansina, Jan (1973) The Tio Kingdom of the Middle Congo, 1880-1892, New York: Oxford University Press.

Spencer, Paul (1965) The Samburu. A Study of Gerontocracy, New York: Oxford University Press.

Lecture 6: Economic Structures

Hopkins, Anthony G. (1973) An Economic History of West Africa, London: Longman.

Dalton George H. (1976) "Review: An Economic History of West Africa by A. G. Hopkins," African Economic History, 1, 51-101.

Douglas, Mary (1962) “Lele economy compared with the Bushong: a study of economic backwardness,” in Markets in Africa, ed. by Paul Bohannan and George Dalton, Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Lowes, Sara, Nathan Nunn, James A. Robinson and Jonathan Weigel (2015) “The Interation of Culture and Institutions: Evidence from the Kuba Kingdom,” forthcoming in Econometrica.

Lecture 7: The collision with the slave trade

Lovejoy, Paul E. (1989) “The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on Africa: A Review of the Literature,” Journal of African History, 30, 365-394.

Nunn, Nathan (2008) "The Long Term Effects of Africa's Slave Trades," Quarterly Journal of Economics, 123 (1): 139--176.

Nunn, Nathan and Leonard Wantchekon (2011) "The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa," American Economic Review, 101 (7): 3221-3252.

Lecture 8: The collision with Colonialism: Settler Colonies

Van Onselen, Charles (1996) The Seed is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper 1894-1985,

Lundahl, Mats (1982) "The Rationale of Apartheid," American Economic Review, 72, 5, 1169-1179.

Lecture 9: Indirect Rule

Mamdani, Mahmood (1996) Citizen and Subject: Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Lecture 10: Making and Fortifying Identities

Vansina, Jan (2004) Antecedents of Modern Rwanda, Madison: University if Wisconsin Press.

Mid-Term

Lecture 11: Them against us

Henry Tajfel (1970) “Experiments in Intergroup Discrimination,” Scientific American, 223.5 (1970): 96-102.

Des Forges, Alison (1999) Leave None to Tell the Story, Human Rights Watch.

Lecture 12: Some long-run economic consequences

Heldring, Leander and James A. Robinson (2012) “Colonialism ad Economic Development in Africa,” http://www.nber.org/papers/w18566

Bates, Robert H. (1981) Markets and States in Tropical Africa, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Palmer, Robin and Q. Neil Parsons eds. (1977) Roots of Poverty in Southern Africa, London: Heinemann.

Lecture 13: Creating Political Order

Young, Crawford (1965) Politics in Congo: Decolonization and Independence, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Zolberg, Aristide (1966) Creating Political Order, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Killick, Tony (1978) Development Economics in Action, London: Heinemann.

Lecture 14: Political Dynamics

Turner, Thomas and Crawford Young (1985) The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Reno, William (1995) Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lecture 15: How African States work

International Crisis Group (2008) Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State, https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic/central-african-republic-anatomy-phantom-state

Lombard, Louisa (2016) State of Rebellion: Violence and Intervention in the Central African Republic, London: Zed Books.

Debos, Marielle (2016) Living by the Gun in Chad: Combatants, Impunity and State Formation, London: Zed Books.

De Waal, Alex (2016) The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power

Lecture 16: The Past in the Present

Chabal, Patrick and Jean-Pascal Daloz (1999) Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument, Oxford: James Currey.

Acemoglu, Daron, Tristan Reed and James A. Robinson (2014) “Chiefs: Elite Control of Civil Society and Development in Sierra Leone,” Journal of Political Economy, 122(2), 319-368.

Herbst, Jeffrey I. (2000) States and Power in Africa,Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Lecture 17: Civil War

Richards, Paul (1996) Fighting for the Rainforest, Oxford: James Currey.

McGovern, Michael (2011) Making War in the Côte d’Ivoire, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lecture 18: Africa and the International Community

Ferguson, James (1994) The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Van de Walle, Nicholas (2001) African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis, 1979-1999, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Blair, Rob (2013) “Legitimacy After Violence: Evidence from Two Lab-in-the-Field Experiments in Liberia,” <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2326671>

Humphreys, Macartan, Raúl Sanchez de la Sierra and Peter van der Windt (2016)

“Social Engineering In The Tropics,”

http://www.columbia.edu/~mh2245/papers1/20150519%20HSW.pdf

Lecture 19: African Development Futures

de Gramont, Diane (2015) “Governing Lagos,” http://carnegieendowment.org/files/governing\_lagos.pdf

Kelsall, Tim (2013) Business, Politics, and the State in Africa: Challenging the Orthodoxies on Growth and Transformation, London: Zed Books.

Widner, Jennifer A. (2001) Building the Rule of Law, New York: W.W. Norton.

Young, Alwyn (2012) “The African Growth Miracle,” Journal of Political Economy 120, 696-739.