

# **Afrobarometer and the MSU Department of Political Science**

in collaboration with the

## **Alliance for African Partnership's**

### **African Futures Research Leadership Program**

offers a 2020-2021 mentoring opportunity focused on:

## **Analysis and Publication Using Afrobarometer Public Attitude Data**

### **Afrobarometer overview**

Afrobarometer (AB) is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts nationally representative public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, government services, the economy and related issues. Established in 1999, over the last 20 years, AB has conducted nearly 200 surveys in 39 countries. The network has compiled an extremely rich and unique data set about the experiences, attitudes, evaluations and behaviors of ordinary Africans from across the continent, gathered in face-to-face interviews with nearly 300,000 respondents. Afrobarometer's rigorous methodologies have been described as "the gold standard" for survey research in Africa. Round 8 surveys are currently under way, and will be completed in 35 countries in 2020.

Afrobarometer data covers a wide range of topics, from support for democracy to awareness of climate change. Data of particular interest for participants in this program might include Afrobarometer's extensive time-series and cross-sectional data on government performance and citizen experiences in the health and education sectors, as well as numerous indicators relating to access to clean water and reliable energy supplies. Moreover, all AB data can be disaggregated by age and by gender to gain added insight into the views and experiences of Africa's youth and women. In addition, all Afrobarometer data is now geocoded, so it is possible to analyze Afrobarometer public attitude data alongside other geo-located data sources e.g., on infrastructure, investment, and related issues.

AB places a high priority not just on collecting high quality data, but on disseminating the findings to the widest possible audience in order to ensure that Africans' voices are represented in policy and political debates across the continent. AB data and publications are used by journalists to develop and report on critical issues facing African societies, by governments to guide policy design and evaluate implementation, and by NGOs and citizen advocates to hold governments accountable. They are also widely used by international donors, academics and others to better understand the societies where they work and study. This dissemination effort is supported by Afrobarometer's professional communications team, which has helped the network publish 345 AB Dispatches, 61 AB Policy Papers and 184 AB Working Papers, along with hundreds of press releases and other documents.

In addition to rigorous data collection and extensive communication of the findings, AB's third core objective emphasizes building capacity across the continent not only to collect high quality data, but to analyze it and effectively communicate the findings. This objective is met through extensive in-country technical assistance during survey fieldwork, short workshops on selected survey and analysis topics and

methods, extended training courses such as the Afrobarometer Summer School (see below), and through building mentoring relationships between junior and senior analysts.

AB comprises a network of more than 35 partner institutions across the continent, along with Michigan State University in the United States, which was one of the three co-founding institutions. AB partners include university-based research institutes, non-governmental research and advocacy organizations, and research companies. The diverse array of skills and experience that these partners bring to the AB is a key factor underlying the network's success.

More information on Afrobarometer can be found at [www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org)

### Post-Doctoral Position Description

This post-doctoral position with Afrobarometer will offer the researcher the opportunity to work with the extensive Afrobarometer data set with the key goals of producing and publishing several analyses, either alone, or in collaboration with other members of the AB network and the MSU/AB team. The position is highly flexible and will be adapted to accommodate the interests, needs and goals of the researcher with regard to both research topics, as well as the level of analysis and types of publications and outputs to be produced. AB and MSU/Political Science Department can also offer a number of special research and learning opportunities to the researcher as described below.

We will launch this post-doctoral position with an initial discussion of the researcher's skills and experience in working specifically with public opinion data. Both Dr. Logan and other members of the network can provide support to build the researcher's skills and experience in this area as needed. We will also introduce the researcher to the full scope of the AB data available, with a special focus on the topics of special interest to the researcher. We will then jointly develop a workplan that establishes research and publication goals for the year. The researcher can choose to maintain a primarily academic focus in their work if preferred, but they will also have the opportunity, if desired, to work with the AB communications team to produce press releases, blog posts, tweets and other outputs related to sharing and publicizing their work.

During the course of the post-doctoral position, Afrobarometer, MSU and the Political Science Department can also offer to the researcher the opportunity to:

- Work with members of the Afrobarometer surveys team during preparations for survey fieldwork, including possible participation in or observation of field data collection.
- Attend the Afrobarometer Anglophone Summer School, a signature AB training event, as either an instructor, a participant, or both. The Summer School is a four week course held at the University of Cape Town each year in November/December that offers participants training both in analytical methods (at both introductory and intermediate/advanced levels) and in core concepts covered by Afrobarometer such as governance and service delivery, gender or youth analysis, and related issues. (Note that AB also holds a Francophone Summer School, usually in July/August each year, which the researcher may also be able to attend if the timing can be accommodated in the overall schedule for the position.)
- Mentor other young scholars, including MSU undergraduate and master's program students
- Participate in other aspects of research project development and management, including grant writing for capacity building, analysis and communications activities, budgeting, and related topics.
- Present at and participate in weekly research seminars held within the Department of Political Science, as well as at the MSU African Studies Center, and in other departments on campus.