

# APSA 2011 Africa Workshop: “Representation Reconsidered”

Carl LeVan, *American University*

The American Political Science Association’s 2011 Africa Workshop will be led by Todd Eisenstadt and Carl LeVan, both of American University in Washington, DC, along with Josephine Ahikire from Makerere University in Uganda and Karuti Kanyinga from the University of Nairobi. The Institute for Development Studies at the University of Nairobi will be hosting the workshop in July. The workshop will be the fourth in a multi-year effort supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to encourage collaboration between political scientists in United States and Africa.

### WORKSHOP THEMES

Over a period of two weeks, approximately 20 Africa-based political scientists and four American graduate students will study three interrelated themes under the banner of “Representation Reconsidered: Ethnic Politics and Africa’s Governance Institutions in Comparative Perspective.” The first set of themes explores different philosophical bases for representative democracy, including the literature on democratization and recent analytical efforts to disaggregate illiberal regimes. Participants will evaluate the merits of different forms of representation inherent in “foundational” debates. Readings will touch upon African understandings of political liberalism, formulating an argument for collective rights within historical nationalist struggles, contemporary surveys on identity, and the broader theories of multiculturalism. Leveraging the different area expertise of the workshop leaders, seminars will examine comparative cases from Latin America and Africa that share common obstacles to democratic development in order to illustrate effective use of case selection.

The second workshop theme explores different democratic models that reflect contrasting responses to the core questions and theories of representation. Consociationalism, power sharing, and the more inclusive

democratic models promote representation as a means of honoring citizen preferences, mitigating conflict, and improving the “quality” of democracy. These models advance a holistic understanding of the interrelated nature of institutions and simplify the task of analyzing salient features of political party systems, executives, federalism, and electoral systems. A critical examination of this research identifies potential tensions between representation and accountability, asking whether inclusive models privilege democratic representation at the expense of other democratic goals. Veto player theory could offer an alternative model applicable across regimes. However, these efforts must balance “formal” institutions such as constitutions with more informal manifestations of political authority such as local strongmen, traditional authority figures, and patriarchy.

The third theme focuses on how the different models of democratic political representation impact public policy performance and resource distribution. Participants will empirically reconsider the consequences of consociationalism, multiparty coalitions, and “consensus” governments. Rather than just considering conflict amelioration, sessions will draw attention to outcomes such as clientelism, corruption, the construction of inefficient informal institutions, and failures to deliver public goods.

### MEETING SITE

The Institute for Development Studies at the University of Nairobi offers a world-class venue for the workshop, and the choice of Kenya will also afford a firsthand assessment of one of Africa’s most important democratic cases. Recent institutional reforms are transforming the relationship between ethnic identity and politics, breaking with harmful colonial legacies. Ethnic violence followed the country’s flawed elections in 2007. Like the representative models explored in the workshop, the principal solution involved power-sharing among political parties. The agreement quickly became cumbersome and

unpopular. However, a national referendum in 2010 restored a sense of hope regarding the future of Kenya’s democracy: by peacefully voting for a new constitution by a 2-1 margin, citizens gave a sense of legitimacy to Kenyan democracy, which is lacking in many constitutional reform processes across Africa. Successful elections in 2012 are far from certain, though, and a comparative institutional analysis can help identify possible roadblocks and solutions. Key insights from the workshop will thus serve both topical and practical purposes.

### WORKSHOP GOALS

In keeping with the APSA’s objectives for the Africa workshop series, one central goal is to help prepare participants to publish their work in U.S.-based or other English-language journals. Participatory seminar sessions will aim to emulate the critical thinking that lies at the root of the peer-review process for scholarly journals. A second goal is to improve the research design skills of participants by discussing examples of good research design in depth. Finally, the workshop team aspires to establish lasting working relationships with the Africa-based scholars, including a possible follow-up meeting in Washington, DC.

### TEAM LEADER BACKGROUNDS

Eisenstadt is the former chair of the department of government in AU’s School of Public Affairs. He has published widely on Latin American political parties, social movements, and ethnic politics. LeVan’s recent journal articles examine democratization in Nigeria, African responses to the U.S. military’s Africa Command, and problems stemming from power-sharing agreements in Africa. Both scholars received their Ph.D.s from the University of California, San Diego, and they collaborated on a 2009 workshop at AU on “The Consequences of Political Inclusion in Africa,” funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the AU Africa Council. Josephine Ahikire, a

senior lecturer in the department of women and gender studies at Makerere University, is the executive director of the Centre for

Basic Research in Kampala and publishes on the politics of gender. Karuti Kanyinga is based at the workshop's host institution,

and he has published numerous analyses of Kenya's power-sharing agreement and land reforms. ■

## Title VI and Fulbright-Hays Cuts Impact Social Science Research

Brooks Marmon, *Program Assistant, APSA International and External Relations*

*The APSA discovered just before going to press that the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad (DDRA) Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, has been cancelled for FY 2011. From the inception of the awards in 1965 through 1994, 13% of all Fulbright-Hays fellowships supported students of political science or economics. In FY 2010, at least ten doctoral political science students received DDRA funding for work in locations ranging from Brazil to Burma. The following article provides further background and highlights some specific research projects DDRA funding has enabled in Africa.*

*When this article was written, it was hoped that in a worst-case scenario, the FY 2011 budget passed by Congress would result in a smaller overall number of awards. Unfortunately, the funding constraints discussed here have been fully realized, causing this year's program to be cancelled entirely. The piece remains in its original form, in the hope that it poignantly illustrates the value of DDRA funding and helps make the case for its restoration in the FY 2012 congressional budget. The APSA continues to work with several partners, including the National Humanities Alliance and the Coalition for International Education, to reinstate this valuable resource for the social science scholarship of our nation's emerging academics.*

As of this writing, funding for programs within the Department of Education funded by Title VI of the Higher Education Act and the Fulbright-Hays Act face cuts of 40%. Title VI supports over 100 national resource centers at public and private universities engaged in area and language studies, while the Fulbright-Hays Act primarily supports doctoral dissertation research abroad. As a member of the Coalition for International Education and the National Humanities Alliance, the APSA is working to restore these funds, which play a critical role in promoting U.S. global competence.

One striking illustration of the value of Title VI and Fulbright-Hays support for political science research can be found in the work of emerging scholars funded by these programs. An examination of the professional biographies of the U.S. graduate students applying to our annual Africa workshop series (supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation) highlights the importance of this funding.

The APSA received approximately 25 applications for the 2011 Africa workshop from U.S. graduate students (mostly political scientists, but also representing several other social science disciplines) competing for three openings in the workshop to be held at the University of Nairobi in Kenya. Each year, the impressive array of applicants furnishes a wide set of credentials. The typical candidate has significant experience in Africa and knowledge of one of the continent's languages, such as Portuguese, Arabic, Swahili, Setswana, or Yoruba, many of which

are considered vital to U.S. national security interests. The U.S. Department of Education facilitated the experience of many of these doctoral students in Africa through Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships—a major component of Title VI funding and/or Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad (DDRA) Fellowships. Private foundations often focus their support toward more senior faculty, so these grants have played an invaluable role in allowing a younger generation of scholars to develop a solid base for their early research. With the acquisition of the language skills needed to conduct research abroad courtesy of a FLAS Fellowship, the Fulbright-Hays DDRA funding allows graduate students to effectively apply their training in the field.

Megan Hershey, a doctoral candidate in political science at Indiana University and a 2011 APSA Africa workshop applicant, received support from both programs. She began study of Swahili in the summer of 2005 on an FLAS-funded program, further developed her knowledge of the language over the course of the 2006–07 academic year, and then visited Kenya with DDRA funding. She observes, “FLAS funding prepared me with the language skills necessary to conduct intensive qualitative field work in Kenya and the Fulbright-Hays made that field work possible.” Hershey's dissertation, “NGOs and Community Participation in Kenya's Fight against HIV/AIDS,” explores the role of community-based NGOs that receive significant amounts of international funding.

Her Fulbright-Hays funding allowed her to spend almost a year interviewing staff and observing operations at several HIV prevention centers in Kenya. As Hershey states, she would not have been able to “collect impassioned views of the aid system from youth living in Nairobi's slums or conduct detailed observations of local civil society organizations,” without this valuable support.

Hershey's dissertation deepens our understanding of the strategic political and social interactions between diverse groups of civil society actors and suggests that a numbers-based approach to international development has gained currency at the expense of more meaningful community participation. She has received several internal grants from Indiana University, but institutional funding is rarely able to facilitate insights as extensive as those derived from Title VI-funded language training and the sustained field experience of a Fulbright-Hays Fellow. Hershey believes that her graduate career “would be far less interesting” had she not received this federal support, and that it would have been much more difficult “to produce valuable and interesting research that has practical policy implications for both the United States and Kenyan governments.”

Steve Lichty, another 2011 applicant and a student of political science at the University of Florida, received FLAS language training in Arabic and Swahili. He subsequently secured Fulbright-Hays funding that allowed him to track eight cosmopolitan churches in Nairobi for his dissertation, “Between Pulpit