

Thomas Alexander Isbell

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Curriculum Vitae

Education:

since 11/2016: Doctoral Studies at the University of Cape Town (supervisor: Prof. Robert Mattes/ Prof. Jeremy Seekings); Research Question: Does perceived economic inequality decrease democratic culture in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa?

Past research suggests that high levels of economic inequality are linked to declining social trust and engagement, political participation, efficacy and less satisfaction with democracy. Given that a large share of democracies today, are low-income and developing countries, such cases would appear an obvious case for scrutiny. However, only few studies have tested such linkages in this context. Limited economic data may be to blame for this gap in the literature. I use perceived inequality from survey data, rather than national aggregate data to bridge this gap. Such data moreover addresses an issue persistent in much of the inequality literature, which widely uses objective, attributed measures of inequality, such as GINI-based measures. Past research has shown, however, that objective inequality is not accurately perceived by individuals. As individuals inherently base their behavior and attitudes on their perception of reality, it is questionable how valid objective inequality measures are, as a predictor of individuals' action and attitudes. I address my research question in two steps. First, I explore what factors moderate individuals' perception of inequality, placing special emphasis on education and identity. In the second stage, I test the causal effect of perceived inequality on democratic culture in sub-Saharan Africa. I use mixed-linear models, to estimate the effect of perceived inequality on the respective dimensions of democratic culture- efficacy, trust and participation.

02/ 2013 - 12/2015: Postgraduate Studies at the University of Cape Town (Master of Arts: International Relations); Thesis Supervisor: Prof. Robert Mattes; Degree awarded with distinction in coursework and thesis

09/2009- 12/2013: Undergraduate Studies at University of Mannheim; Germany (Bachelor of Arts: Political Science/ Business Studies) Overall Grade: 2,0 (Upper Second)

06/2007: A- Levels; Ernst-Haeckel Gymnasium in Werder/Havel; Germany Overall Grade: 1,6 (First)

Work Experience:

Since 01/2018: Assistant Data Quality Officer, Afrobarometer Survey

04/2014- 12/2017: Data Clerk at Afrobarometer Survey. My responsibilities included raw data cleaning, calculation of error rates, compilation of cross-survey results (SOR), programming of electronic data capturing software and writing of codebooks.

02/2017- 02/2017: Convenor for POL3043F (Democratic Theory and Practice), University of Cape Town; Design and formulation of course outline, structure and syllabus, focussing on balancing theoretical discussions of democratization literature and introduction to research design and quantitative research methods; hiring and management of lecturer, teaching

assistant and tutors; formulation of examination material (class test and exam); supervision and grading of final research papers.

04/2017- 07/2017: Lecturer for POL2039F (International Political Economy), Convenor: Dr Harry Stephan (Class size 240)

04/2016-06/2016: Lecturer for POL2039F (International Political Economy), Convenor: Dr Harry Stephan (Class size 180)

02/2016- 06/2016: Teaching Assistant for POL2039F (International Political Economy), Convenor: Dr Harry Stephan (Class size 180)

11/2015-12/2016: Tutor, Introduction to Social Science Statistics, CSSR Summer School, UCT (Class size: 25)

10/ 2015-12/2016: Member of Organizing Team, CSSR Summer School, UCT

02/2015-06/2015: Teaching Assistant for POL 1004F (Introduction to Politics), Convenor: Dr Harry Stephan, UCT; Course Administration, Responsible for Tutors, Weekly lectures on Methodology in the Social Sciences (Class size: 520)

11/2014- 12/2014: Tutor, Introduction to Social Science Statistics, CSSR Summer School, UCT (Class size: 30)

02/2014- 06/2014: Teaching Assistant for POL 1004F (Introduction to Politics) Convenor: Dr. Harry Stephan, UCT; Course Administration, Responsible for Tutors, Weekly lectures on Methodology in the Social Sciences (Class size: 480)

01/2014- 02/2014: Tutor for Advanced Statistics at CSSR Summer School, UCT (Class size: 10)

01/2012- 03/2012: Internship at World Climate Ltd., Copenhagen, Denmark (Content Management (Corporate Publication) Investor Acquisition Market Analysis (Germany, Austria, Switzerland; Middle East)

05/2010- 05/2011: Student Research Assistant at the Special Research Area 884 at University of Mannheim, Supervised by Prof. Dr. Rittberger

05/2009- 06/2009: Voluntary Work at the Salvation Army, Regional Branch, Queenstown, New Zealand

Publications:

2018:

Kenians say climate change affecting personal lives and country (with W Macharia & A Kopf). <http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad183-kenians-say-climate-change-affecting-personal-lives-and-country>

2017:

Election quality: Ugandans skeptical of electoral commission, back reforms to gain transparency (with F. Kibirige). <http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad182-election-quality-ugandans-skeptical-electoral-commission-back-reforms-gain-transparency>

Tax compliance Africans affirm civic duty but lack trust in tax department.

<http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/pp43-tax-compliance-africans-affirm-civic-duty-lack-trust-tax-department>

Malawians increasingly cautious about exercising right to 'free' political speech (w J.

Chunga). <http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad176-malawians-increasingly-cautious-about-exercising-right-free-political-speech>

Burundi's national land commission: How fairly does it resolve land disputes?

<http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad163-burundis-national-land-commission-how-fairly-does-it-resolve-land-disputes>

Perceived patronage: Do secret societies, ethnicity, region boost careers in Cameroon?

<http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad162-perceived-patronage-do-secret-societies-ethnicity-region-boost-careers-cameroon>

Building bridges? Cape Verdeans value regional ties, U.S. model, China's influence.

<http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad161-building-bridges-cape-verdeans-value-regional-ties-us-model-chinas-influence>

Efficacy for fighting corruption: Evidence from 36 African countries.

<http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/pp41-efficacy-fighting-corruption-evidence-36-african-countries>

Le Burkina post-2014: La préférence pour la vérité plutôt que l'oubli mise à l'épreuve.

<http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad155-le-burkina-post-2014-la-preference-pour-la-verite-plutot-que-loubli-mise-lepreuve>

A price worth paying? How Sudanese balance human rights and the pursuit of security.

<http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad144-price-worth-paying-how-sudanese-balance-human-rights-and-pursuit-security>

Algerians' darkening outlook on economy and democracy predates recent anti-austerity

protests. <http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad140-algerians-darkening-outlook-economy-and-democracy-predates-recent-anti-austerity>

A no-confidence vote? Mozambicans still vote, but faith in democracy is slipping.

<http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad139-no-confidence-vote-mozambicans-still-vote-faith-democracy-slipping>

Digging a future? Citizens see positive impact of mining in Madagascar .

<http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad138-digging-future-citizens-see-positive-impact-mining-madagascar>

Rejoining the AU, Moroccans bring decidedly mixed attitudes toward regional integration

(with D. Jacobs) <http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad137-rejoining-au-moroccans-bring-decidedly-mixed-attitudes-toward-regional>

Senegal's corruption court seen as building trust in government, but credibility weakened by

bias (with A. Kopf). <http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad136-senegals-corruption-court-seen-building-trust-government-credibility-weakened>

A second spring for democracy in post-Mubarak Egypt? Findings from Afrobarometer (with D. Jacobs). <http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad133-second-spring-democracy-post-mubarak-egypt>

Of the people, for the people? Attitudes toward sharing of resource revenues in Mozambique (with A. Kopf) <http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad132-attitudes-toward-sharing-of-resource-revenues-in-mozambique>

2016:

Are Africans willing to pay higher taxes or user fees for better health care?

<http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/pp37-are-africans-willing-pay-higher-taxes-or-user-fees-better-health-care>

Winds of change? Attitudes toward renewable energy policy in Mauritius. 2016. (with A.Kopf). <http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad127-attitudes-toward-renewable-energy-policy-mauritius>

Languages:

German: Mother tongue

English: Mother tongue

French: basic

Technical Skills:

SPSS- Advanced skills

Survey to go- Intermediary skills

Excel- Intermediary skills

Word- Advanced skills

Power Point- Intermediary Skills

References:

Professor Robert Mattes (Political Science- University of Strathclyde, Scotland); Co- founder and senior advisor to Afrobarometer Survey, Principal Investigator in the African Legislatures Project; South African principal investigator of the Comparative National Elections Project.

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