

PL-251A: Contemporary African Politics
Country Institutional Profile and Consultancy Brief

Directions:

You are a freelance political consultant tasked with providing your analysis on a political institution within an African country of your choice. You have been contracted to present at the African Union High-Level Policy Dialogue (HPLD) on Institutional Innovation and Reform in Africa. As part of your presentation, you will prepare a profile of a member state, including an analysis of the current political regime, economic climate, and social climate. In addition to profiling the country, you have been invited to consult the AU as to how to the member state can improve one of its political institutions.

The purpose of this profile is to give students the opportunity to examine the multifaceted dynamics of one African country, critically analyze African political institutions, and practically apply their knowledge to a simulated professional context.

Your job:

1. Select a country as your main unit of analysis and choose a political institution to focus on
 - a. Examples of institutions are:
 - i. Elections
 - ii. Constitutional Drafting/Reform
 - iii. Legislative
 - iv. Judiciary
 - v. Executives
 - vi. Political Parties
 - vii. Police/Security
 - viii. Foreign Policy
 - ix. Bureaucracy
 - x. Civil Rights/Civil Liberties
 - xi. Other examples found in readings/in class discussion

Preparing your analysis:

In order to write up your report, you will need some background information on your country. Do some research into the qualities and the performance of your country's regime. Has your country experienced post-electoral violence? Has your country had numerous constitutional amendments and revisions? Does the executive wield too much power? You are responsible for diagnosing the problem in the democratic institution of your country. Once you have identified the problem, you will conduct research on the history of the problem. For example, if you are writing about the failure of electoral institutions in Rwanda, you should provide a brief history

of how the electoral system was set up and how the institutional design might contribute to the contemporary issues.

Paper set-up and requirements:

Your paper should follow the following outline:

- I. Introduction (2-4pgs.)
 - a. An opening statement with brief background information
 - b. This should include a discussion of how your institutional selection. For example, if you are choosing to study the legislature in Kenya, you might include language from its constitution and any other founding documents that assert the normative role of the legislature in the country and problematize the context.
 - c. This section should also summarize the main points that you will cover in the report.
 - d. The purpose of your report (ex. Provide insight and suggestions on how to improve the drafting process of the X country's constitution)
- II. Profile country/Identify the problem (similar to a literature review; 4-6pgs.)
 - a. This section should provide the context and scope of the institutional problem you identify. Here is where you will provide some in depth background knowledge about your country
 - b. Scope of problem must be with the establishment or effectiveness of your selected institutions. For example, if you are interested in the lack of political competition, you must identify how precisely you are defining competition (for instance, single-party dominance might be part of the competition problem, but you will have to lay out how other groups/parties are excluded as well).
- III. Policy analysis/suggestions (4-6 pages)
 - a. What are the options to solve your problem? Rely on course materials and other resources to define the range of options
 - b. Lay out the pros and cons of each option you define. These should be informed by the literature, secondary sources, and specifics to the case
 - c. Descriptions of each recommendation should be accompanied by a justification
 - d. Think about the ways your organization can help/is built to help solve the problem
 - e. THIS IS NOT AN OPINION SECTION—I stress here that your policy suggestions should be grounded in evidence and scholarly sources.
- IV. Summary of Key Recommendations and next steps (2-4 pages)
 - a. Select from the range of policy options that you've laid out and recommend how you can solve the problem
 - b. What would potential next steps be?
- V. Bibliography and Endnotes