

Democracy in africa research unit

Bob Mattes

The Democracy in Africa Research Unit supports scholars and students conducting research on topics related to the consolidation of democracy in South Africa and across the continent. Core areas of research focus on the linkages between democracy and public opinion, elections and voting, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

DARU made significant strides in 2003 towards advancing the social scientific understanding of democratic politics in Africa. We built new capacities to conduct systematic research on these topics, and also facilitated the rapid progress of some very promising graduate students at UCT.

This was enabled by Mellon funds which supported fellowships and scholarships for UCT faculty and students, as well as visiting fellowships for internationally renowned political scientists.

Progress was also greatly facilitated by emerging partnerships with external research projects. For example, DARU is a research associate of the *Afrobarometer*, a groundbreaking series of cross national surveys of citizen attitudes to democracy and markets conducted in 16 African countries. We also work with the Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Research Unit (HEARD/University of Natal) to analyze existing data and plan new research directions on the impact of AIDS on democratic governance. DARU is also now the South African partner in the Comparative National Elections Project that will have been carried out in over 20 countries by 2005. As detailed below, these partnerships have already begun to increase our research output, giving DARU researchers access to existing data, allowing them to participate in new data collection efforts, and creating exciting synergies with researchers in the rest of Africa and across the world.

DARU built research capacity by facilitating the movement of several important micro and macro level data bases to Data First. In close cooperation with the Dept of Political Studies and the Graduate School of Humanities, we are training a growing number of undergraduate and graduate students in research design, social statistics, and substantive issues in the study of democratic politics. Seminars and lectures by Visiting Scholars also stimulated interest in systematic empirical research amongst a number of previously skeptical graduate students.

DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL CULTURE

With the time created by his buy-out arrangement from the Dept of Politics, DARU Director Robert Mattes authored or co-authored six CSSR Working Papers, and also co-authored a book entitled *Democracy, Markets and Public Opinion in Africa* currently in production at Cambridge University Press for publication in 2004.

Prof Doh C. Shin from the University of Missouri visited

DARU for one month, and presented a seminar on his critique of Richard Rose's influential "Churchill Hypothesis" explanation of popular support for democracy in formerly authoritarian societies. Shin and Mattes co-authored a comparative analysis of South Korean and South African survey data to test whether the Churchill Hypotheses adequately explains support for democracy in these cases: this will soon appear as a Working Paper.

Hermann Thiel, of the University of Stellenbosch, was at DARU throughout the second half of the year. As part of the Director's buyout, he taught a 2nd year course on research design and methodology in the Political Studies department. He also used World Values Survey and *Afrobarometer* data to examine the predictors of protest behavior and its links with democratic values: this will shortly appear as a Working Paper.

Wole Olaleye, a Nigerian born South African working at the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa, began work on his Ph.D. on political participation in southern Africa in the last quarter of this year. DARU has developed an innovative arrangement with Olaleye whereby we support him for specific periods throughout the year during which he takes unpaid leave from his work and comes to Cape Town for intensive periods of research and interaction with supervisors and colleagues at CSSR and produces dissertation chapters. If successful, this model should help us continue to attract good graduate students who are already employed but want to pursue degrees.

DARU supported **Chris Claasens'** work on his MA mini-thesis: whether mass support for democracy in a country predicts subsequent democratic trends in that country. Claasens is creating a macro data base using results from the World Values Study as well as Freedom House democracy ratings.

Finally, DARU supported **Namhla Mniki** as a Junior Fellow to work with Bob Mattes on analyzing the results of a survey of a nationally representative sample of final year tertiary students about their emigration potential. They are currently completing a co-authored report for the Southern African Migration Project who funded the survey.

ELECTIONS AND VOTING

Prof Pippa Norris, from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government spent one month at DARU, stimulating faculty and students with two seminars on her recent work using the World Values Survey to test Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis and Robert Putnam's arguments about social capital. She also co-authored a CSSR Working Paper with Mattes using *Afrobarometer* data to analyze the role of ethnicity in determining African's political party preferences.

A/Prof Jessica Piombo of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School spent a month at DARU presenting research results

about ethnic mobilization in South African elections and writing a Working Paper on the subject. We also laid plans for her return to UCT next year to participate in DARU's research activities around the 2004 South African election and co-edit a timely book soon after the 2004 election.

2003 saw DARU award its first Ph.D. scholarship to **Joao Pereira** of Eduardo Mondlane University. Pereira's dissertation uses *Afrobarometer* data from Mozambique to analyze bases of party identification and voter preferences in that country, testing the validity of standard explanations revolving around regional and ethnic loyalties. Joao now has a fully developed research framework and plan, and will spend 2004 doing hypothesis testing.

Gavin Davis was with us for three months as a Junior Fellow where he built upon his recently completed MA and gathered additional data on party campaign messages in the 1994 and 1999 South African elections and subsequently completed a Working Paper.

Finally, Mattes traveled to Ohio State University to attend a planning workshop of the Comparative National Elections Project and finalize DARU's role as the South African partner in Round 3 of this important cross national election project, as well as to facilitate the inclusion of other African partners.

AIDS AND DEMOCRACY

In early 2003, we published the results of a study by **Ryann Manning** which developed a methodology with which to assess the impact of HIV/AIDS on the performance of municipal governments.

DARU is now employing **Janis Kennedy** to develop a provincial level data set on Social Cohesion and HIV/AIDS in South Africa. This will be used by Mattes and **Prof Alan Whiteside**, of HEARD/University of Natal, to test a series of propositions about the possible linkages of social cohesion and the spread of the pandemic.

OTHER RESEARCH

DARU is open to supporting other innovative projects outside of its core area that are broadly related to the study of democracy in Africa. In 2003, we provided support to **Philemon Mahlangu**, an MA student in the Department of Politics, for fieldwork research on constituency representation by South African Members of Parliament.

DEVELOPING DATA SETS

DARU has worked closely with Data First to identify a range of political science data sets on African politics, such as an important macro level data base of democratization developed by scholars at Michigan State University, as well as facilitate access to a range of micro level data sets originally collected by the World Values Study, the

TRAINING

As a continuation of an innovative arrangement begun in 2002, DARU supported Tracy Jooste as a Teaching Assistant in the Dept of Politics. To increase the pool of Politics students with requisite research skills to whom we can offer scholarships, we identify one promising graduate student per year to act at a Teaching Assistant under the direction of Mattes. DARU expends no extra funds for this position, with the money coming out of the Director's buyout from the Dept of Politics.

This year, Jooste assisted Hermann Thiel in the department's 2nd year introduction to research design, deepening her understanding in the basic logic of research methodology. She also assisted Mattes with the Dept's senior level "capstone" research course where she led students through the process of creating research proposals, and also coordinated student fieldwork as part of the Cape Area Survey. Through this "learning by doing" approach, Tracy developed impressive skills and understanding far more rapidly than would have been achieved simply by taking a number of seminars. We note that Namhla Mniki, our 2002 DARU Teaching Assistant, was hired as a professional researcher by UCT's Children's Institute.

Mattes also trained students in empirical research by teaching several different courses. We have already mentioned the Dept of Politics 3rd year research course, in which students write a research proposal (which requires suggesting initial versions of survey question items), pilot the questionnaire, help draw the final sample, acquire census maps and identify start points, form fieldwork teams, conduct 10 CAS interviews each, and also learn basic skills in computer aided data analysis in order to write their final report. (DARU also provided basic fieldwork expenses for these students).

Mattes also teaches various modules in the Graduate School of Humanities Research Methodology sequence. A short course at the Honours level entitled Public Opinion Analysis introduces students to the types of questions scholars use surveys to answer, as well as how they conduct surveys. In a full semester MA level course, students are introduced to key readings in a range of important literatures in the study of political behavior, and in the second half of the course choose a data set with which they can address the topic of their choice, and then use computers and SPSS to test propositions from the literature and are expected to write a research paper of publishable quality. A small number of students took the class in 2003, but they all produced excellent pieces of empirical analysis, one which provides a firm basis for a chapter in Pereira's dissertation, and two that are being turned into CSSR Working Papers by Claasens and Jooste (this course and student performance received specific praise from the external examiners).

Finally, to facilitate fuller use of *Afrobarometer* data by African scholars, DARU works with Michigan State University to develop analytic capacity amongst African research partners. In 2004 we did this by hosting and co-funding a training workshop with MSU on "The Analysis of African Public Opinion Data." DARU also builds capacity in this project by hosting *Afrobarometer* researchers as Visiting Scholars.

Institute for Democracy in South Africa, the Human Sciences Research Council, and the *Afrobarometer*.

We routinely require that all projects funded by DARU that collect new data deposit a fully documented data set with Data First. In the past year, DARU personnel have deposited a qualitative data set on the impact of HIV/AIDS on municipal government performance in Durban, and a content analysis of party campaign messages in South Africa's 1994 and 1999 elections.

OBSTACLES

While our progress has been marked, it has been less than we expected. Our greatest frustration over the past two years has been in identifying students and scholars whose projects we can support.

This is most acute with regard to Research Fellows: given the political studies tradition of UCT which has tended to used historical and narrative approaches there is no developed set of modern political science research skills upon which we can consistently draw. Those faculty who do use these approaches have been unable to take up offered position for varying reasons.

With regard to visiting fellows, the very conditions that limit African researchers in their home institutions and motivated our creation of this position have often prevented them from taking up positions. Because of their scarce skills and talents, their institutions have been reluctant to grant them leave to come to UCT.

Finally, we face stiff competition identifying qualified

graduate students because financial pressures often dictate they pursue steady employment in universities or the private sector rather than completing their degrees.

RESEARCH OUTPUT

By the end of 2003 DARU expects to have published a total of 10 working papers, a satisfying increase over the 2 published in 2002. The quality of the research is reflected by the fact that a growing number of Working Papers are progressing upwards to publication in referred journals, edited volumes, or as part of co-authored books.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2004

Besides support to a host of new and continuing MA and Ph.D. students, UCT Fellows and Visiting Fellows, we look with anticipation to a range of activities around South Africa's 2004 election. They include an **Elections Seminar Series** featuring South African and international scholars engaged in systematic work on election related issues, a project monitoring news media coverage of the election campaign, and a post election survey of a nationally representative sample of South Africans.

