Application for AAP African Futures Program (MSU Faculty Mentorship)
Jeffrey Conroy-Krutz, Associate Professor of Political Science
conroyk6@msu.edu

Project: The Determinants and Effects of Youth Engagement
AAP Priority Area: Youth Empowerment

Africa’s population is the youngest in the world. One in six Africans is between the ages of 15 and 24, and four in ten are currently younger than 15. For many, this represents a “youth bomb,” as many young people will find it harder and harder to access to economic, educational, and political opportunities. A disenfranchised and disenchanted generation could become apathetic and disengaged, and even vulnerable to sectarian and extremist movements.

These concerns are exacerbated by the fact that, in many African countries, civic spaces have started shrinking considerably in recent years, as governments place new limitations on civil society actors, traditional and new media, and general freedoms of expression and association. Many of these changes are instituted ostensibly to limit foreign influence and encourage stability, but they are significant challenges to accountable government, informed policy-making, and anti-corruption efforts. Youth are often already marginalized; these changes are likely to frustrate their ambitions for economic advancement and political voice even more.

On the other hand, youth could provide tremendous opportunities for economic growth and vibrant citizenship, particularly as younger generations in Africa comprise the best-educated and most-technologically savvy elements of their societies. Social and digital media, for example, which are more often accessed by youth, present new opportunities to share information, innovate economically, and enhance transparency in ways that hold politicians accountable. As Dayo Olopade writes, African youth hold the potential to engage in “risk tasking and rejection of conventional pedagogy” in ways that can positively transform the continent’s political and economic systems.¹

Increasing opportunities for youth—and harnessing their civic potential—is therefore a crucial component of building better governance in Africa. Realizing this, local organizations are devoting considerable resources to youth-oriented programs involving civic education, capacity-building exercises, and development of virtual civic spaces that can enable information sharing and collective action. Engaged youth have the potential to agitate for more-inclusive policy-making, improve service delivery, and combat corruption, both in terms of how resources are allocated and how democratic institutions function.

Research Themes

This research program will evaluate the effectiveness of various initiatives to enhance youth engagement in Africa.² More specifically, it will focus on three areas:

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² Although the project will likely be focused on the East African countries of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, youth-engagement initiatives are relevant throughout the continent, and perspectives from researchers from outside of these countries would certainly be welcomed.
[1] **Promoting good governance, by combatting corruption and improving accountability.** Youth often disengage from politics, due to cynicism about an inability to effect change in the face of corrupt, entrenched interests. However, youth-oriented—and youth-led—initiatives at local and national levels have the potential to transform governance, often by harnessing new technologies that foster transparency, information-sharing, and citizen-to-citizen and citizen-to-representative communication.

[2] **Building sustainable tolerance in diverse communities.** Under-employed and generally disaffected youth are too often vulnerable to messages that scapegoat and denigrate “others,” thus fueling potential inter-group discrimination and conflict. Thus, reaching these groups with counter-messages, promoting the potential benefits of inter-group cooperation and teaching strategies of active bystandership, is essential.

[3] **Supporting informed engagement.** The global interest in the role of social and traditional media in propagating misinformation also applies in East Africa. The governments of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda have all responded to this apparent problem by putting in place or proposing laws and regulations that significantly limit speech and press freedoms. However, a number of organizations are seeking to combat “fake news” by training youth to recognize factually incorrect messaging and verify messages before sending them.

**Collaborative Activities**

An early career scholar would participate in a number of research-related activities on these themes. These specific activities would be partly determined by the early career scholar’s goals and specific interests, and partly determined by opportunities for partnerships with donors and civil society organizations on the continent.

[1] Development of **theories and testable hypotheses** on the determinants of youth engagement in different contexts in Africa, and the potential effects of various kinds of engagement on the focus areas.

[2] Development of **grant applications** for submission to funding agencies to support partnerships between academics at AAP consortium institutions and practitioners, to study the effects of youth engagement on the focus areas.

[3] Designing **strategies for analyzing and collecting various kinds of data**—qualitative and quantitative, experimental and observational—to test hypotheses. Data sources include those collected by Dr. Conroy-Krutz from recent and ongoing projects (e.g., in Burundi, DR Congo, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, and Uganda) and third parties (e.g., the Afrobarometer and surveys conducted by other researchers before and after experimental interventions). In addition, depending on funding and other partnership possibilities, there may be opportunities to collaborate on the collection of original qualitative and/or quantitative data.

[4] **Writing and disseminating results**, in venues such as workshops, conference presentations, policy papers, blog and media posts, and academic journals.
These activities would constitute meaningful opportunities for early career scholars to gain increased experience in important aspects of researchers’ regular work, including developing theories, seeking funding, designing and conducting data collection, analyzing observational and/or experimental data, and presenting findings.

Finally, Dr. Conroy-Krutz is submitting an application to support the initial stages of this research through the AAP’s Transforming Institutions Strategic Funding Proposal Exploratory Grant. That grant would fund a workshop in Nairobi in July 2019 to begin discussions between academics and civil society organizations working on these issues in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. These discussions would, in turn, be used to inform proposals to potential donors. If logistics allowed, an early career researcher working on this project would have the opportunity to participate in that workshop, as a way to launch collaborative activities.
March 2019

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E-mail: conroyk6@msu.edu

Academic Employment
Associate Professor of Political Science, Michigan State University, January 2017-Present
Assistant Professor of Political Science, Michigan State University, August 2009-December 2016

Research Interests and Teaching Fields
Political information and mass media, elections and campaigns, ethnicity, clientelism, Africa

Education
Ph.D., Political Science, Columbia University, 2009
  Dissertation: Political Information & Electoral Behavior in Sub-Saharan Africa
  Committee: Macartan Humphreys (chair), John Huber, Kimuli Kasara

M.A., Political Science, Columbia University, 2003

B.A., World Politics and History, Hamilton College, 2001 (summa cum laude)

Peer-Refereed Journal Publications


  **Best Paper Award, Experimental Politics Section of the American Political Science Association (for best paper presented at 2013 annual meeting)

  **Sage Best Paper Award (honorable mention), Comparative Politics Section of the American Political Science Association (for best paper presented at 2013 annual meeting)


“Partisan Cues and Vote Choice in New Multiparty Systems” (w/ Devra Moehler and Rosario Aguilar), Comparative Political Studies, vol. 49, no. 1 (January 2016), pp. 3-35.


**Best Paper in Journal of Politics Award, Southern Political Science Association (for 2015)**

**Kaid-Sanders Best Political Communication Article of the Year Award, International Communication Association, Political Communication Division (for 2015)**


**Other Peer-Refereed Publications**


“Museveni and the 2011 Ugandan Election: Did the Money Matter?” (w/ Carolyn Logan) Afrobarometer Working Papers Series, no. 135 (September 2011)


**Book Chapters**


**Working Papers (Under Review or Available in Draft Form)**

“The Legacies of Colonial Partition on Ethnic Politics in Contemporary Africa” (w/ Christian Houle)

“Media and Attitudes about Electoral Malpractice: Evidence from a Field Experiment in a New Democracy” (w/ Devra Moehler)

“Within-Group Inequality and Ethnic Bloc Politics in Africa”

“Mapping Ideologies in African Landscapes” (w/ Dominique Lewis)

“The Electoral Topography of the African State”
Other Ongoing Projects

“Campaign Effects and Inter-Ethnic Relations in Africa”

“Campaign Effects in Competitive-Authoritarian Regimes”


“Parties as Ethnic Mobilizers in Africa? Uganda After the ‘No-Party’ Democracy Experiment”

“Culture Shift? The Effects of Violent Conflict on Attitudes on Women’s Political Participation” (w/ Nicholas Kerr)

“Candidate Appearance Effects in a New Electoral Regime: An Experiment on Visual Cues and Voting Behavior in Uganda” (w/ Dror Walter)

“Who Transhumes? Dominant Party Deconstruction and Construction in Senegal” (w/ Fritz Bondoa)

“Mixed Signals? Petty Patronage as a Signaling Strategy in African Campaigns”

Book Reviews


Fellowships & Grants

Embassy of the Netherlands (for study of impact on media programming and grassroots activities on interethnic relations in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda) (2017-9) (€100,000)


Dr. Gwen Andrew Faculty Initiatives Fund, College of Social Science, Michigan State University (for
study of norms around electoral malpractice in Kenya) (2017-8) ($5,745)

Course Development Award, African Studies Center, Michigan State University (Summer 2017) ($2,962)

Strategic Partnership Fund Award, Center for Advanced Study of International Development, Michigan State University (for study of partisan polarization in Ghana) (Spring 2017) ($4,760)

United States Agency for International Development, Center of Excellence in Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (for project implemented by the Institute of International Education) (w/ Erica Frantz) (for study on transitions from authoritarianism) (2016-7) ($119,987)

Dr. Gwen Andrew Faculty Initiatives Fund, College of Social Science, Michigan State University (for study of how violence affects norms on women’s political participation in Côte d’Ivoire) (2014-15) ($5,020)

Research Initiation Grant, Center for Advanced Study of International Development, Michigan State University (for study of how violence affects norms on women’s political participation in Côte d’Ivoire) (2014) (declined)

National Science Foundation (SES-1024031) (for panel survey on campaigns in Uganda) (2010-3) ($138,211)

British Broadcasting Corporation Media Action Grant (w/ Devra Moehler) (for field experiment on effects of partisan radio in Ghana) (2012)

International Development Grants Program, Center for Advanced Study of International Development, Michigan State University (for panel survey on campaigns in Uganda) (2010-1) ($4,000)

National Science Foundation (SES-0720275) (for survey experiments in Uganda) (2007-8) ($12,000)

Teaching Fellowship, Columbia University Graduate School of Arts & Sciences (2002-8)


Junior Fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Democracy and Rule of Law Project) (2001-2)

Awards

Journal of Politics Best Paper Award, Southern Political Science Association (for 2015), for “Moderation from Bias: A Field Experiment on Partisan Media in a New Democracy,” w/ Devra Moehler

Kaid-Sanders Best Political Communication Article of the Year Award, International Communication Association, Political Communication Division (for 2015), for “Moderation from Bias: A Field Experiment on Partisan Media in a New Democracy,” w/ Devra Moehler
Best Paper Award, Experimental Politics Section of the American Political Science Association (for best paper presented at 2013 annual meeting), for “Mobilization by Media? A Field Experiment on Partisan Media Effects in Africa,” w/ Devra Moehler

Sage Best Paper Award (honorable mention), Comparative Politics Section of the American Political Science Association (for best paper presented at 2013 annual meeting), for “Mobilization by Media? A Field Experiment on Partisan Media Effects in Africa,” w/ Devra Moehler

**Conference Presentations & Invited Talks**

“Path Ways from Authoritarianism.” Presented at United States Agency for International Development Tuesday Group Meeting (Washington, June 2017).

“Path Ways from Authoritarianism” (w/ Erica Frantz). Presented at The Democratic Change Research Initiative, Northwestern University (Evanston, April 2017).


“Partisan Media Effects in New Democracies,” University of Missouri (Columbia, MO, April 2016)

“Media Exposure and Political Participation in a Transitional African Context.” Presented at Conference on Data-Driven Development in Africa (State College, PA, February 2016)

“Violent Conflict, Gender, and Attitudes on Leadership: Survey Results from Nigeria” (w/ Nicholas Kerr). Presented at Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) Annual Meeting (Chicago, April 2016)


“Ballot Design and Ethnic Voting” (w/ Devra Moehler). Presented at Workshop on Emerging Challenges of Electoral Integrity (Chicago, August 2013); ASA (Philadelphia, November-December 2012); APSA (New Orleans, August-September 2012) (conference canceled due to inclement weather); and MPSA (Chicago, April 2012).
“Partisan Voices on the African Airwaves: An Experiment on the Political Effects of Exposure to
Talk Radio” (w/ Devra Moehler). Presented at MPSA (Chicago, April 2013).

Presented at MPSA (Chicago, April 2013) and APSA (New Orleans, August-September 2012)
(conference canceled due to inclement weather).

“Measuring Campaign Effects in African Contexts.” Presented at MPSA (Chicago, April 2012);
Department of Political Science, Concordia University (Montréal, March 2012); and African
Studies Center, Michigan State University (East Lansing, April 2011).

“Museveni and the 2011 Ugandan Election: Did the Money Matter?” Presented at African Studies
Center, Michigan State University (East Lansing, December 2011).

“Vote Buying in the 2011 Ugandan General Election.” Presented at Center for Advanced Study of
International Development/GenCen Forum, Michigan State University (East Lansing, September
2011).

“Parties on the Ballot: Visual Cues and Voting Behavior in Uganda” (w/ Devra Moehler and Rosario
Aguilar). Presented at APSA (Seattle, September 2011).

“Parties as Ethnic Mobilizers in Africa? Uganda After the ‘No-Party’ Democracy Experiment.”
Presented at APSA (Washington, September 2010).

“Mapping Ideologies in African Landscapes” (w/ Dominique Lewis). Presented at MPSA (Chicago,
April 2010).

Electoral Politics.” Presented at APSA (Toronto, August 2009).

“Survey Experiments, Information Processing, and Electoral Decision-Making.” Presented at APSA
(Boston, August 2008).

“Information, Petty Patronage, and Voting Behavior in Africa.” Presented at New England Political
Science Association (NEPSA) (Providence, April 2008).


“How Common is Communalism? Diversity, Information Access, and Community Political Cohesion
in Uganda.” Presented at MPSA (Chicago, April 2007).

Boston University African Studies Graduate Conference (Boston, March 2007).


MPSA (Chicago, April 2006).


Teaching

Michigan State University (assistant & associate professor)

PLS 857. Parties and Elections (Graduate). Fall 2010, Fall 2012, Spring 2015, Fall 2016.

Harvard University (teaching assistant)

Gov 20. Introduction to Comparative Politics (Undergraduate). Fall 2008.

Columbia University (teaching assistant)


Service

Afrobarometer Working Papers Series Editor (May 2018-Present)


External grants reviewer: National Science Foundation, Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship (Social Science Research Council), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Ohio University Research Consortium, Spencer Foundation


Best Paper Award Committee, Experimental Politics Section of the American Political Science Association (2016)


Executive Committee, Midwest Group in African Political Economy (2011-Present)

Sage Best Paper Award Committee (for best paper presented in comparative politics at 2014 American Political Science Association annual meeting) (2015)

Best Book Award Committee, African Politics Conference Group (2014)

MPSA Program Committee, Politics of Developing Countries Section Chair (2013-4, 2014-5)

APSA Program Committee (Co-Chair), African Politics Conference Group (Sep. 2010-Sep. 2011)

Editorial Assistant, *Political Science Quarterly* (September 2004-May 2009)


### PhD Dissertation Committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Committee Position</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
<th>Post-MSU Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steve Anderson</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Current PhD candidate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Danielle Carter</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Completed Spring 2013</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, St. Mary’s College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olufunmbi Elemo</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Completed Fall 2012</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, James Madison College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shih-hao Huang</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Completed Spring 2014</td>
<td>Post-doc, National Chengchi University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerry Lavery</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Completed Spring 2014</td>
<td>National Democratic Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helen Lee</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Completed Spring 2014</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, James Madison College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dominique Lewis</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Completed Spring 2017</td>
<td>Instructor, Blinn College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caleb Lucas</td>
<td>Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alex Mardon</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Current PhD candidate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hsin-Hsin Pan</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Completed Spring 2015</td>
<td>Post-doc, National Taiwan University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Penar</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Completed Fall 2017</td>
<td>Visiting Assistant Professor, Davidson College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chunho Park</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Completed Spring 2017</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, Nazabayev University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christina Scheller</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Current PhD candidate</td>
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### Research Conducted Outside of United States

- Senegal (Summer 2006, Summer 2007)
- Ghana (Summer 2011, Summer 2012, Fall 2012, Summer 2017)
- Côte d’Ivoire (Spring 2015)
- Rwanda (Summer-Fall 2017)
- Kenya (Fall 2017)
- Mali (Spring 2018, Summer 2018)
- Niger (Summer 2018, Fall 2018)

### Language Skills

- French (basic proficiency); Spanish (reading proficiency); German (introductory); Wolof (introductory)