

Collaborative Learning Initiative on Governance and Development

Richard Joseph

What sets this initiative apart is the commitment to deepening ties between African and non-African institutions and making them more seamless and routine. There is a need to make this case to US institutions - lobbying them to digitize/provide open access, creating relationships with African institutions, prioritizing partnerships and academic exchanges, and putting their resources behind these efforts. In other words, harnessing academic institutions own resources and pushing for a conceptual change in how they operate could yield huge long-term dividends.¹

On September 1, 2018, as an Emeritus Professor of Political Science of Northwestern University, with the accumulated knowledge, experience, and collegial networks of five decades, a new phase of my professional life began.² In this capacity, I will draw on many years of study, teaching, research, and policy work, principally on Africa, to engage students, researchers, policymakers, and others to build bridges across certain gaps:

- between the resources of our higher education institutions and the degree to which they are invested in Africa
- between academic research and policy formulation
- between the ideas and skills of earlier generations of scholars and those of contemporary researchers
- between traditional lecture and classroom teaching and immersive learning
- between the desires for peace, democracy, and development and the realities of persistent conflict and predatory rule
- and between self-government over several decades and the failure to provide basic public goods of physical security, electricity, clean water, environmental sanitation, and satisfactory public education, healthcare, and transportation.

Immersive and Collaborative Learning

A roundtable discussion at the African Studies Association annual meeting - “Ruptures: African Studies and the Racial Politics of Knowledge Production” - continued reflections on Professor Jean Allman’s [plenary lecture as outgoing ASA president](#). I intervened to state that some Black scholars had different experiences with their mentors and other senior scholars from the ones criticized. Subsequently, I began a re-examination of the life and work of the distinguished

¹ Matthew Page, former U.S. State Department Officer and a specialist on Nigeria, February 20, 2019, personal correspondence.

² This text is an abridged version of a report available at <https://doi.org/10.21985/N2RV0Z>.

British scholar, Thomas Lionel Hodgkin (1910-1982). Hodgkin had introduced me to the study of African politics at Oxford University in 1968 and supervised my doctoral research on the late-colonial experiences of Cameroon. He was an exemplar of engaged scholarship and immersive and collaborative learning.

The first outcome of this exercise will be a paper, “Agency, Access, and Action: The Enduring Legacy of Thomas L. Hodgkin”, to be presented at a graduate students conference, “Decolonizing African Studies”, at Northwestern University April 4-5, 2019. Other research and writing projects regarding Hodgkin’s pioneering work on African history and politics will follow.



With Thomas Hodgkin, Ilmington, England

A *Fund for Collaborative Learning* will be created to provide financial support for activities identified in this document. This work effectively began a few years ago with the pruning and organizing of my personal archives by undergraduate assistants. Simultaneously, they conducted research projects on peace and democracy initiatives of The Carter Center, Atlanta.³

³ For a relevant talk in a conference on Open Access to Knowledge convened by Arch Library, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hjzm0MaKQ8>.



Observing ballot count, Carter Center and National Democratic Institute, Zambia, 1991

A Network on Collaborative Learning will be activated and expanded. It exists implicitly as a collegial network of scholars of Africa and of state, governance, and democratic development. Our interactions have taken place over many years of engagement with the continent and on these topics. The asymmetries in institutional capacities between the Global North and South, and in the possession of African artworks, are now widely acknowledged. Complementing my work as a researcher, university lecturer, and policy advocate, I hope to share my personal library and abundant teaching materials with African institutions. The selective digitization and open access to personal archives will also be increased. These activities will be guided by the priorities identified during the ASA brainstorming session:

- Engaged Scholarship and Immersive Learning
- Improving African access to, and co-production, of knowledge
- Closing the Governance Gap
- Building Democracy
- Reclaiming Security

Books and Other Publications

Freedom Gates

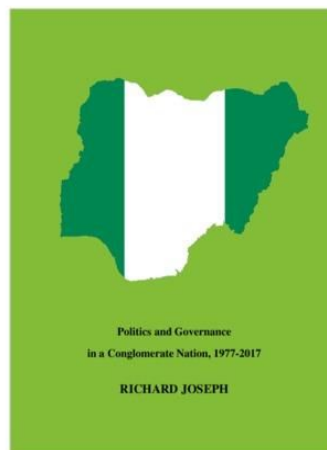
The period 1989 -1995 was one of widespread political upheaval and transition in Africa. The involvement of The Carter Center, and of President Jimmy Carter and his associates, in several countries has not been fully examined by researchers. Preliminary work conducted by Northwestern undergraduates can be expanded. In addition to increasing our understanding of important events during this period, this work can contribute to assessments of political advances and setbacks during the subsequent three decades.



From left, with Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, former president of Zambia; with Prof. Adu Boahen, then leader of Ghana opposition to military rule; and with Gayle Spencer, director of Carter Center conflict resolution program, and Isaias Afewerki, leader of the Eritrean Peoples's Liberation Front

The Nigerian Crucible

In February 2019, Africa's most populous country, Nigeria, will have experienced two decades of sustained constitutional government. This period is twice as long as that of all previous elected governments since independence in October 1960. Despite the country's multiplying security challenges, it remains a leader in the continent in many regards. A project to edit and make accessible dozens of essays and talks on Nigeria (1977-2017) has made significant progress courtesy of Northwestern's Arch Library.⁴ The completion of this exercise, and the synthesizing of these documents in a printed book, will proceed.



⁴https://arch.library.northwestern.edu/collections/rb68xb902?utf8=%E2%9C%93&sort=system_create_dtsi+asc&per_page=20

Cameroon and Nigeria: Revised Book Editions

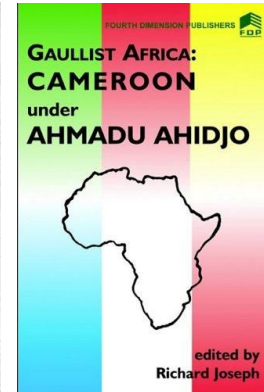
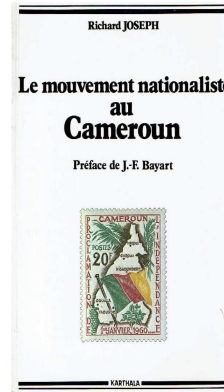
Three previously published books will be revised:

Gaullist Africa: Cameroon under Ahmadu Ahidjo (Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1978). This edited collection of essays by Cameroonian, French, British, and American authors included critical appraisals of political and economic developments in this understudied nation. In addition to correcting errors in the publisher's version, the revised edition will incorporate important essays and documents as well as contributions from contemporary researchers. The turbulent experiences of this highly diverse, and culturally rich, nation of 25 million deserve greater attention.



Seminar at the Ibadan School of Government and Public Policy (ISGPP), 2017

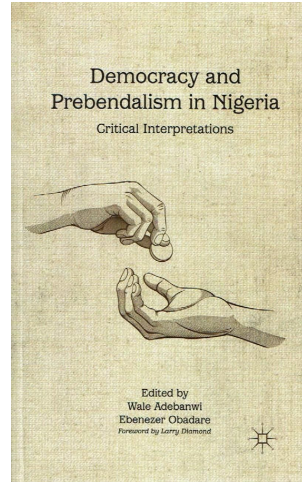
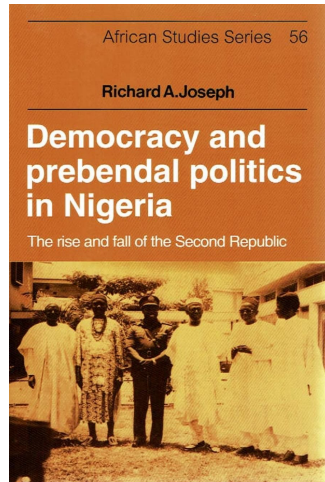
Radical Nationalism in Cameroun: Social Origins of the UPC Rebellion (Oxford University Press, 1977). This monograph remains a key reference source on the transition in Cameroon from French colonial rule to a regime that has endured for six decades. The new edition will incorporate additional materials, such as J.F. Bayart's introduction to the French edition (Karthala, 1982) and other commentaries, and will be made available in an affordable paperback. This book will also respond to the increased interest in the prolonged crisis of state and governance in this important country. In a new chapter, it will be shown how research on a resilient anti-colonial movement, led by the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC), overcame many impediments.



From left, UPC leaders: Osendé Afana, Abel Kingué, Ruben Um Nyobé, Félix-Roland Moumié, Ernest Ouandié

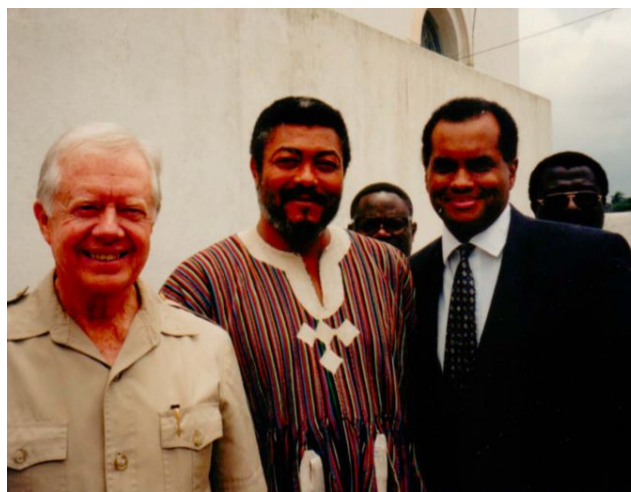
Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic (Cambridge University Press, 1987). In this study, which provides detailed information on the competition for political power in post-civil war Nigeria, an innovative analysis was also advanced on the corrupt uses of government resources. The concept of prebendalism has influenced many subsequent studies of African and non-African countries. A Nigerian colleague, acknowledging the many references to this analysis and its centrality in political discourse in his country, proposed that an updated version be made available for wide dissemination. His proposal will now be explored.⁵

⁵ The colleague is Dr. Abimbola Agboluaje, an independent analyst and civic organizer. Following an international conference in Lagos, Professors Wale Adebunwi and Ebenezer Obadare edited and published *Democracy and Prebendalism in Nigeria: Critical Interpretations* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). A print-on-demand edition of *Democracy and Prebendal Politics* was issued by Cambridge University Press in 2014. The first paperback edition of this book was published by Spectrum Books (Ibadan, Nigeria, 1991).



Freedom Work: Memoir of a Scholar-Activist

The examination of the life and work of scholar-activist Thomas Hodgkin, mentioned above, opens the door to the writing of a memoir on my intellectual and political journey. It will cover the period since I immigrated to the United States from Trinidad and Tobago in September 1958. The memoir will span several decades from the confronting of racial segregation and exclusion as an undergraduate at Dartmouth College, to the experience of working with Thomas Hodgkin, President Carter, and other scholars, political leaders, and policy practitioners regarding Africa.



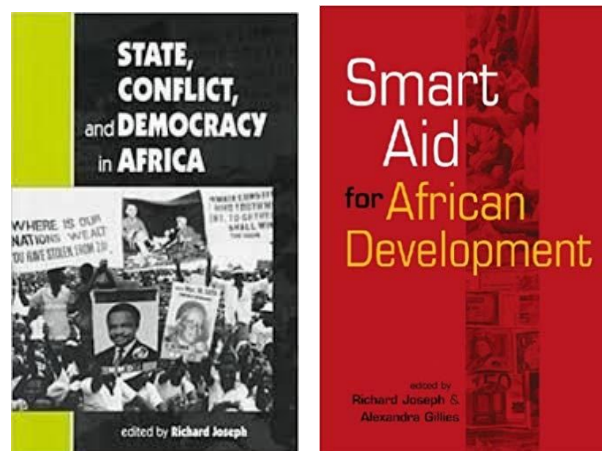
With former U.S. president Jimmy Carter and Frederick Chiluba, opposition leader in Zambia, 1991, and Jerry Rawlings, President of Ghana, 1994

Reclaiming Security

Nationalist movements in Africa and other areas of the colonial world shared a common premise: the acquisition, or re-acquisition, of sovereignty by colonized peoples would lead to an

enhancement of their security in multiple domains. The key instruments of enhanced security were expected to be the state itself and governmental entities.⁶

Attempts to reclaim security in many African countries, during the transitions from colonial rule or subsequent transformations, have often been followed by greater insecurity. Rulers and regimes frequently respond to such challenges by heightening political repression. There are many countries that illustrate this tendency today. They include Cameroon, both republics of Congo, Gabon, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.



Since the publication of my 1978 article “Affluence and Underdevelopment: The Nigerian Experience”, I have participated in many forums and collaborative projects to address the dilemmas of state, governance, and democratic development.⁷ The relevant documents are being curated and a digitized selection will be made accessible via the internet. Their availability will increase understanding of how the core problems have been perceived, the corrective actions advocated, and the progress made or stymied. Progress in overcoming basic insecurities depends on knowing the roads traveled and those still to cross.

⁶ I was first exposed to this vision and related arguments during the struggle for independence, and the ill-fated West Indian Federation, in Trinidad and Tobago. The movement was led by the noted scholar-activist, Dr. Eric Williams, and his People’s National Movement (PNM). Dr. Williams subsequently served as the country’s first Prime Minister, 1962-1981.

⁷ *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 16, no. 2 (1978).



Student research assistants at The Carter Center, left in 2017, and the Arima Learning and Resource Center, Northwestern University, in 2018⁸

NU Collaborative Learning Initiative

The nucleus of a Learning and Resource Center has been created at Northwestern University courtesy of its Transportation Center and with the support of its Weinberg College, Department of Political Science, Buffett Institute, and student research grants from several entities including the Office for Undergraduate Research. In recent years, Northwestern students have been given access to primary archival documents and provided opportunities to expand their knowledge via interviews with established scholars in person or video-conferencing.

The CLI will be launched at Northwestern at a meeting in spring 2019. In addition to the archival and country-based research that students have conducted as members of successive research teams, they will be invited to tackle one of the most perplexing challenges in Africa: How can developmental governance replace predatory practices which have inhibited equitable and sustainable growth. Today's technologically-adept, and globally-aware, students can be encouraged to invest their skills in the design of solutions grounded in an understanding of past struggles, successes, and failures. The evolving immersive and collaborative learning practices, and the unique opportunity to have access to contemporaneous documents, will enable students of Northwestern and other institutions to foster the "conceptual change" suggested by Matthew Page.

⁸ Arima is my birthplace in Trinidad.



Research Alliance to Combat HIV/AIDS (REACH), Nigeria, 2010; and colleagues A. Olukotun, F. Adesola, and M. Omotoso, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, 2015