

PLS 343

Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa

Week 1:
Introduction to African politics

Welcome to PLS 343!

Plan for this week

- Introduction to Africa and African politics
- Course organization and assessment

Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa



Africa: size

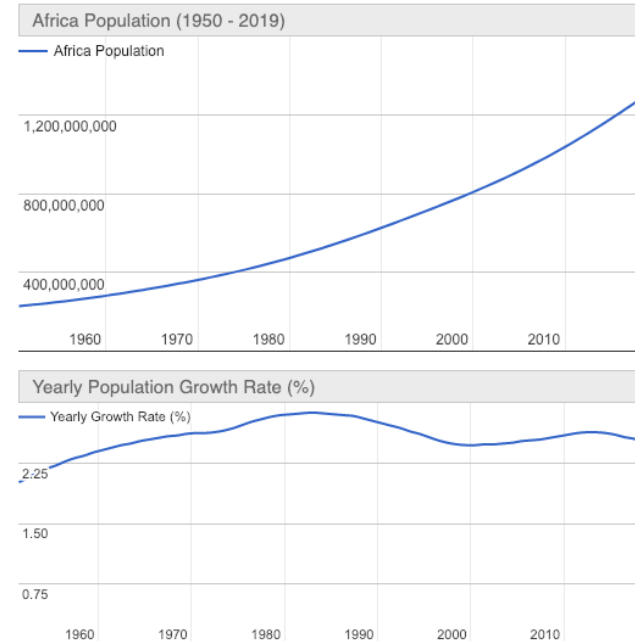


Africa: size

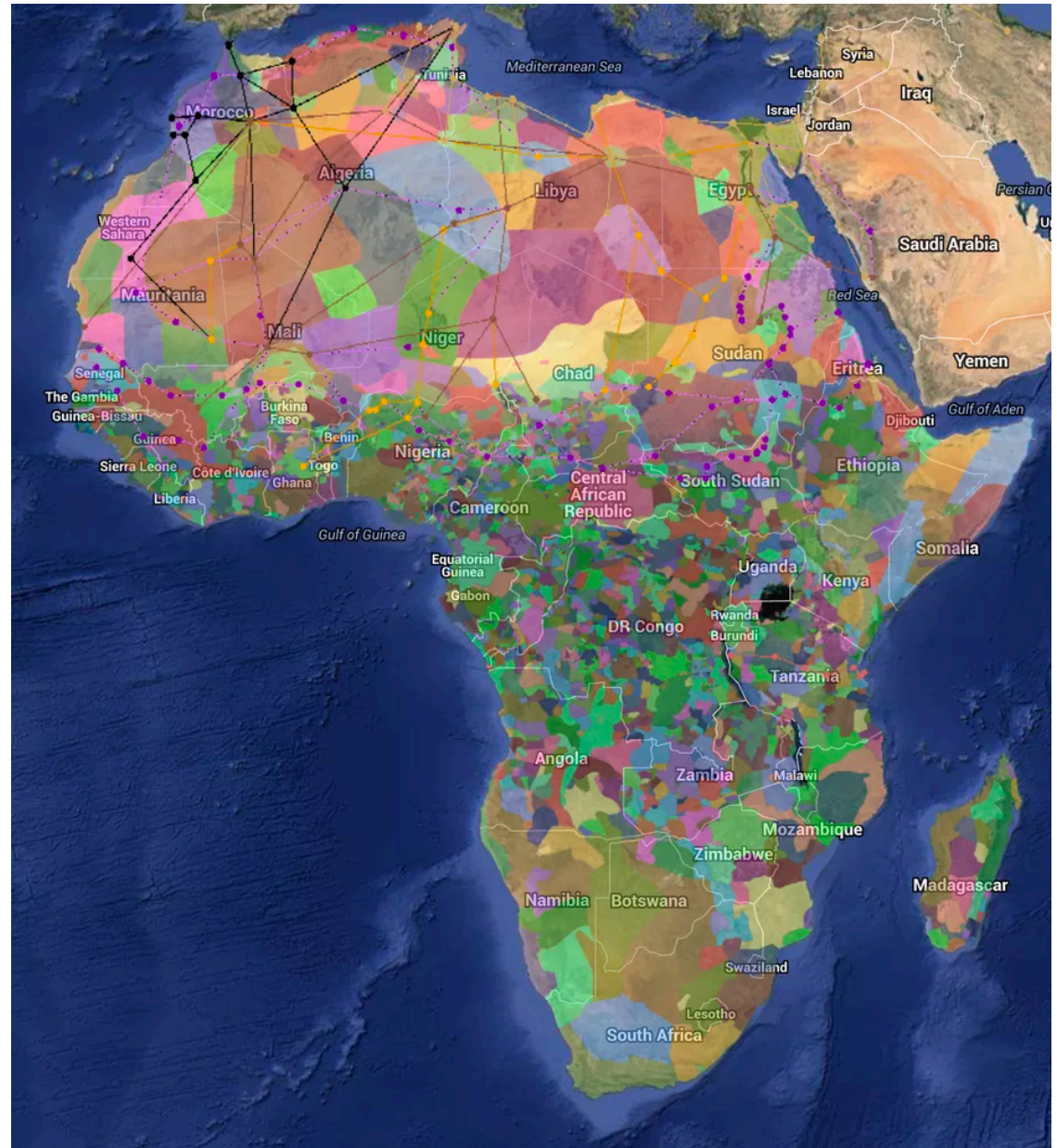


Africa: population

- 1.3 billion / 1.1 billion in SSA today (~2.5 billion in SSA by 2050)
- 17% / 14% SSA of world population (~25% SSA by 2050)
- Population growth: 2.5% / 2.7% SSA
- Median age: 19.4



Africa: ethnicity



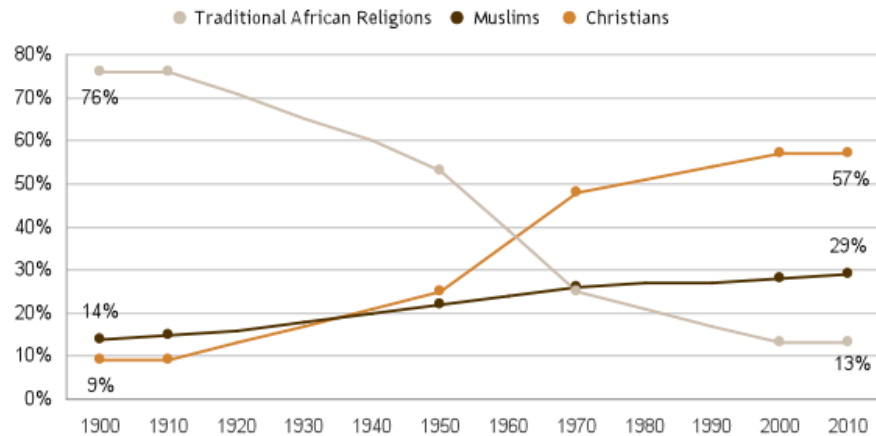
<http://worldmap.harvard.edu/africamap/>

Africa: languages



Africa: religions

Growth of Islam & Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa Since 1900

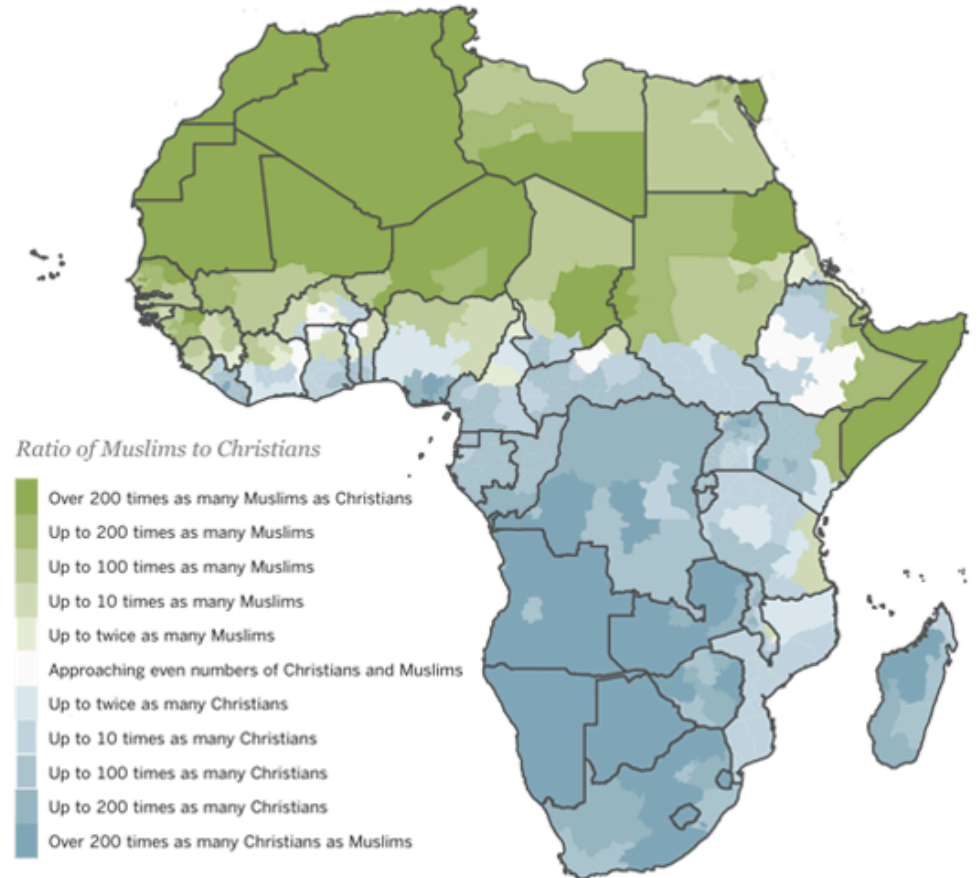


Source: World Religion Database. Historical data draw on government records, historical atlases and reports of religious organizations at the time. Later figures draw on U.N. population estimates, surveys and censuses.

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, April 2010

Muslims and Christians in Africa

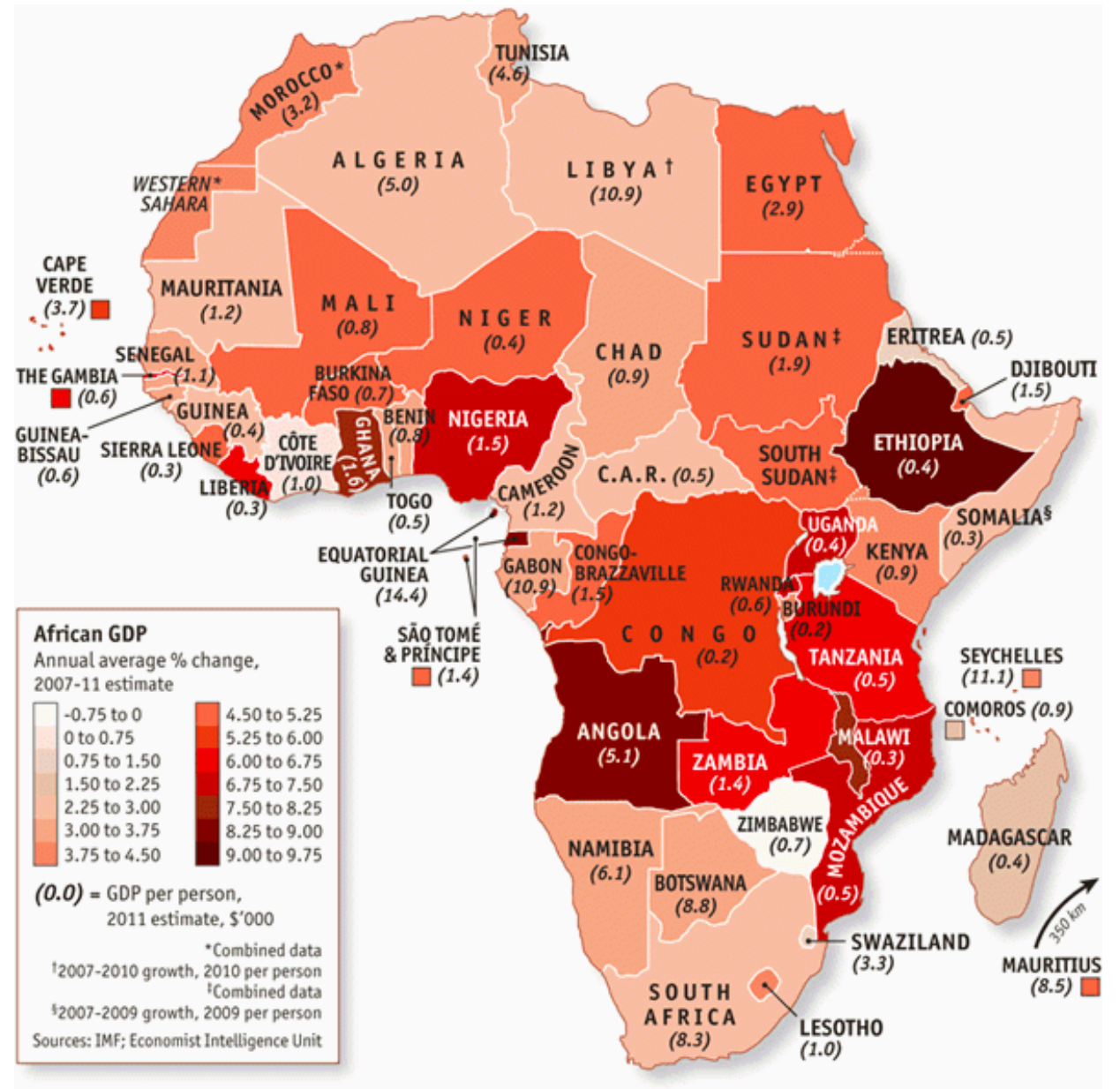
This map shows the ratio of Muslims to Christians in each country and province. The north is heavily Muslim, and the south is heavily Christian.



Sources: censuses, demographic and health surveys, and the World Religion Database

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, April 2010

Africa: economy

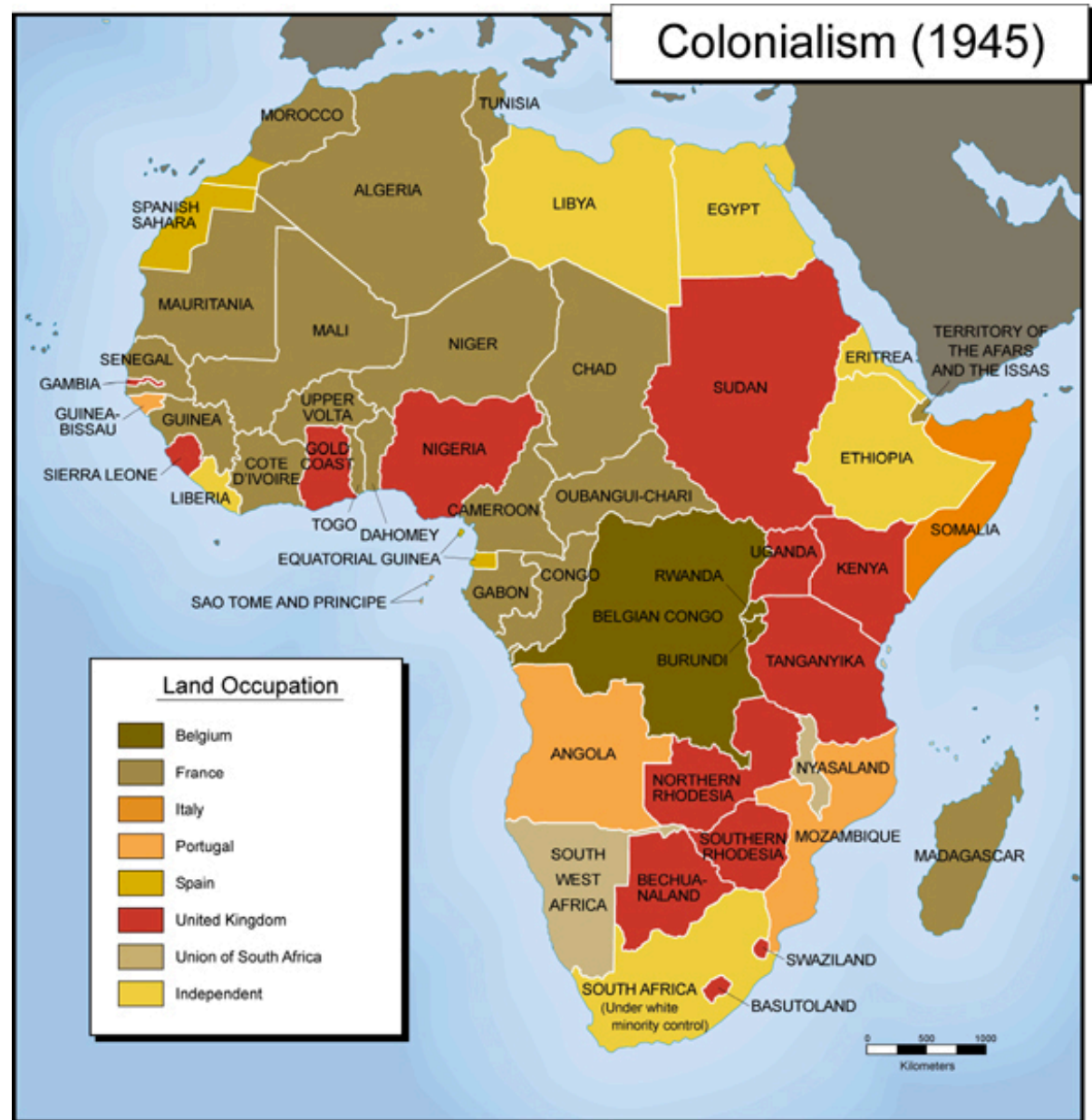


African politics

- 54 states in Africa
- 48 states in Sub-Saharan Africa

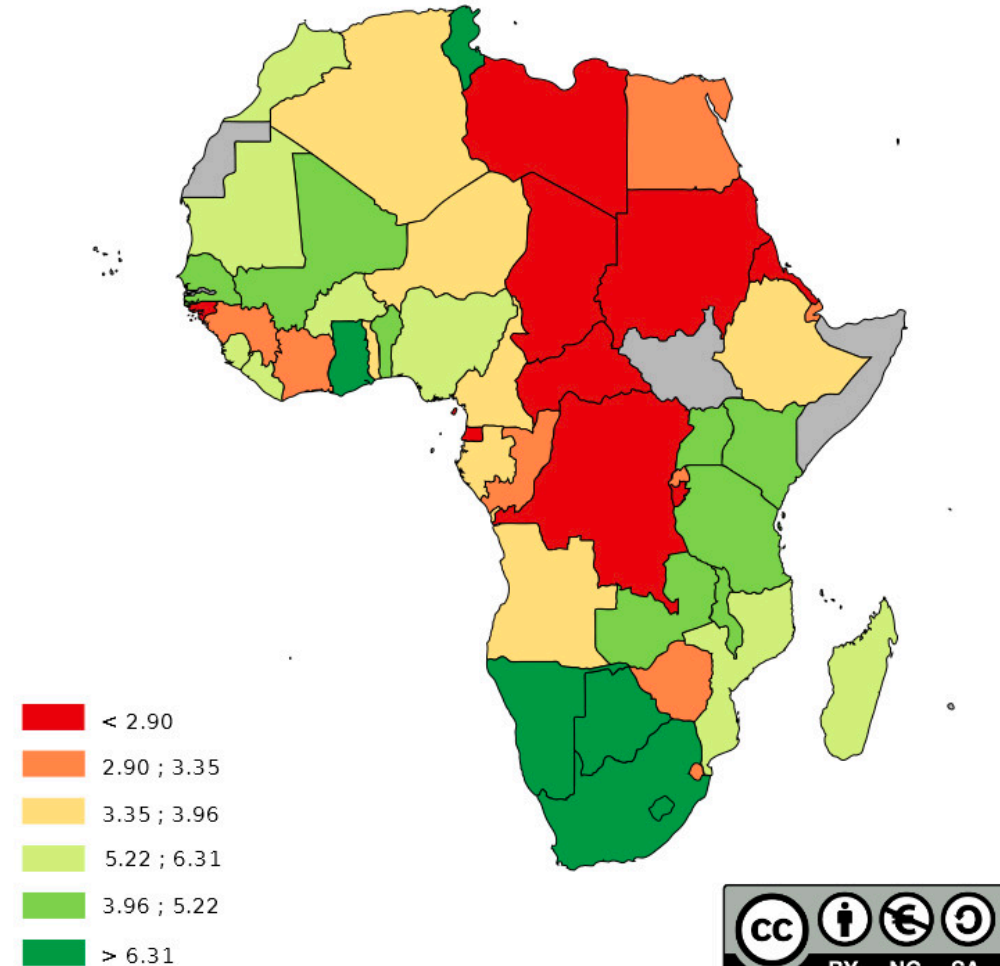


African politics: colonial experience



African politics: regimes

Democracy Index (10 = perfect)



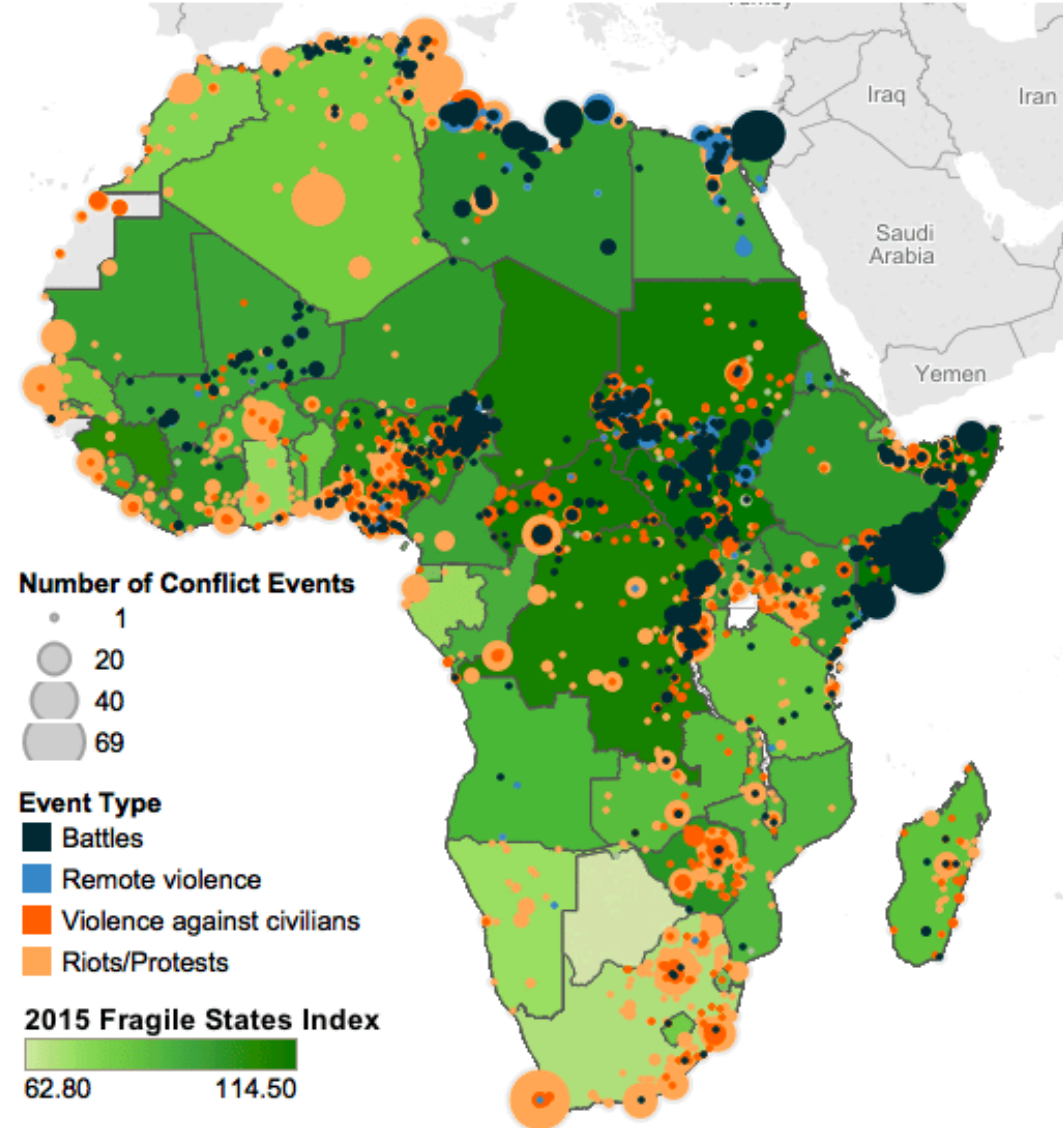
Source : Economist Intelligence Unit - 2015

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African politics: state fragility and conflict

Figure 1: State Fragility and Political Conflict, Africa, 2015



#WHYAFRICA



Why study Africa?

Empirical puzzles

- Why is Africa poorer than other world regions / continents?
- Why have some African countries undergone successful democratic transitions, while democratization failed in others?
- Why is Tanzania stable, while neighboring DRC is riven by conflict?
- Why is the Kenyan state relatively strong, while its Somali counterpart disintegrated?

Inferential leverage

- What is the effect of colonialism on economic performance, state capacity, or government accountability?
- Does rapid population growth impede economic development?
- What is the relationship between ethnic and / or linguistic diversity and conflict?

Challenges

- Data
- Access
- Ethics
- Analysis

Data and access



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Guardian Africa network Economics

Lies, damn lies and GDP

Or, how Ghana went from being one of the poorest countries in the world one day to an aspiring middle-income one the next



▲ A woman carries fruit to sell in the market in Lagos, Nigeria. Photograph: Sunday Alamba/AP

Morten Jerven for African Arguments, part of the Guardian Africa Network

Tue 20 Nov 2012 15:14 GMT

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2012/nov/20/economics-ghana>

Ethics of studying Africa



Is It Ethical to Study Africa? Preliminary Thoughts on Scholarship and Freedom

Mama, Amina.

African Studies Review, Volume 50, Number 1, April 2007, pp. 1-26 (Article)

Published by African Studies Association
DOI: [10.1353/arw.2005.0122](https://doi.org/10.1353/arw.2005.0122)



Ethics of studying Africa

GRANTA

FICTION ESSAYS & MEMOIR POETRY IN CONVERSATION ART MAGAZINE GRANTA BOOKS ABOUT



ARGUMENT

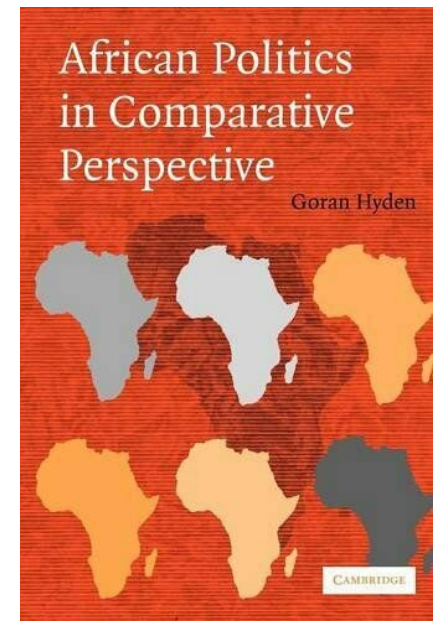
How Not to Write About Africa

The media shamefully neglects Africa -- until it decides to swarm a story with terrible coverage.

BY LAURA SEAY | APRIL 25, 2012, 6:11 PM



Analytical challenges



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg>

Course topics: Part I—historical legacies

- Precolonial Africa
- Colonialism
- Decolonization and nation-building
- African states and Africa's states-system



<https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-146>

<https://theconversation.com/african-history-is-a-discipline-on-the-rise-and-one-that-raises-many-questions-74459>

Course topics: Part II—key issues in contemporary African politics

- Authoritarianism, neopatrimonialism and state-society relations
- Politics of identity: ethnicity, race, religion, and gender
- Political violence
- Economic development
- Democratization, democratic consolidation, and democratic reversals
- Recent trends in African politics

Course organization

- Readings:
 - Book chapters and journal articles + some non-academic sources
 - Some of the most important contributions to African politics scholarship
- Lectures and seminars
- Contact:
 - Office hours
 - Moodle forum and messages

Assessment

- Research proposal 5%
- Research essay:
 - Initial draft 15%
 - Final draft 20%
- Map quiz 5%
- Term test 15%
- Final exam 25%
- Class involvement 15%

Course policies and requirements



IT'S IN THE SYLLABUS

This message brought to you by every instructor that ever lived.

[WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM](http://www.phdcomics.com)

<http://phdcomics.com/comics.php?f=1583>

Commitments

