

UCLA  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 259-2:  
INFORMATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

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Fall 2013  
Tues 10:30am-1:30pm  
4280 Bunche Hall  
Office hours: Tues 2-4pm

Over the past decade, interventions to promote the wellbeing of the world's poorest citizens have been transformed by a shift from top-down to bottom-up approaches. Key to this shift has been a growing emphasis the role that citizen pressure can play in holding governments and service providers accountable for improved performance, and in the role that information can play in generating such bottom-up citizen pressure. This seminar looks critically at this trend. We first examine the theoretical basis for the claim that information deficits are the central stumbling block to improving government accountability. We then discuss a number of important recent studies that test the impact of information on accountability achieved through the ballot box and through citizen action in the education and health sectors. Our discussions will focus equally on the implications of the each study's findings and the strengths and weaknesses of the research design it employs.

In the last two weeks of the course, we will take a close look at the Uwezo initiative, an education intervention designed to generate citizen pressure for improvements in children's learning in East Africa. We will discuss the motivation and design of the Uwezo intervention and review the evidence to date for its impact. Students will then have the opportunity to work with the Uwezo data and project materials to design their own interventions to test unanswered questions in the context of this ongoing research project. Particularly promising proposals may be implemented in the field in summer 2014.

The course is designed for advanced Political Science Ph.D. students who have field research experience in developing countries. Professor Michael Callen's graduate seminar on field experiments is a prerequisite.

#### REQUIREMENTS

There are three requirements for the course. First, students are required to attend all class meetings, come to seminar having read the assigned material for the week, and participate actively in class discussions. Students will be expected to have read—not just skimmed, but really read, and read carefully—all of the readings before each class meeting.

Second, students will each write brief response papers on *three* of the studies we discuss during the sessions on voting, education and health. These paper, no more than two pages long, will summarize the main findings of the study, assess the strengths and weaknesses of its design, and evaluate its implications for the literature.

Third, each student will write, either alone or in collaboration, a “just-add-water-and-stir” research design proposal for an intervention that would advance our understanding of the relationship between information and accountability. Details will be distributed.

The weight attached to these three requirements is as follows:

- Attendance and participation 40%
- Response papers 30%
- Research proposal 30%

## READINGS

Copies of all the course readings are posted on the course web page. You may download and print them *for your own use*.

## CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Oct 3: *No Class Meeting*

Oct 8: *Introduction to the Course*

Twaweza. 2011. "Twaweza Strategy 2011-2014."

Oct 15: *Theory*

World Bank. 2003. *World Development Report 2004: Making Services Work for Poor People*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, chs 3 and 5.

Adsera, Alicia, Carles Boix, and M. Payne. 2003. "Are You Being Served? Political Accountability and Quality of Government." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 19 (2): 445-490.

Fearon, James. 1999. "Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians: Selecting Good Types versus Sanctioning Poor Performance." In Bernard Manin, Adam Przeworski, and Susan Stokes, eds., *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Besley, Timothy and Robin Burgess. 2002. "The Political Economy of Government Responsiveness: Theory and Evidence from India." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 117 (4): 1415-1451.

Khemani, Stuti. 2007. "Can Information Campaigns Overcome Political Obstacles to Serving the Poor?" In Shantayanan Devarajan and Ingrid Widlund, eds. *The Politics of Service Delivery in Democracies: Better Access for the Poor*. Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Oct 22: *Voting*

Humphreys, Macartan and Jeremy Weinstein. 2012. "Policing Politicians: Citizen Empowerment and Political Accountability in Uganda."

Gottlieb, Jessica. 2012. "Does Raising Voters Expectations Improve Accountability?"

Chong, Albert, Ana L. De La O Torres, Dean Karlan, and Leonard Wantchekon. 2012. "Looking Beyond the Incumbent: The Effects of Exposing Corruption on Electoral Outcomes." Yale Department of Economics Working Paper No. 94.

Banerjee, Abhijit, Selvan Kumar, Rohini Pande, and Felix Su. 2011. "Do Informed Voters Make Better Choices? Experimental Evidence from Urban India."

Oct 29: *Education I*

World Bank. 2003. "Basic Education Services." *World Development Report 2004: Making Services Work for Poor People*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, ch 7.

Banerjee, Abhijit, Rukmini Banerji, Esther Duflo, Rachel Glennerster, and Stuti Khemani. 2010. "Pitfalls of Participatory Programs: Evidence from a Randomized Evaluation in Education in India." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 2(1): 1-30.

Andrabi, Tahir, Jishnu Das, and Asim Khwaja. 2013. "Report Cards: The Impact of Providing School and Child Test Scores on Educational Markets."

Keefer, Philip, and Stuti Khemani. 2013. "Mass Media and Public Education: The Effects of Access to Community Radio in Benin."

Pandey, Priyanka, Sangeeta Goyal, and Venkatesh Sundararaman. 2009. "Community Participation in Public Schools: Impact of Information Campaigns in Three Indian States." *Education Economics* 17 (3): 355-375.

Nov 5: *Education II*

Barr, Abigail, Frederick Mugisha, Pieter Serneels, and Andrew Zeitlin. 2012. "Information and Collective Action in Community-Based Monitoring of Schools: Field and Lab Experimental Evidence from Uganda."

Reinikka, Ritva, and Jakob Svensson. 2005. "Fighting Corruption to Improve Schooling: Evidence from a Newspaper Campaign in Uganda." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 3 (2-3): 259-67.

Hubbard, Paul. 2007. "Putting the Power of Transparency in Context: Information's Role in Reducing Corruption in Uganda's Education Sector."

Pradhan, Menno, Daniel Suryadarma, Amanda Beatty, Maisy Wong, Armida Alishjabana, Arya Gaduh, and Rima Prama Artha. 2011. "Improving School Quality Through Enhancing Community Participation: Results from a Randomized Field Experiment in Indonesia." World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 5795.

Lieberman, Evan S., Daniel N. Posner, and Lily L. Tsai. 2013. "Does Information Lead to More Active Citizenship? Evidence from an Education Intervention in Rural Kenya."

Nov 12: *No Class Meeting*

Nov 19: *Health*

World Bank. 2003. "Health and Nutrition Services." *World Development Report 2004: Making Services Work for Poor People*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, ch 8.

Björkman, Martina, and Jakob Svensson. 2009. "Power to the People: Evidence from a Randomized Experiment on Community-Based Monitoring in Uganda." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124 (2): 735–769.

Björkman, Martina, and Jakob Svensson. 2010. "When is Community-Based Monitoring Effective? Evidence from a Randomized Experiment in Primary Health in Uganda"

Björkman-Nyqvist, Martina, Damien de Walque, and Jakob Svensson. 2013. "Information is Power: Experimental Evidence of the Long Run Impact of Community-Based Monitoring."

Iirjani, Altin, Daniel de Kadt and Daniel N. Posner. 2013. "Impact Evaluation Proposal for USAID Zambia Mission."

Nov 26: *Private Action, General Equilibrium Effects and Other Complications*

Dupas, Pascaline. 2011. "Do Teenagers Respond to HIV Risk Information? Evidence from a Field Experiment in Kenya." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 3(January): 1-34.

Gordon, Grant, Macratan Humphreys and Jeremy Weinstein. 2013. "Transparency and Spin: How Communication Reinforces (or Undermines) Political Accountability."

Svensson, Jakob and David Yanagizawa-Drott. 2012. "Estimating Impact in Partial vs. General Equilibrium: A Cautionary Tale from a Natural Experiment in Uganda."

Habyarimana, James and William Jack. 2011. "Heckle and Chide: Results of a Randomized Road Safety Intervention in Kenya." *Journal of Public Economics* 95: 1438-1446.

Yanagizawa-Drott, David. 2012. "Propaganda and Conflict: Theory and Evidence from the Rwandan Genocide."

Ravallion, Martin, Dominique van de Walle, Puja Dutta, and Rinku Murgai. 2013. "Testing Information Constraints on India's Largest Antipoverty Program." World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 6598.

Dec 3: *The Uwezo Initiative*

Tanzania Baseline Survey Questionnaire (Household Module; Community Module; Health Module; School Module)

Uwezo Assessment Questionnaire, 2013.

Dec 10: *Presentation/Discussion of Research Proposals (joint with MIT and Princeton Seminars)*