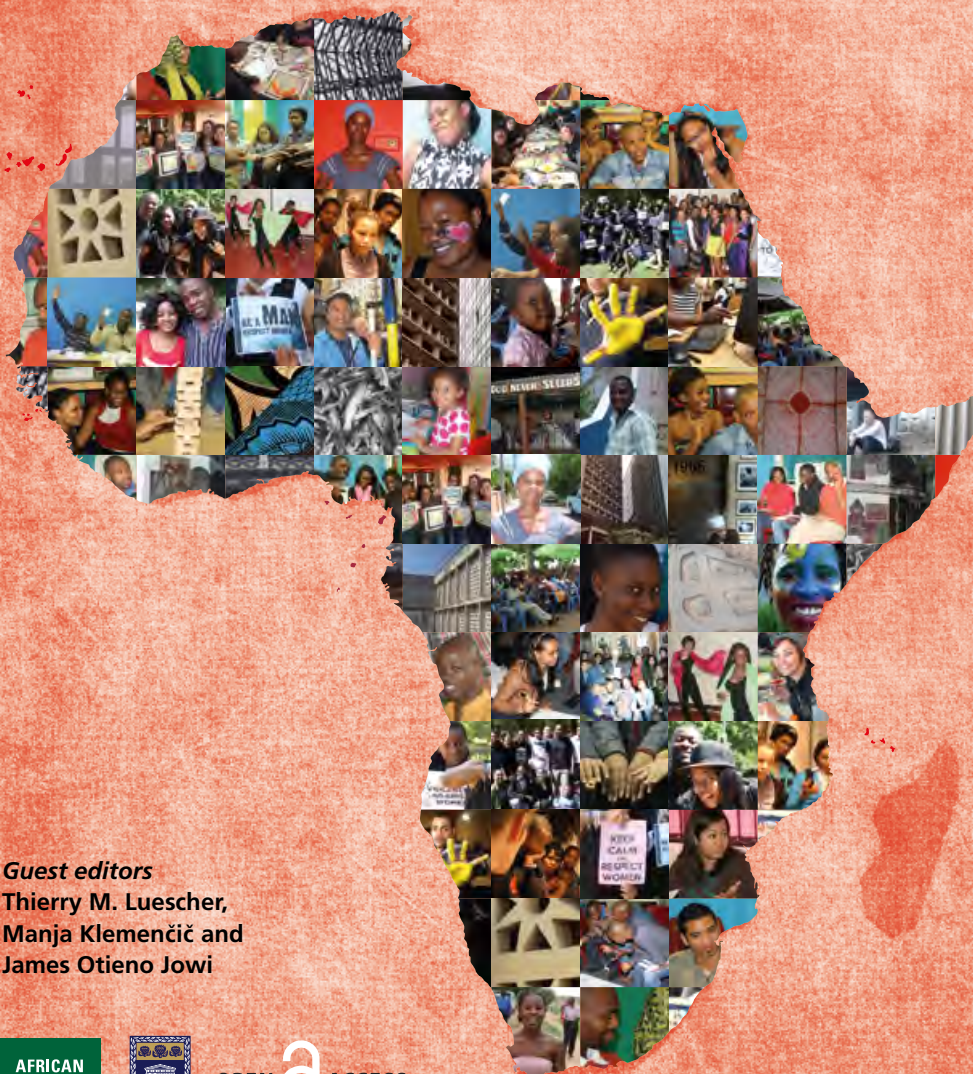# Journal of Student Affairs in Africa

Student Power in African Higher Education

Guest editors
**Thierry M. Luescher,
Manja Klemenčič and
James Otieno Jowi**

AFRICAN MINDS

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Preface

Claudia Frittelli

A common refrain of Western donors is that challenges of leadership, corruption and ethnicity are major elements hindering African development work. Whether these dynamics are any less prevalent in the developed world is arguable. However, one indisputable factor is the African youth bulge with an estimated 20% of the world population to be African by 2050. How Africa's education systems nurture and accommodate the formative years will continue to affect mobility, peace and security globally.

With the premise that African universities have the responsibility to educate and train their countries' political and academic leaders, Carnegie Corporation of New York embarked on a programme to revitalise African universities in 2000. One report flowing from the programme's research component and entitled *The university in Africa and democratic citizenship: Hothouse or training ground?* concluded that 'the potential of a university to act as a training ground for democratic citizenship is best realized by supporting students' exercise of democratic leadership on campus. This in turn develops and fosters democratic leadership in civil society'. The report prompted a collaborative research project which led to the book *Student Politics in Africa: Representation and Activism* and to this issue of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*. The book provides a 21st-century baseline review of student governance, as well as its development, current structures and level of enforcement in a cross section of universities and countries in sub-Saharan Africa and indicates how student participation has evolved since the student movements of the 1960s. Both the book and the journal issue provide evidence that the challenges of leadership, ethnic cleavages and good governance are already evident at the level of student leadership, often reflecting a national ethos influenced by political parties. This begs the question of how institutions might look if student governance was held to standards demanded by students themselves, thus changing the mindset graduates might take to their next institutional affiliations.

The issue 'Student Power in Africa' of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* and its companion publication, the book *Student Politics in Africa: Representation and Activism*, are especially useful resources for administrators interested in the transformation of institutional cultures, and as an orientation for new student leaders. Both publications are open access through a pioneering publisher, African Minds, another by-product of the programme support. Student leadership is one of the principal entry points where youth experience institutional governance. Vibrant universities engaged in innovative and often daring reform contribute to producing a new generation of leaders, an important route to transformative democratisation, reforming public policy and building civil society. This issue of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* offers reflection on how that process could advance.

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Acknowledgement

Student Power in Africa

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This issue of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* brings together parts of the work of a group of young African scholars who have investigated student politics in Africa and its relation to university governance, national politics, citizenship and democracy in Africa. It is part of the African Minds project Student Representation in Higher Education Governance in Africa sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation of New York (see Preface by Claudia Frittelli in this issue). Following an open call for proposals in December 2013, we received over 20 abstracts and eventually draft papers which we thoroughly reviewed and individually engaged the authors on. We gave them extensive comments and access to local and international literature, and advised them on conceptual, analytical and methodological approaches to guide the development of their papers.

In August 2014, the group of authors and editors met for a three-day symposium and workshop in Cape Town, South Africa, during which they shared their experiences, reviewed and commented on one another's contributions, and discussed cross-cutting issues emanating from the papers. The participants were also treated to workshops aimed at developing academic writing, presentation and publishing skills, and presentations on contemporary trends and practices in academic publishing.

The final product of the project is presented in two publications: The dedicated issue 'Student Power in Africa' of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* and its companion publication, the book *Student Politics in Africa: Representation and Activism*, published as Vol. 2 in the African Higher Education Dynamics Series of African Minds (cf. Luescher, Klemenčič & Jowi, *forthcoming*).

In our work as project leaders and editors, we have been cognisant of recent empirical and theoretical work conducted for various other projects, including the Council for the

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Development of Social Science Research in Africa's (CODESRIA's) investigations into higher education governance in Africa, the studies done by the Higher Education and Advocacy Network in Africa (HERANA) on higher education and democracy, and the Centre for Higher Education Transformation's (CHET) project on student leadership, student engagement and citizenship competences in Africa. We have also been inspired by the publication of special issues on student representation of the journals *Tertiary Education and Management* (2011)*, European Journal of Higher Education* (2012) and *Studies in Higher Education* (2014). In keeping with this genealogy, the Student Representation project has been first and foremost an opportunity to produce new knowledge on the politics of students in African universities, focusing on empirical investigations into student representation and activism in the African context. The aim has been to explore and describe contemporary manifestations of student power, particularly student representation in African higher education governance and student activism, in order to develop new and existing key concepts, analytical approaches and theoretical frameworks.

What is 'student representation'?

'Student representation' refers to the formal structures and processes of elected or appointed student representatives speaking or acting on behalf of the collective student body in higher education governance within a higher education institution or a higher education system. It means making the collective student voice 'present' in decision processes within higher education institutions or public-policy processes led by political authorities responsible for higher education. Student representation is premised on three conditions. Firstly, there must be democratic procedures in place which confer collective student powers on student representatives to represent the interests of the collective student body and through which those powers can also be revoked. Secondly, student representatives must create procedures through which they regularly communicate with the student body to collect student views and inform about their activities (for more on authorisation and accountability, see Mugume & Luescher, in this issue). Thirdly, there must be representational structures through which student representatives can intermediate student interests into the decision-making processes. In other words, student representatives have to have seats on governing and other bodies involved at all levels and stages of the decision-making processes (Klemenčič, 2014).

Why study student representation?

Student representation is a widespread phenomenon, worldwide and across all African higher education institutions, at the level of institutional governing bodies. Indeed, it is a vital ingredient in higher education governance at the institutional level, that is, the decision-making processes, structures and relationships through which higher education institutions choose their goals and guide and restrain collective activities. Contrary to the institutional level, student representation in national-level higher education governance is much less widespread across the systems, and often dependent on informal relationships rather than stipulated in formal rules and procedures (Klemenčič, Mugume & Luescher in

Luescher, Klemenčič & Jowi, *forthcoming*). The relations between governments and student groups are more frequently explored through the lens of activism and student movements rather than representation. In any case, investigations into student power and students' collective political behaviour contribute to a broader research theme of how human agency – individual and collective – shapes higher education policies, a theme which is still fairly underexplored within the field of higher education studies.

Student representation and student affairs

Student representation lies at the intersection of several key research areas in higher education studies. For one, it lies at the heart of student affairs as a field that focuses on institutional practices with respect to co-curricular learning and services to, and support for, students at institutions of higher education. Institutional relations to student representative associations – student councils, unions, governments, guilds, parliaments, etc. – fall directly into the domain of responsibilities of student affairs departments within institutions of higher education. What exactly these relations entail varies from one institution to another. In some institutions, student affairs practitioners are the ones who have direct contact with student organisations and student representatives, manage the institutional support granted to these organisations, oversee their activities, and help with advising and training student representatives. It is very common that student affairs professionals involve student representatives in planning and implementing various programmes, services and events under their responsibility related to student advising, arts and culture, counselling, diversity, disability, leadership development, orientation, residence life, sports and recreation, and student on- and off-campus life more broadly. Student associations frequently supplement services that are offered by the institutions of higher education (see examples from Kenya by Macharia in this issue; also see Luescher-Mamashela & Mugume, 2014). The cooperation between student affairs professionals and student representatives comes naturally from the shared responsibility to organise student life either on the basis of the concept that universities stand in loco parentis or out of awareness that student life outside the classroom is important for student self-formation, well-being, and student engagement, and should therefore be pursued intentionally and systematically and be consciously structured and coordinated (Tinto, 2014).

Student representation and higher education governance

Student representation is also part of the studies of governance and administration of higher education institutions and of higher education system governance. The former investigate the structures, processes and relationships which steer organisational behaviour within individual institutions. The latter focus on structures, processes and relationships between public authorities, higher education institutions and other higher education stakeholders, such as students, which coordinate, steer and influence organisational behaviour across a higher education system. Both types of studies elucidate the questions of authority, power and influence, responsibilities and preferences of various actors within the decision-making processes of higher education institutions or within a higher education polity. Students –

individually or collectively – are one, often highly invested, actor in these decision-making processes (Klemenčič, 2012; 2014). By focusing specially on the agency and subjectivity of students we can investigate student governance as the constellations of authority and accountability that manifest the 'cultures of governance' (Hall, Symes & Luescher, 2004) that operate and are experienced in student life. Student governance includes in its scope the structures, processes and relationships of student government, how it is organised, governs and is governed, and how student representatives relate to the collective student body and to the authorities which they try to influence (Klemenčič, 2012; 2014; Luescher-Mamashela & Mugume, 2014).

Student representation and student activism

Where student representation is absent or ineffectual, students have historically resorted to protest action to voice their grievances and express their preferences. Student activism refers to various, typically oppositional, forms of public expression of student power (Altbach, 2006; for an overview of Altbach's work on student activism, see Luescher-Mamashela, 2015). Student activism is not confined to higher education–related isses; it extends the articulation of student preferences well beyond university politics and policy to involve students as a political force in social movements locally and around the world (Altbach & Klemenčič, 2014, p. 2). Student representation and student activism are two sides of a coin, the currency of which is student power. In this respect, Pabian and Minksová (2011, p. 262) argue that there are two categories of studies of student politics: 'the first deals with student activism in "extraordinary" governance processes like student protests and rallies while the latter focusses on the "ordinary" processes of elections and board negotiations.' Yet, the interrelation between student representation and activism is not only conceptual; it is also historical. The formal representation of students in higher education governance has its roots precisely in student agitation to this end (Luescher-Mamashela, 2013; Pabian & Minksová, 2011).

Student representation and student engagement

Finally, student representation falls into the research on student engagement, especially on research into teaching and learning for critical and active democratic citizenship (Trowler & Trowler, 2010). Conceiving universities as sites of citizenship and civic involvement harnesses the university potential to consciously cultivate democratic norms, values and practices on campus (Bergan, 2004). A strong student representation is at the centre of such an objective. As the article by Kgosithebe and Luescher (in this issue) shows, universities stimulate students' cognitive engagement with politics, as well as their interest in and discussion about politics, and increases knowledge of basic facts about the political system, government, and political incumbents. Student representation, if diligently following the principles of democratic governance, is a powerful example of democracy at work, and efficacy of student representatives in university governance can be an important lesson that democracy indeed works. The activities organised by student representatives – as well as by other student groups – present the 'social glue' that bonds the university community and enhances student engagement, in particular the sense of student belonging to a university

community, all of which are essential for student integration, motivation, retention and student success (Tinto, 2014; also see: Kuh, 2009; Astin 1999; Tinto 1998). They lend themselves to life laboratories for active and collaborative learning for the development of competences and critical understanding related to democratic citizenship (Luescher-Mamashela, Ssembatya, Brooks et al., 2015). This potential, of course, also presents challenges. Student representatives who do not adhere to the principles of democratic governance of student associations, who misuse the powers vested in them for personal or party-political interests, or who fail to meet student expectations due to inactivity, feed student cynicism over the state of democracy within their student association, university and their country. Similarly, universities that do not provide for student representation deny their students opportunities to be socialised into enlightened, responsible and constructively critical citizens. A well-designed institutional framework of student representation is a necessary, but not sufficient, part of such socialisation. To nurture students' commitment to active and critical citizenship of the university and beyond, other measures need to be integrated into the curriculum and in all functions and operations of university life so as to consciously cultivate democratic norms, values and practices on campus (Klemenčič, Bergan & Primožič, 2015; Luescher-Mamashela, Ssembatya, Brooks et al., 2015).

Student power in Africa: In this issue

This issue of the *JSAA* comprises five articles from the Student Representation project and covers a diversity of topics. The article by Taabo Mugume and Thierry Luescher addresses the critical shortage in student housing on public university campuses in South Africa and the student politics surrounding attempts at addressing this by means of public–private partnerships. With regard to the 'Kovacs crisis' of 2012 at the University of the Western Cape, the authors show how the Students' Representative Council put the user-price of the new residence onto the agenda of the university management, and analyse the effectiveness of student representation in the process.

Mwangi Macharia explores contemporary student representation and participation in university governance in Kenya. He outlines the structure of students' unions in Kenyan universities and students' involvement in university decision-making, and this is followed by a discussion of the changing manifestation of 'comrades' power' in universities.

Blessing Makunike outlines in his article the relationship between the Zimbabwean student movement and government in broad strokes: from the pre-independence period through the first and second decades of independence. He illustrates his argument about the love-hate relationship between the student movement and government with special reference to two moments in the country's student political history: the 1973 student protests against racial discrimination at the University of Rhodesia and post-1990 developments in national and university politics in Zimbabwe.

Lucky Kgosithebe and Thierry Luescher analyse data on students' political attitudes to democracy collected as part of the HERANA student surveys at four African flagship universities. Comparing the student data with national public opinion data from the Afrobarometer, they find that, in most cases, students are better informed, more active

and more critical citizens than youths without higher education and citizens in general in their respective countries. They also find that the students at the four universities, that is, the University of Botswana, University of Cape Town, University of Dar es Salaam, and University of Nairobi, are not necessarily more democratically inclined than non-students. In this way, their analysis confirms earlier studies that suggest 'political hothouse' conditions in African flagship universities; they offer solutions as to the way these conditions may be employed to transform the African university into a training ground for democracy.

Finally, Adesoji Oni and Jeremiah Adetoro present the results of a survey conducted among academics, university leaders and students in the 12 public and private universities of South-West Nigeria. In a country where formal student representation is limited and the expression of student interests frequently results in large-scale protests, the results of their analysis are leading the way. They conclude that, 'for [university] leadership and teaching effectiveness to be guaranteed in Nigerian universities, provision must be made for adequate involvement of students in decision-making on important matters relating to university administration' (Oni & Adetoro, in this issue). They arrive at this conclusion by focusing their analysis, firstly, on the relationship between student involvement in decision-making and leadership effectiveness, where they find a significant difference in decision-making with student involvement as against decision-making without student involvement. Secondly, when analysing the impact of the student–management relationship on teaching effectiveness, they again find that a cordial relationship significantly affects teaching effectiveness.

The guest-edited research articles are complemented by a critical reflection on the role of student affairs in the internationalisation of higher education and, particularly, in the transition of international students to campus life at New York University (NYU). Allen McFarlane presents 15 salient lessons learnt from the International Student Engagement Meeting Initiative at the NYU New York campus.

In the *JSAA* organisational news section 'Campus dialogue', Annsilla Nyar reports on the inaugural conference of the South African National Resource Centre for the First Year Experience and Students in Transition, which took place from 19 to 21 May 2015 at the University of Johannesburg. In addition, Lisa Bardill Moscaritolo and Birgit Schreiber present a report on the 2nd Global Summit on Student Affairs which took place in Rome in 2014. The summit was hosted by the European University College Association in collaboration with the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) and the US Association for Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education (NASPA).

This issue of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* concludes with a critical review of the acclaimed new book *Knowledge Production and Contradictory Functions in African Higher Education*, edited by Nico Cloete, Peter Maassen and Tracy Bailey, and reviewed by Birgit Schreiber. For the editing of the latter contributions, the guest editors would like to thank the *JSAA* Editorial Executive for its support.

The issue of 'Student Power in Africa' has been guest-edited by:
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Dr Manja Klemenčič, Harvard University, USA
Mr James Otieno Jowi, Moi University, Kenya

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The politics of student housing: Student activism and representation in the determination of the user-price of a public–private partnership residence on a public university campus in South Africa

Taabo Mugume* and Thierry M. Luescher**

Abstract

South African universities have been facing a critical shortage in the provision of student housing for several years now, and the establishment of public–private partnerships (PPPs) is seen as part of the solution to address the shortage (Rensburg, 2011). This article investigates the effectiveness of the Students' Representative Council (SRC) of the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in representing student interests during its negotiations with university management to reduce the user-price per student for the new Kovacs Residence, a PPP student housing complex on the UWC campus. It thus highlights some of the complexities involved in public–private collaborations on student housing provision, including the tension between profitability, affordability and equity in the face of organised student power.

The article shows that, considering the various initiatives taken by the SRC to engage university management, and the resulting reduction of the user-price per annum, students' interests were effectively represented by the SRC, even if this view does not correspond with the perceptions of students. Our analysis uncovers many deficiencies in student representation processes both within student structures and university management. It is supported by data from in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion. Interviews were conducted with SRC members and university management, and a focus group discussion was facilitated with students in residences.

Keywords

Higher education; university administration; student politics; student housing; activism; representation; social justice; public–private partnerships.

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Introduction

The subject of student representation in higher education institutions continues to be emphasised not only in South Africa but worldwide (Jungblut & Weber, 2012; Klemenčič, 2012; Luescher-Mamashela & Mugume, 2014; Luescher, Klemenčič & Jowi, *forthcoming*). This article focuses on student representation within an important domain of student life and governance: student housing. In particular, we investigate the effectiveness of student representation at the University of the Western Cape (UWC)during the 'Kovacs crisis' of 2012 and the related process of negotiating the student user-price for the new Kovacs Residence which had been established as a public–private partnership (PPP). Our investigation deals with the student political challenges involved in addressing the shortage of student housing, in particular the negotiation of an affordable user-price between university and organised student power. In the process, we will address questions of representation, participation and accountability in student representation, and the effectiveness of student interest representation through the university's Students' Representative Council (SRC).

The process of resolving the 'Kovacs crisis' included the SRC taking the initiative in relation to university management, its mobilisation of students to protest against the lack of action by management on the high user-price, and, eventually, the way the SRC communicated with students about the outcomes of the meetings held with management. We find that, contrary to the perceptions of students, the SRC actually represented the interests of students effectively, which resulted in a significant reduction in the annual user-price from R30 000 (USD2 400) to R24 000 (USD1 900) – even if this falls short of the student demand of R 17 000 (USD1 400). Our analysis shows various typical characteristics and deficiencies in the manner of student representation, student participation, and communication with the student body on all sides. We conclude that the way the crisis was resolved highlights a need for universities such as the UWC, which have high levels of student activism, to stick to established mechanisms of student representation in the process of decision-making and resolving conflicts – even in the case of PPPs – and avoid retreating into 'closed spaces'. The latter negates the advantages of formal student representation in university decision-making and creates antagonistic relations between university management and organised student power. Moreover, our analysis shows how university managements routinely tend to undermine student representation – especially in their manner of communication – even if eventually they agree with the cause. We highlight two important matters frequently raised in studies on student representation: firstly, the argument that representation improves the quality and acceptability of discussions, and, secondly, that only transparent and inclusive decision-making processes involving students have the potential of inculcating democratic values and leadership skills as part of co-curricular learning outcomes. Finally, the article provides a cautious reminder to students, university management and private investors that PPPs may not be the panacea for addressing the shortage of affordable student housing in developing countries.

The Kovacs Residence project

The provision of affordable student accommodation presents a challenge internationally, even if the challenges differ between developed regions and developing countries. A study by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) shows that an increase in the need for universities to provide housing space for students is, inter alia, a result of international student mobility, whereby international students may find it more difficult to make private arrangements for accommodation than local students who may live at home, reside with relatives, or have easier access to local renting stock (UNESCO, 2015). In South Africa, as in many other developing countries, the shortage of affordable student accommodation is a function of the fast expansion of higher education, the enrolment of increasing numbers of students from poor and working-class backgrounds, critical shortages of privately owned rental stock conducive for student housing, and limitations of funding and capacity in the development and maintenance of university-owned student accommodation. In 2011, a ministerial committee reviewing the provision of student housing at public universities in South Africa found that there had been a backlog of almost 200 000 student beds in public higher education in 2010. Addressing this shortage over the next ten years would require an investment of R82.5 billion (USD6.6 billion) in addition to the costs for the refurbishment and modernisation of existing student housing infrastructure (Rensburg, 2011, p. 125). The ministerial committee identified PPPs as one of the different sources of funding available to address the shortage of student accommodation (Rensburg, 2011, p. 126; also see: Bond & Tait, 1997; Mafukidze & Hoosen, 2009; Phiri, 2012; Proscia, 2015).

The University of the Western Cape (UWC) in Cape Town, South Africa, is a public university that was originally established in 1960 as a university for coloured students[1] and is located on the outskirts of the urban core in the Bellville South area. It prides itself on being an emerging research university which continues to provide access to quality higher education for poor and working-class students; at the same time, the institution's commitment to social justice and its geographic location create a desperate need for student housing on campus. This is captured, for example, in the words of the former vice-chancellor of the UWC, Prof. Brian O'Connell:

> The scale of the problem is desperate. We [UWC] have thrown open the doors of learning for nineteen thousand students, but we only have [student housing] place for three thousand two hundred. Local landlords demand high rentals, but NSFAS [the National Financial Aid Scheme] funding is totally inadequate; and this accommodation is often appalling. We can't have any campus programmes after four in the afternoon because of the dangers our students, many of whom are from the poorest of the poor communities of Khayelitsha and beyond, face while travelling. The nearest cinema is fifteen kilometres from campus. The past continues to linger with us. (O'Connell in Rensburg, 2011, p. 118)

Despite its commitments and the dire need for on-campus student accommodation, in 2010 the UWC was only able to provide housing for 20% of its student body (Rensburg, 2011, p. 32). Moreover, while the UWC was charging among the highest user-prices for

on-campus accommodation of any South African university, it recorded a deficit of almost R12 million in 2010 (almost USD1 million) in respect of its residence system (Rensburg, 2011, p. 98, Table 12, p. 103, Table 13).

According to Phiri (2012), it is in the context of these challenges that the institution went into a PPP with a private investor, Kovacs, to build a new complex of student residences on campus land known as the Kovacs UWC Student Housing Project (Kovacs, 2015). The first phase of construction of the Kovacs Residence complex started in 2011 and the first housing units were opened for student occupation in 2012. Upon its completion in 2014, the Kovacs Residence complex provided 1 100 new beds (UWC, 2013, p. 93).[2] When the first phase of residence blocks opened to students in January 2012, the annual user fee charged per student became an issue of contention. Phiri (2012) argues that part of the contention was the view of students that Kovacs as a privately owned company was profit-driven. The cost per single room was set at about R30 000 a year, while the user-price in the existing UWC residences was considerably lower. There was an (erroneous) view among students that the average price of residences at UWC was about R15 000 per bed and therefore that Kovacs was charging double the normal cost of student housing. Thus, immediately after the first blocks of Kovacs were completed and became available, students started protesting against occupying the blocks owing to their high user-price. Students argued that the Kovacs Residence would only accommodate students from wealthy families; that students from poor backgrounds would be disadvantaged in their access to on-campus housing when compared with students from affluent backgrounds; and that Kovacs was thus creating class divisions among students (Phiri, 2012).

It is at this point that the SRC had to step in. The SRC is the statutory governance structure established to represent students' interests in a South African higher education institution. It is established in terms of the Higher Education Act (1997), a university's institutional statute and the SRC constitution. In keeping with the notions of good and cooperative governance in South African higher education, an SRC ought to participate in the governance of its institution with respect to all institutional matters that affect student interests. Thus, section 3.3 of the *White Paper on Higher Education* (WPHE) of 1997 indicates:

> Good governance must be based on a recognition of the existence of different interests and the inevitability of contestation among them and must therefore create structures and encourage processes which enable differences to be negotiated in participative and transparent ways. (*WPHE*, 1997)

It is against this understanding of the nature of university governance and the role of the SRC that the SRC intervened in the matter of Kovacs on behalf of students in order to challenge the user-price of the new residences through the structures of the university.

Conceptualising the study

Representation

Various scholars have articulated the reasons for representation, the various ways it could or actually does take place, and the advantages and disadvantages which may arise in the process of representation. Hannah Pitkin argues, firstly, that representation 'means the making present in some sense of something which is nevertheless not present literally or in fact' (Pitkin, 1972, p. 9). Representation thus involves making present one who is absent. To what extent is it possible (or even desirable) for the representative to 'replace' an absent person? What leeway does the representative have in her or his role? In keeping with these questions, Lavalle, Houtzager and Castello (2005) note that the autonomy of the representative has to be considered along with her or his genuine commitment to the interests of the represented.

The effectiveness of representation can therefore not be discussed in isolation from, for example, levels of participation and accountability. In terms of this and other characteristics, a number of scholars have established different typologies of representation. Thus, Pitkin (1972) categorises representation in four ways: formalistic, descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation. Mansbridge (2003) also offers four categories of representation, namely promissory, gyroscopic, anticipatory and surrogate representation. Even though the two scholars use different concepts for their respective types of representation, a number of similarities emerge from the way they define and characterise them.

Formalistic representation is characteristic of a type of representation where 'a representative is viewed as someone who has been authorized to act' (Pitkin, 1972, p. 39). In this case, power is entrusted to the individual who takes over a specific office. This idea of representation relates to Mansbridge's notion of promissory representation whereby a representative is authorised to represent, but, in this case, only after making certain promises to the represented, for example during an election campaign (2003, pp. 516–517).

Secondly, according to Pitkin (1972, pp. 39–40), descriptive representation refers to the case where a representative is elected to office because she or he somehow resembles a group that is to be represented. The relevant characteristics in this case may be demographic (e.g. based on class, race or gender). Mansbridge (2003, p. 520) refers to this type of representation as gyroscopic representation; while there are various differences in the characterisation of their respective types, both authors agree that 'resemblance' does not guarantee that the elected representative will actually act on behalf of the group that elected her or him to office.

Thirdly, Pitkin explains substantive representation as a form of representation which focuses on 'what the representative does and how he/she does it' (Pitkin, 1972, p. 143). In the context of student leadership, this form of representation would, for example, refer to the situation whereby an SRC member who made certain promises during an election campaign is assessed while in office as to the extent to which these promises have been given substance. The idea thus corresponds to Mansbridge's notion of anticipatory

representation (2003, pp. 516–517) whereby voters reflect on the record of a candidate before making a decision to re-elect the candidate. Anticipatory representation is therefore also similar to promissory representation, given that the promises which may be made by a candidate during a campaign, for example, could be the indicators used by the electorate to anticipate her/his future performance.

Lastly, the notion of symbolic representation focuses on what the representative stands for (Pitkin, 1972, p. 42). An example would be someone who gets elected because he/she stands for the eradication of poverty. Mansbridge's fourth notion of surrogate representation, in contrast, refers to a form of representation that 'occurs when a legislator represents constituents outside of their district' (2003, p. 522). This category is also given and defended by Dovi (2006). In this case, there is no electoral relationship with the representative, because she/he was elected by a different constituency (Mansbridge, 2003, p. 522).

For the purposes of this study, the different categories of representation given by each of these authors can be seen as providing different reasons or rationales for electing an SRC into office and thus as dimensions for considering the effectiveness of representation. In this regard, the case for student representation has historically been made on a number of premises. Firstly, it is argued that the operation of an institution may be impaired by the exclusion of a very large number of those actively involved in, and affected by, the activities of the institution, especially if, as in the case of students, they may become politically organised or unionised to defend their interests; secondly, that as consumers, students have an interest in the quality of the service they receive; thirdly, that participation is a fundamental element of the education process, which cannot take place without the willing acceptance and support of those who are being educated; and, finally, that the inclusion of students in the processes of decision-making means decisions are made by inclusive bodies and thus may result in better decisions that are accepted with less resistance by the student community (Luescher-Mamashela, 2013).

Not only can the nature of representation be characterised and analysed from various perspectives, and be justified on different grounds, but representation can also take various forms: it may occur in conventional settings or be informal. Moreover, it has been noted above that student representation cannot be discussed without considering the implications of participation and accountability. Attention will, therefore, be given to the question of political participation and, particularly, Ballard's distinction of different spaces of participation.

Spaces of participation

According to Birch (1994, p. 80), 'participation' refers to taking part in an activity which, in this case, may be public, political or community-based. 'Community participation' refers to various ways in which members of a certain locality take part in collective decision-making processes, especially at a local-government level; 'political participation' refers to how citizens participate in the formal political process, for example in electing their parliamentary representatives, while 'public participation' generally refers to both community and political participation. Participation performs two main political purposes:

It can be used for information-gathering exercises in order to allow leaders to understand the needs of citizens or a community; it is also a way for citizens to engage the governing authority so as to ensure that the needs of the community or citizens are met (Ballard, 2008, p. 168).

Ballard (2008, pp. 173–182) distinguishes between two popular types of 'spaces' utilised in the process of participation. Firstly, he conceptualises 'invited spaces' as those spaces that are used by a governing authority to engage the community and gather information about the needs of citizens. In the context of a university, these would, for example, include meetings arranged by an SRC and meetings between management and students, as well as elections for the SRC and for other structures of student governance like a residence house committee, etc. Conversely, 'invented spaces' are those spaces created by citizens to engage the governing authority, for example on matters of policy. They are typically created to provide avenues of engagement *outside* the established processes; they may thus be considered unconventional and include various forms of protest. The way these different kinds of spaces are utilised is part of a continuous contestation of ideas and a shifting constellation of power. Gaventa adds to the conception of 'invited' and 'invented' spaces that of 'closed spaces' as the third space of participation. 'Closed spaces' are those where 'decisions are made by a set of actors behind closed doors, without any pretence of broadening the boundaries of inclusion' (Gaventa, 2006, p. 26). Those included in closed spaces may try to create an invited space in order to legitimise decisions taken behind closed doors, thus seeking consent from excluded representatives to relieve any hostility that may have built up from taking decisions in closed spaces. It has been argued that student representation in many universities precisely originates in a politically-realist assessment of the political situation on campus; hence the 'co-option' of student representatives into formal or 'invited spaces' of university decision-making (Luescher-Mamashela, 2013).

Accountability

In considering Pitkin's type of formalistic representation, two key components of representation can be highlighted: authorisation and accountability (Pitkin, 1972). Authorisation entails a representative having the rightful power to speak on behalf of a constituency or electorate and thus to represent its interests. Accountability, in turn, involves the representative accounting for her or his use of this authority; thus, where a representative fails to represent the interests of the represented, he or she should be removed from office, for example by voting a new candidate into the position in the next election (Pitkin, 1972, pp. 55–57). Moncrieffe (1998, p. 393) posits that, during the term of office of a representative, political accountability can be measured first of all through openness and transparency in the process of representation. Thus, representatives ought to provide 'timely information and opportunities of deliberation and debate' (Moncrieffe, 1998, p. 393). Hence, representative democracies have constitutions which provide for checks and balances as measures of accounting to the public. In the case of the SRC of the University of the Western Cape, the SRC Constitution (2010) outlines the importance of annual general meetings for the SRC to report back to students. Conwell and Gaveta (2001)

highlight transparency and trust as the two main values of accountability. 'Trust' refers to the extent to which stakeholders believe in one another's agenda: The represented has trust in the representative, while the representative is transparent so as to ensure accountability to those who trusted him or her with public office.

Methodology

In order to analyse and understand the processes of representing students' interests in the course of resolving the question of the pricing of Kovacs, a differentiated notion of student representation was used based on the foregoing conceptual outline. This basic framework presented the starting point for conducting in-depth interviews to extract detailed actor-relative accounts of the origins of the so-called 'Kovacs crisis' and how it was resolved (see Rule & John, 2011, p. 30). The sampling of respondents was purposive to ensure that they were well informed (Coyne, 1997, p. 623). Actors involved in the negotiations were therefore interviewed, including an official in the office of the deputy vice-chancellor: student affairs who is responsible for linking the student leadership (SRC) to university management and who attended the meetings in the process of resolving the 'crisis'. Other interviewees were the SRC president and a SRC cabinet member of the 2011/2012 SRC, both of whom were part of the SRC team that negotiated with the UWC management. In addition, a focus group discussion was conducted with six students who lived in different UWC residences at the time of the crisis, including three female and three male students, two of whom were specifically chosen because they had been involved in Kovacs-related student protests and had attended the report-back meetings organised by the SRC. In this manner, more detailed and richer, different perspectives could be gained on the problem and how it was resolved. Finally, one of the researchers was also a resident of a UWC student residence at the time and had some opportunity to observe public student activism. Thus, by means of these different methods of data collection and sources of data, the researchers were able to triangulate the observations and thus increase the validity of their findings and conclusions (compare Neuman, 1997, p. 421). The research is, however, limited by the fact that the researchers could neither conduct a focus group or interviews with any of the students who had occupied rooms in the Kovacs Residence during the time of the 'crisis', nor with member of senior management of the university other than the officer noted above. The data obtained from both the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussion were coded and analysed to assess how effectively the SRC leadership represented students' interests. Below, we outline the steps that were taken to resolve the crisis and how the conceptual framework may assist in understanding the process.

The steps taken by the different actors

Representation

The SRC of the UWC represents the interests of students in the various governance structures and committees of the institution, including the Council as the university's highest decision-making body, the Senate, the Institutional Forum, and many of their

respective committees, and in meetings directly with institutional management. In keeping with its role as the representative structure of student interests, the newly elected SRC of 2011/2012 called a meeting with university management immediately after being voted into office at the end of the 2011 academic year to discuss the pricing of the Kovacs Residence. According to the student affairs officer, the SRC argued that the proposed annual user-price of R30 000 for the new Kovacs Residence was much higher than the typical user-price at UWC residences. SRC members interviewed for the purpose of this study (2 April 2013 & 4 April 2013) recalled that management agreed to have a meeting if the SRC had suggestions to present. Cursory research conducted by the SRC found that the most expensive residences at the UWC at the time were the Hector Petersen Residence (HPR) and DISA Residence, each supposedly costing about R15 000 (USD1 200) per annum; other public universities in or around the Cape Town Metropole charged considerably more: the University of Stellenbosch apparently had the most expensive residences costing about R23 000 (USD1 840), while the University of Cape Town charged approximately R20 000 (USD1 600) and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology approximately R18 000 (USD1 440) annually.[3] Thus, in the first consultation meeting organised by the SRC for the student community about Kovacs, students demanded that the Kovacs Residence user-price be reduced to R17 000 (interview with the SRC president, 4 April 2013).

Following the consultation meeting with students, the SRC cabinet agreed in camera that the SRC should negotiate a reasonable price between R20 000 and R22 000 with the private contractor. This decision by the SRC cabinet to negotiate on behalf of students at a price higher than that suggested by the students they represent, illustrates Lavalle, Houtzager and Castello's (2005) argument that representatives assume autonomy in the making of decisions. In this case, the SRC clearly sought to improve its negotiating position by seeking to strike a balance between students' demand for affordability and what the SRC anticipated as the service provider's reasonable demand for profitability.

SRC members (interviews, 2 April 2013 & 4 April 2013) indicated that they had a number of meetings with university management and Kovacs. In order to get a price reduction, the SRC argued that 'the university should subsidize the residence'. The SRC further argued that it did not make sense paying R30 000 for Kovacs while faculties such as the Faculty of Arts did not even have a degree that cost as much annually. Moreover, the SRC reasoned that most UWC students were funded by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), which only offered a maximum of approximately R15 000 for accommodation (interviews, 2 April 2013 & 4 April 2013; Phiri, 2012). The SRC President noted that they discovered later in discussions with management that the university had actually informed the national Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) about the anticipated high user-price for Kovacs Residence and that the Department had released some funds to the institution to be used for subsidisation a year earlier. However, it was noted that:

UWC went back to the Department [and requested] to use the money for something else [arguing that they] will replace it at some other point. The Department [representatives] approved that request. (interview with SRC president, 4 April 2013)

According to both the student affairs officer (interview, 5 April 2013) and SRC members (interview, 2 April 2013 & 5 April 2013), the meetings between the SRC, Kovacs and university management deadlocked. Hence, the SRC, after holding a report–back meeting with the student body, decided to organise a protest on the UWC's main campus and deliver a memorandum to university management and the Kovacs board.

Throughout this phase in the 'Kovacs crisis', the SRC was acting as the formal representative body, negotiating on behalf of the student body, consulting students, organising protests on behalf of students, and drafting and delivering a memorandum to the managements (compare Pitkin, 1972). The change in the form of engagement from formal negotiations to protests following the deadlock highlights the SRC's ability to employ a diverse political repertoire in its pursuit of representing student interests, thus showing resolve as representatives not to accept a deal it thought was not in the interest of the student community.

The interview with the student affairs officer (interview, 5 April 2013) further indicates a different complexity in the Kovacs Residence PPP: Kovacs was a private entity on UWC land. Were the various problems raised in relation to the new Kovacs Residence by the students to be addressed by university management or by Kovacs? Eventually, after a series of meetings deadlocked, SRC protest actions, a unilateral management decision, and two open letters by the SRC to the DHET, a meeting was held with all the major actors involved in the PPP: the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), which had loaned the funds to the private investor (Kovacs); the DHET, which had provided funds and guarantees to the university; UWC management and Kovacs management; and the SRC. Through retreating to an 'invented space' in the form of protest, students had put sufficient pressure on university management to provide a new space to which to invite all stakeholders for discussion and negotiation (cf. Ballard, 2008, p. 186). However, according to interviews with participants, even this meeting did not produce the results the SRC was hoping for. According to the participating SRC members, the main player among all the actors, the DHET, asked for time to think about a better solution. By the time the 2011/2012 SRC left office in November 2012, it had not heard from the DHET (interviews, 2 April 2013; 4 April 2013 & 5 April 2013).

As much as it is clear here that the SRC tried to engage with other parties on behalf of students, there were hardships such as those suggested in the focus group (7 April 2013). For example, it was argued that the SRC could not win a battle against university management because student representatives were always outnumbered in these meetings. A focus group respondent went on to argue that the SRC's strategies were poor and that the SRC ought to caucus with sympathetic Council members rather than rush to protest. Accordingly, the student argued that students lost the battle against management (focus group, 7 April 2013).

Participation and accountability

As shown above, students not only participated in formal meetings in order to put pressure on university management to reduce the user-price of Kovacs Residence, but also organised the protests that followed and which resulted in the temporary halting of construction work at the Kovacs site on the east campus and a sit-in/occupation of some rooms in the unit that was ready in 2012. The mobilisation of students was done using posters in public places informing students about upcoming protest marches and student mass meetings; mass emails were also sent out to inform all students of the goings-on. Students thus used both invited and invented spaces in the process of making their demands.

Despite the very public nature of the 'crisis', the focus group participants (7 April 2013) argued that there was insufficient consultation with the student body, both by university management and the SRC. One of the focus group respondents even argued that he knew nothing about Kovacs, and that as a student in a UWC residence, the protests could have affected him. The focus group participants further indicated that, in the report-back meetings organised by the SRC, there was less emphasis on student participation and that SRC members, it appeared, were not completely open with students about the discussions that were going on with university management. A focus group respondent argued:

> I think they were hiding something. You know, when someone is hiding something, before they answer your question they consult each other. (focus group, 7 April 2013)

Transparency is very important in promoting trust between representatives and represented, as Conwell and Gaveta (2001) posit. In this case, the SRC seems to have been working against its own interests, since its manner of communication led students to doubt the trustworthiness of the SRC's engagement with management. Moreover, some students said that students were discouraged from attending the SRC's mass meetings because they tended to turn into party-political contests rather than focusing on trying to constructively resolve the 'Kovacs crisis'. Accordingly:

> The thing is in those meetings its always SASCO and PASMA trying to win over the students. [Each] saying you know we actually have a better plan than this one, so they do not actually address the problem. (focus group, 7 April 2013)[4]

Another focus group respondent argued that propositions by students in mass meetings tended to be overlooked. Apparently, this was also particularly the case if a student was a PASMA member, because the SRC leaders were mostly from SASCO. As a result, fewer students participated in the mass meetings and, eventually, fewer knew about the protests. Moreover, because the protests were not well organised, some of the students were arrested for damaging university property.

Thus, the above suggests that the different spaces for participation created by the SRC were not always effectively used as a means to show itself accountable to students, build trust, and ensure broad-based participation. This negatively affected students' perceptions

of the effectiveness of student representation by the SRC. As noted, the SRC used various measures of reporting back: mass meetings, mass emails and posters in public places. Participation is indicated, for instance, by the fact that the decision to protest was reached in a meeting between the SRC and students in order to force university management back to the negotiating table after a deadlock had been reached. The SRC Facebook page and other online social networks also served as forums for discussion and information. Finally, reporting back also happened through the SRC constitutional General Council meeting which brings together all student leaders serving in student governance structures on campus. Nonetheless, attendance levels were reported as very low, which impaired the SRC's ability to account to the student body (focus group, 7 April 2013).

Resolving the 'Kovacs crisis'

In March 2012, university management sent an email to all UWC students informing them that the cost of the Kovacs Residence had been reduced from R30 000 to R24 000 per annum. The SRC had been waiting for almost two weeks to receive a response to the memorandum it had delivered as part of the protest march; when it received the email from university management, it was taken aback, since it had not been part of this decision nor had it been informed of it before the general university community was informed. According to the student affairs officer, the latter was an administrative oversight; the SRC president was supposed to have been informed of the decision before it was made public:

> The person who was supposed to have sent the letter did not add the SRC president as one of the recipients to inform him that this is what has been agreed to and to please share this with his fellow SRC members [before we make the decision public]. (5 April 2013)

However, some participants in the focus group doubted the ignorance of the SRC of university management's decision; they also alleged that some members of the SRC cabinet had been promised incentives so as to accept the resolution by management (focus group, 7 April 2013). These allegations were, however, vigorously denied by the SRC president and his cabinet. University management instituted an investigation to discover what exactly had happened about the lack of informing the SRC prior to sending out the public emails to inform students about management's decision (interview with student affairs officer, 5 April 2013). According to the student affairs officer, the investigation concluded that it had been an administrative oversight – a human error – that the SRC was not informed beforehand. For our purposes, such oversights and allegations epitomise a sense of mistrust between the represented and the representatives; allegations of this nature create a negative perception about the SRC which, eventually, affects student participation in SRC activities, as some participants in the focus group argued (focus group, 7 April 2013).

Concluding discussion

University management's unilateral decision to subsidise the Kovacs Residence user–price came about undeniably as a result of the 'Kovacs crisis' created by the SRC and students

in 2012 for this purpose. Management's commitment to resolving the 'crisis' was limited and temporary: it only committed to subsidise the Kovacs price for one academic year (2012), and the reduction was limited to a new price of R24 000. In its annual report, university management considered the housing fee subsidy agreement a 'financial risk to the developer' and 'setback' in its efforts to develop campus infrastructure and address the student housing shortage, even though it recognised the need for 'equitable access' to student housing and 'affordability' (UWC, 2013, p. 23). It further reported:

> Council ... approved that if needed, some university funds, of which a maximum amount was determined, could be redirected to the Kovacs student accommodation project, a public private partnership project. This decision has been taken as a sustainability measure to reduce the immediate financial burden on students by reducing the base fee charged by the developer, which will also impact on increases going forward. (UWC, 2013, pp. 6–7)

Nowhere in the annual report is there any mention of the SRC's role in initiating and arriving at the decision. Meanwhile, the SRC members interviewed argued that they had suggested subsidisation earlier in the discussions with management:

> We said to the university they [should] subsidize; they were a bit reluctant to subsidize it. In the end, we succeeded. I think that's the argument that actually won the case. (interviews, 2 April 2013 & 4 April 2013)

Thus, not only was it the SRC's initiative to open talks on the Kovacs user-price (and eventually create a 'crisis'), but the SRC also claims to have suggested the solution. However, in the communication regarding the resolution of the 'crisis', university management failed to mention the role of the SRC. As with management's email to students, the manner in which university management communicated publicly about the Kovacs subsidisation decision in the UWC annual report undermined the role played by the student representatives. Did university management fear losing face and therefore deliberately refuse to involve the SRC in the final decision and inform it about its decision to subsidise Kovacs in order to avoid students claiming victory? The resolution of the 'crisis' could have provided an opportunity for a mature university management and SRC to showcase good and cooperative governance, as well as to reconcile and demonstrate their mutual solidarity and commitment to social justice at the UWC. However, management's actual action angered the SRC members, and students were unsure about the effectiveness of their SRC (interviews, 2 April 2013 & 4 April 2013).

Thus, while all respondents in the interviews and focus group discussion agreed (when prompted) that the SRC had represented the interests of students persistently, and that management's agreement to subsidise the residence in 2012 could be attributed to the SRC's representation of student interests, the level of effectiveness was considered highly debatable. The SRC's effectiveness was challenged by most focus group discussants who argued that the price of Kovacs was still high (and had returned to R30 000 in 2013). In addition, they argued that students had, after all, wanted the price down to R17 000, which

was not achieved. The Kovacs case thus raises the important question of how to include student representatives effectively when forging complex partnerships with external bodies, as in the case of PPPs for student housing, where students have an abiding interest in the kind of service to be provided.

Student involvement in university decision-making frequently leads to better decisions and decisions that are more readily accepted by students (cf. Luescher-Mamashela, 2013). The 'Kovacs crisis' of 2012 illustrates this – not only in its contemporaneous context but also when considering the sequel to the 'Kovacs crisis' in 2014. In March 2014, UWC management turned to the High Court to restrain the SRC from protesting, inter alia, about the fact that disadvantaged students needed accommodation on campus while Kovacs Residence had 200 empty (and unaffordable) beds (Fredericks & Mposo, 2014). It is at this point that the vice-chancellor of the UWC, Prof. O'Connell, conceded that the Kovacs PPP altogether turned out not to be the perfect solution to address the institution's student housing challenge. According to Fredericks and Mposo (2014):

> Asked if in hindsight he [i.e. the UWC vice-chancellor, Prof. O'Connell] thought the university should have entered the partnership, he said: "I don't think so."

In a broader perspective, the way the 'Kovacs crisis' was brought about and resolved emphasises the importance of formal student representation in higher education institutions and the problematic nature of using 'closed spaces' as mechanisms of decision-making. South Africa is a democracy which, by 2012, was still in its teens, and where these mechanisms of student representation put in place at university level were also seen as opportunities for grooming a new crop of democratic leaders. Outdated authoritarian and exclusive methods of decision-making and resolving institutional problems do not expose student leaders to democratic values and practices and thus do not effectively use the opportunity of student involvement in university governance as a *training ground* in democracy (see Mattes & Luescher-Mamashela, 2012).

Acknowledgements

Endnotes

1. Apartheid legislation in South Africa classified all inhabitants into four racial groups, variably called 'native' or 'black', 'European' or 'white', 'coloured', and 'Indian' or 'Asian'. The population group 'coloured' included people of mixed descent and from various parts of the world.

2. The *UWC Annual Report* describes the Kovacs Student Housing Project as follows: 'UWC has appointed Kovacs in terms of a financing agreement in a "Build Operate Transfer" (BOT) model whereby UWC leases land to KOVACS with a right to develop student residences exclusive to UWC students with a right to collect rentals at full risk. The financing agreement to UWC is regulated by a "Development Agreement", Lease Agreement" and a "Management Agreement". The salient points of the agreements are: 1) The terms of the lease [are] 25 years plus 3 years of development; 2) KOVACS takes full risk of the business model; 3) The design and development

of student accommodation stock is the responsibility of KOVACS with approval from UWC; 4) The total number of beds contracted amounts to 1100. The asset will be depreciated over its useful life. The obligation will be released to revenue on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease. The land rentals will need to be recognised on a straight-line basis. At the end of the lease term only the asset will remain on the statement of financial position and this will continue to depreciate over the remaining useful [life]. Phase 1 of the service concession agreement was completed with construction costs of R57,741,421 having been incurred. 334 beds were completed in this phase. Phase 2 consists of the construction of 3 accommodation blocks with actual cost incurred of R44,824,917. A total of 228 beds were available for use at beginning of 2013. Phase 3 comprises the balance of the development entailing the construction of 538 beds to be estimated at R76,573,940.' (UWC, 2013, p. 93)

3.   When comparing this with Rensburg (2011, p. 103, Table 13), who provides the official weighted figures of average residence prices for 2010 by all the universities referred to by the SRC's 'research', it is clear that the SRC's figures were much too low and outdated, wrong or based on discounted residence prices.

4.   SASCO and PASMA are two major student political organisations involved in student politics at the UWC. The South African Students Congress (SASCO) is formally aligned with the South African governing party, the African National Congress. The Pan Africanist Student Movement of Azania (PASMA) is a student organisation born at the UWC and aligned to the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, a South African political party. The UWC SRC tends to be dominated by either one of the two organisations; the 2011/2012 SRC was a majority SASCO SRC.

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Comrades' power: Student representation and activism in universities in Kenya

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Abstract

In the last decade, student politics and governance of universities in Kenya and in other African countries have undergone a tremendous transformation. The unprecedented expansion and massification of public universities, the introduction of 'Module 2' programmes, the admission of private, 'parallel' and 'school-based' students, and the substantial increase in private universities have impacted on the governance of the institutions and student politics in different ways. In this context, this article explores student involvement in university governance and describes the structure of students' unions in Kenyan universities in comparison with students exercising 'comrades' power' in universities in Kenya.

Keywords

Higher education; student politics; student activism; student unionism; university governance; representation.

Background and introduction

According to the Commission for University Education (2014), the higher education sector in Kenya is comprised of 52 universities, including 22 public chartered universities, 17 private chartered universities, and 13 institutions with letters of interim authority. In addition to universities and polytechnics, the higher education system contains a number of teacher training colleges, institutes of science and technology, government-owned and government-supported medical training colleges, and trade and agricultural institutions, which provide three-year vocational training at diploma level and two-year certificate courses. Student enrolment in Kenyan universities rose from 571 at independence in 1963 to a total of 239 362 in the 2012-2013 academic years (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

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Private higher education in Kenya can be traced to the colonial period when missionaries established schools and colleges for their converts. The first private institutions of higher learning were St Paul's United Theological College (1955) and Scott Theological College (1962). In 1970, the United States International University (USIU) established a campus in Nairobi. These early universities offered degrees in the name of parent universities abroad. For a long time, the government did not give accreditation to these private colleges or universities. Thus, the evolution of private higher education and the privatisation of universities were a response to two developments. Firstly, there was the increasing demand for higher education in the face of the financial inability of the government to expand admissions and subsidise students in public universities. This was a key impetus for the growth of private universities. Secondly, there was the desire by the management of public universities to stall the collapse of the institutions and reverse the decline in the quality of their programmes. The increased demand for university education led the government to encourage the establishment and accreditation of private universities in the 1990s. This phenomenal growth has not satisfied the increased need for university education in Kenya. The phenomenal growth has also increased the need for transformation and the restructuring of student governance and representation in order to effectively highlight and address issues affecting the growing number of students.

Over the last few years, there has been a massive expansion characterised mainly by upgrading some middle-level colleges to university status. This has been occasioned by the increasing numbers of students joining the universities through the Joint Admissions Board and the Self-Sponsored Program (SSP). The rising number of students has also been occasioned by the increase in conversion of several middle-level colleges to fully fledged universities (Bosire, Chemnjor & Ngware, 2008). In early 2014, for example, Kenya upgraded 15 such colleges into fully fledged universities in a bid to raise capacity for at least 10 000 extra students annually.

The rapid rise in the student population has raised significant issues regarding student representation and governance in both public and private universities. New data from the government shows that enrolments in state universities rose by 41%, from 195 428 in 2012 to 276 349 by the end of 2014. In contrast, admissions to private universities increased by just 7.1%, from 45 023 in 2012 to 48 211 in 2013. As a result of the admissions jump in public institutions, overall student enrolment shot up by 34.9% nationally to reach 324 560, as against 240 551 in 2012. Kenya's Ministry of Planning attributes the rise to new courses, the upgrading of university colleges to universities, and the expansion of private universities. Enrolments are expected to hit new highs this year as the government starts admitting state-funded students to private universities – currently, state-funded students can only join public universities (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

In this context, this article engages with two specific questions:
- What is the structure of student representation and participation in university governance in public and private universities in Kenya?
- What is the nature of 'comrades' power' and student activism in universities in Kenya, and what may account for changes and different patterns in public and private institutions?

Methodological approach

This article is largely descriptive and exploratory in design (cf. Creswell, 1998; Babbie, 2001; Bogdan & Bilken, 2003). It draws on available literature related to student governance, student politics and activism internationally, as well as in Kenyan universities, which was supplemented with information from the field. For the former, library and Internet searches provided a considerable amount of literature. The documentary sources used included published books, journal articles, magazines, as well as unpublished materials such as dissertations, and conference and seminar proceedings. In particular, they were useful in demonstrating the nature of student politics, representation and organisational characteristics in public and private universities in Kenya, as well as the significant similarities and differences in exercising 'comrades' power' in public and private universities in Kenya.

In addition, the article draws on conversations with student leaders held on the main campuses of four universities: two public universities, that is, Kenyatta University (KU) and Egerton University (EU), and two private universities, that is, the United States International University (USIU) and Mount Kenya University (MKU). The study does not attempt to provide a comparative analysis of student politics between these four institutions; rather, they serve to ensure that the overall discourse provided in this paper is informed by a variety of institutions.

Overall, the article to present a reflective account that raises questions and informally starts making propositions towards a deeper understanding of historical changes and contemporary patterns of student politics in Kenyan public and private universities and their significance.

Governance and universities in Kenya

Governance is a relational concept whose meaning depends on the context in which it is applied. While there is a variety of definitions of 'governance' found in the literature, which makes a single, unanimously comprehensive definition difficult, a common element in conceptualising governance in higher education is the notion of a multifaceted web of interaction and relationships among bodies operating at different levels, depending where, by whom and when the decision is made, and on what aspect (cf. Obiero, 2012). Governance is also viewed as the structure of relationships that authorise policies, plans, and decisions, and account for their probity and responsiveness (Meek in Amaral, Meek & Larsen, 2003). On the same note, it is described as decision-making patterns of authority distribution (Margison & Considine, 2000, p.7; also see: Meek in Amaral et al., 2003).

Higher education governance can be viewed in terms of two levels: institutional or internal governance and external or system governance (De Boer & File, 2003, p.10). External governance encompasses the vast array of macrolevel structures and relationships through which the regulatory frameworks and policies for higher education are developed, funding is allocated to institutions, and institutions are held accountable for the way it is spent. It also includes less formal structures and relationships which steer and influence organisational behaviour across the system. Institutional governance refers to the structures

and processes within individual institutions that establish responsibilities and authority, determine relationships between positions, and thereby define the way through which all stakeholders in a university setting relate to one another (Maassen 2003; de Boer & File, 2003). The relationship between these two levels determines the characteristics of individual higher education institutions, how they relate to the whole systems, the nature of academic work, and, more importantly, the ways the institutions are organised and governed. This article focuses on the institutional level governance.

For a very long time, institutional governance in Africa has been based on a top-down model. This has been challenged frequently in favour of a more inclusive, democratic, and participatory model of governance and leadership in keeping with notions of democratic representation (De Boer & Stensaker, 2007), the more traditional notions of shared governance, or the concept 'distributed leadership' (e.g. Harris, 2004). The latter is a rather new concept where responsibilities and activities are distributed across a wide range of people within each specific context (e.g. Lumby, 2003, p. 283). Thus, Obondo (2000) argues that, in order to effect a democratisation of higher education management in Kenya, existing organisational structures, their composition, operational rules and procedures, have to be modified consistent with the demand for an all-inclusive approach to academic administration. Obondo continues by arguing that democratisation of decision-making is important not only because many conflicts arise from an unequal power relationship, but also because universities are advocates of democratic institutions and should therefore practise what they preach.

The governance of universities typically provides a mechanism through which students can organise themselves in a governance structure that enables them to articulate their views. In considering how student governance is operationalised in private universities and in public universities that are increasingly privatising most of their students, one cannot fail to notice the drastic change from the notions of shared governance that traditionally gave academics and their students greater leeway in the governance of the institutions to the recent introduction of more corporate governance structures. The latter have increasingly diminished the power of students and academics in making binding decisions.

The rapid growth and expansion of universities in Kenya have therefore raised contradictory issues of governance in terms of the ways in which both public and private universities are run. In Kenya today, both public and private universities have embraced, in varying degrees, a democratisation of decision-making. On the one hand, the Universities Act of 2012 promotes wider representation and participation of staff and students in key university governing bodies, and allows staff a greater say in selecting senior university administrators. In the past the president of Kenya used to be the chancellor of all public universities, who, in turn, appointed the vice-chancellors and members of a university's council. This meant that the government played a key role in the internal governance of public universities. The Grand Coalition government, which came into power after the post-election violence in 2008, introduced far-reaching reforms in the running of public universities. Today, each university has its own chancellor and the appointment of the vice-chancellors is done through competitive bidding. Moreover, the government interferes very

minimally in the running of private universities, apart from, for example, through the role of the Commission for University Education (CUE) in awarding charters and letters of interim authority. It is arguable that the Universities Act of 2012 has led to the emergence of new governance cultures in institutions. A unique hybrid of two modes of governance, devolved and centralised, seems to have been introduced through the new Act. This model of governance is a kind of 'devolved centralisation' which seems to favour a corporate governance structure. At the same time, it did not seem to do much in enhancing the voice of the students' union.

Student involvement in university governance in Kenya

Student involvement in university governance illustrates students' willingness to participate in the life of the university. As studies of student engagement have shown, it involves additional educational benefits for students. Moreover, Wood (1993 in Obiero, 2012) carried out a study in three colleges regarding faculty, student and support-staff participation in governance in which he found that these groups provided valuable sources of information for decision-making. Other studies have also had positive outcomes concerning student participation and the ability of students to make significant contributions to the quality of decisions (Zuo & Ratsoy, 1999; Menon, 2005). Wood further argued that students may not be in a position to effectively represent the interest of their group if they have no place on university boards (or councils). Provided that a university comprises various internal stakeholders such as administrators, teaching and non-teaching staff, and the students, who interact in everyday activities of the university, their voices should be heard at the same level and the decision-making organs of the university should include all stakeholders in keeping with the 'stakeholder society' (De Boer & Goedegebuure, 2003, in Obiero, 2012, p. 8).

As stated earlier, Kenya has in the recent past experienced unprecedented growth in and expansion and massification of, universities. The introduction of 'Module 2' programmes, the admission of 'private', 'parallel' and 'school-based' students, and the substantial increase in private universities have impacted on the governance of the institutions. With this rapid growth and expansion, issues of governance have presented challenges in terms of the ways in which both public and private universities are run in the country. Most of these challenges affect students directly and indirectly, since they are the key stakeholders in these institutions. Students form the biggest body in the university and, without them, the university would not serve its purpose (Obiero, 2012). Although students have representatives in university councils, senate and faculty management committees, they are sometimes excluded when crucial matters such as examinations are being discussed.

Student representation in Kenyan universities takes place through students' unions and students' associations at institutional level and also through the Kenya National University Students Union at national levels. These levels of representation are necessary in the area of reform if the challenges of governance in the institutions are to be addressed. Each of the public universities in Kenya has a student governing body referred to by different names such as students' union, student government or congress. Whichever designation is used, this is a body that is akin to a student parliament; it has office bearers who are elected after

each academic year (Bosire et al, 2008). The function and structure of the students' unions in Kenya's public university system are more or less similar to those in other universities in the rest of the world. Generally, the students' union is both a student platform for addressing various social, political and corporate issues of the student community and a link between students and university management (Egerton University, 1999a).

Current reforms have increased the number of students elected as representatives. The increase in student enrolments has led to each hall electing representatives to the student unions. There are also representatives of non-resident students; representatives according to mode of study; school-/faculty-based representatives; as well as representatives of special groups based on, for example, gender and disability. This means that the student council of today is a fairly large body. This enlargement of student representation is not, however, proportional to the increase in student enrolment. The increasing student population has not seen a corresponding increase in leaders who can articulate issues of student representation, which implies increasing pressure on those handling student issues. Obiero (2012) argues that student associations and unions represent an important resource in the university's effort to confront current and emergent governance crises, as student representatives have been noted to have the capacity to diffuse potential conflicts. This they can do through regular meetings with their members and the administration, and by designing a mechanism for regular communication, thereby restraining their colleagues from unnecessary conflicts (Obondo, 2000). In addition, there are other benefits of involving students in the running of the university which do not need to be repeated here (e.g. Luescher-Mamashela, 2013; Obiero, 2012; Obondo, 2000).

In most universities in Kenya, the students' unions also supplement the services that are offered by the university. These include services such as assistance with academic and administrative problems, peer counselling, the provision of financial assistance for needy colleagues, offering study facilities and services, and running businesses such as bookstores, Internet cafes, tuck shops and restaurants (Luescher, 2009). In this case, they have to work together with senior managers such as the dean of students or the director of student affairs (Luescher, 2009).

At Egerton University, for example, as is likely the case in other public universities, the students' union was established by the University Act and Statutes (Egerton University, 1999a; 1999b). With the enactment of the new Universities Act of 2012, the university developed new statutes that recognised the students' union. The union is recognised under the dean of students and the Directorate of Student Welfare. The union plays an integral role in the university in line with the the University Act, which provides that the student body must oversee and plan students' activities for the promotion of academic, spiritual, moral and harmonious communal life and social well-being. It is registered in the office of the dean of students and approved by the university senate and management. The students' union is represented in the senate (but is excluded when the senate is discussing examinations) and congress and on faculty committees. The student government comprises the following nine key offices and office bearers with their designated functions (SUEU, 2002): the executive chairperson, the executive vice-chairperson, the secretary-general, the organising secretary,

the treasurer, the director: welfare, the director: academics, the executive secretary, and the director: sport and entertainment. These titles may differ from one university to another, but generally indicate the main offices, which also make up the executive organ of the union, or Students' Representative Council. The other two organs are the Students' Governing Council and the Committees of the Union. The former consists of the executive, constituency representatives, year representatives, religious representatives, representatives of clubs and associations, representatives of non-resident students, sports and entertainment representatives and corporate members. The latter are a creation of the executive and consist of, but are not limited to, the Academic Affairs Committee, Welfare Committee, Finance Committee, Students' Centre Committee, External Affairs Committee, Sports and Entertainment Committee, Editorial Committee and Discipline Committee (Barasa, 2002).

The students' union is therefore a legal entity recognisable in university administration and governance. It has a guiding constitution that determines and controls the activities of student leaders and their responsibilities to the student body and to the university as defined by the various organs. As a legal entity, the students' union has various rights and obligations, such as holding term elections, collecting funds, organising meetings, and disciplining its members. All students of Egerton University are automatically members of the Students' Union, for which they pay union fees as part of their university fees. This is the source of funding for the union.

At Kenyatta University, students are represented by the officials of the Kenyatta University Students' Association (KUSA). The association was established in 1995. All bona fide students of KU are automatically members of the association upon registration. It was formed so as to take into consideration the needs and views of students. Like those associations at other universities in Kenya, KUSA was banned owing to the uprisings in support of multiparty democracy in the country in the late 1990s. It is now ten years since the re-establishment of KUSA with the aim of being involved in matters affecting students within the university (Obiero, 2012).

KUSA is run by an executive body and a congress made up of students elected through democratically run elections. The Congress is made up of the Executive Council and other ex officio and elected members. The Executive consists of the president, vice-president, secretary-general, deputy secretary-general, finance secretary, academic secretary, organising secretary, gender and social welfare secretary, special needs secretary, and the chairperson of each of the satellite campuses (as provided for in the constitution). The speaker of the congress is an ex officio member of the Executive.

Student involvement in governance in private universities in Kenya seems to be based on the South African model of a Students' Representative Council (SRC). Yet, like elsewhere, student governments in private universities and colleges typically fulfil the functions of student governments: (1) representing students' interests in institutional (and national) governance structures (and related media work); (2) overseeing social activities of students and student organisations on campus, along with student involvement in the running of residences, and sports facilities; and (3) providing supplemental services for students (Hall & Symes, 2000; also see: Ojo, 1995).

Student activism in universities in Kenya

Student involvement and formal representation in university governance in Kenya have not eliminated student activism in the institutions. This may be due to the complications arising from huge student enrolments, the expansion of universities and a lack of corresponding levels and numbers of representation. Student activism may be defined as 'the informal or extraordinary political activities of students' and 'the public expression of new ideas, about shaping public debate on a topic' which is typically political in nature (Luescher-Mamashela, 2015). Student activism is not limited to higher education institutions; it has even influenced national issues in the country. In cases where students feel underrepresented, misrepresented or not represented at all in the formal decision-making processes of university governance, the likelihood of student activism increases. In most universities in Kenya, student activism has been blamed for the numerous strikes and closures over the past decade, thus prolonging the time required by students for completing their studies, disrupting academic life, and driving prospective students and staff to private and overseas institutions (Mwiria et al., 2007).

Bakke (1966), after studying student activism in six different countries, has proposed a set of insights or hypotheses about the roots and soil of student activism. Firstly, student activism is a product of a stage of youth in the maturation process. Student activism is a function of the universal search of adolescent youth for an adult role in society, for self-identity and for social integration, and of their self-assertion at this stage of their maturation process. Secondly, student activism is said to be an actualisation of the image of the 'student'. Here, he argues that there are varying images of a 'student' that play a role in why students engage in student activism. Thirdly, student activism is a result of the youth's involvement in societal problems. Lastly, student activism is a result of students' relations wit other action groups. This highly influences the minds and attitudes of radical students, thus shaping their focus in interacting with such groups and encouraging them all the more to participate in student movements.

In Kenya, student activism has been closely associated with the slogan 'Comrades' Power!'. Bakke's idea of the roots of student activism being found in an activist, youthful, emancipatory student identity yearning for, and forged, in unity with other groups which struggle for democratisation, social justice, and human rights seems to capture that relation. The call for 'Comrades' Power!' in Kenya has its roots in the independence struggle; it has been heard chanted during the democratisation process of the 1990s, during recent student protests, and even during campaigns for students' union elections.

The nature of students' politics, representation and organisation in public and private universities

Student activism or 'comrades' power' has undergone several transformations in the history of Kenya. University students of the 1960s were not involved in politics. This is because they were supplied with the basic necessities during their studies and had guaranteed positions in the ranks of the emerging national bourgeoisie upon graduation. However, after 1970, changes occurred that made university students abandon their ivory-tower mentality

and begin a systematic engagement in political action, including violent confrontation. The political apex of student activism was reached in the mid-1970s and lasted to the mid-1990s, by which point student action was more likely to be accompanied by demands for democratic reform. In Kenya, university students have been leaders of protest, activism and dissent, strikes, and demonstrations – as in many other countries (Altbach, 1989; Brickman & Lehrer, 1980; Light & Spiegel, 1977; Miser, 1988). Mazrui (1995) says that, in the 1960s and 1970s, African students were often the vanguard of democratic defiance in many African countries. It may well be that Kenya would still be wallowing in dictatorship today were it not for the orchestrated street demonstrations by University of Nairobi students in the period leading up to multiparty politics.

The university students, through their leaders, have presented to Kenyans and to the democratisation process the power to riot, to protest, and to stand up for their rights, commonly referred to as 'comrade power'. Street demonstrations in Nairobi and other towns are almost synonymous with university students. Mazrui (19995, p.165) says:

> The relationship between the government and students is often the most difficult… Since government relations with students are often the most difficult, they are the main cause of political confrontations on Third World campuses.

This is certainly true of the campuses of Kenyan public universities. Kenyan public universities face a strained relationship with university management because of decisions and actions that management takes without prior consultation with the student body. For example, in 2009, Kenyatta University students rioted violently in protest at 2 000 students not being given ample time to clear their university fee arrears in order to register. Conversely, the relationship at private universities in Kenya, between management and student body is different. It appears that, at private universities, there is proper prior consultation on important issues affecting students. This may be one of the reasons why student activism in these institutions is absent or only minimal.

During democratisation process of the 1990s, the term 'university students' was associated with fights, riots, stone-throwing, and so forth, all in utter rebellion at unpopular government moves. 'Comrades power' was a household term at the time. Students joined civil society groups and the National Convention Executive Council (NCEC) in making Kenya almost ungovernable through protests, eventually forcing President Moi and the then ruling party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), to concede to multiparty elections and establish other democratic institutions and structures (Mazrui, 1995). Even before Moi, during Kenyatta's era, the regime had crushed all opposition, with only one real threat left: university students and the university community. The universities were part and parcel of the national political discourse; opposition politics in Kenya would not be complete without student activism. The students were proactive in campaigning for their rights and those of their fellow citizens, in spite of the unsympathetic and repressive political climate that prevailed. Student leaders could get arrested, beaten up, jailed at the infamous Nyayo House, or even be murdered in cold blood.

Student leaders were powerful figures in the country then. The government of the day kept vigil over student activism to the extent of placing spies in major universities. The former presidents Jomo Kenyatta and Moi knew the student leaders of all the major campuses by name, and especially those of the University of Nairobi. Comrades, as they would popularly refer to one another, would proceed without fear of subjugation or intimidation to challenge the government on unpopular moves. Student activism was a public watchdog. In 1992, when the fight for multiparty democracy in Africa was at its peak, university students joined notable 'second-liberation' figures such as Kenneth Matiba, Charles Rubia, Paul Muite, and Raila Odinga, among others. The struggle successfully saw the repeal of the famous Section 2A of the Kenyan Constitution, thus ushering in a new era of multiparty democracy. Moreover, thanks to the student activism of the 1980s and 1990s, a crop of vibrant national leaders emerged. The likes of current senator for Siaya County, lawyer James Orengo, former senior adviser of Raila Odinga, Miguna Miguna, the current member of parliament for Budalangi, Ababu Namwamba, and Kenyan chief justice and president of the Supreme Court, Dr. Willy Mutunga, are but a few of the current leadership in Kenya that cut their teeth on student leadership.

In the contemporary phase, student apathy to student activism has become quite prevalent. Several issues have brought about the phenomenon. Firstly, the apathy is due to a certain 'nonchalance': Students feel they lack issues affecting them as one and they only mind about what affects them – blame it on individualism and anomie (Mwiria et al., 2007). Hence, students may ask: Why the activism? Secondly, the academicians of the 1980s were filled with radicalism, which they taught right into their lecture halls; thus lecture halls became bubbling pots of activism. Academics taught emancipation from repression without paranoia or selfishness. Meanwhile, contemporary students focus on reading, passing examinations, graduating, and getting out into the highly competitive job market. To them, a student is intelligent as long as he or she grasps the reading, passes examination and graduates exemplarily (Mwiria et al., 2007). The result is 'academic robots' who blindly conform to the repressive capitalistic system and politics. Can a student without a critical mind and ideals, agree to activism? Student apathy to politics has now become an obstacle to student activism, whereas a critical perspective on the bad politics of the day used to be the main thrust for student activism of previous student generations in the 1980s. It thus appears that the students do not mind any longer how their student organisations, and the country's politics at large, are run. Given that the vibrancy of 'comrades' power' has mainly been restricted to public universities, and students in private universities have shied away from such activism and instead focused on getting their education and qualification, do we see a convergence between public and private universities' student politics?

Exercising comrades' power in public and private universities in Kenya

Universities are unique institutions in many ways, not the least because they have a degree of autonomy rare among large social institutions, and, even if this autonomy has been under attack for many years, it is important nonetheless. This is a fertile condition for exercising 'comrades' power'. Given that universities in Kenya are autonomous and provide a more

liberal environment than the surrounding society, they tend to provide the conditions for exercising political activist attitudes and be the boiling pot of 'comrades' power'. Student newspapers, social media, and radio and television programmes are able to ensure that students are quickly informed of events and are able to create an atmosphere that stimulates student activism and political consciousness. Moreover, in Kenya, universities – especially public universities – are geographically located in major towns and cities. As a result, demonstors are easily mobilised at very short notice and demonstrations are huge in scope. Furthermore, these public universities normally have a large population of students involved in protests. The damage caused by the riots is often considerable, as in the case of the Kenyatta University riots of 2009. In contrast, riots in private universities are rare. One reason may be that private universities do not have the large student populations that public universities have. As a result, management is closer to the issues that affect the students, and thus these issues are easily discussed and enough information is given to the students.

Moreover, the rhythm of academic life is both a help and a hindrance to student activism (cf. Luescher-Mamashela, 2015). The amount of free time available and the volume of academic work to be done all affect student participation in activism. Student life in most public academic systems permits a good deal of free time. Many students in Kenyan public universities have a lot of free time on their hands after they have attended scheduled lectures. The sense of constant responsibility for academic work is not strong and, in general, lectures and other assignments are not compulsory in these public universities. In contrast, at private universities in Kenya, students are examined regularly by their lecturers, which seems to instil a greater sense of responsibility and leaves little time to engage in activism. There is, therefore, less time for extra-curricular activities of all kinds because of the constant assessment of work. These may be some of the reasons why student activism is more prevalent in public than in private universities in Kenya. Future studies could attempt to systematically test these propositions.

Conclusions

The basic concern of this study was to explore and describe how students are represented in the governance of universities in Kenya and how student activism has changed, particularly given the current era of multiparty democracy, and greater openness and inclusivity in the governance of the institutions. Generally, student representation and formal participation in the governance of universities have increased over time, especially compared with the 1980s and 1990s. This may be due to the sociopolitical and economic changes that have occurred in the country since the democratisation process of the 1990s. In particular, student leaders have become involved in decision-making in the university through participation in the various governance structures, boards and committees. This was found to be beneficial: student leaders now formally acted as the link between the student body and university administrators and there was satisfaction among students when their ideas were implemented. This led to a more peaceful university climate. However, the study also found that most of the decisions that students made had to be vetted by the university authorities, as students were seen to lack the qualifications to have a final say in decisions. Conversely, whenever there was lack of adequate

consultation and involvement of students in decision-making, there was a high possibility of student unrest and activism in the universities.

Currently, in both public and private universities, the democratisation of decision-making within the universities has been enhanced by promoting wider representation of staff and students in key university governing bodies and by allowing staff a greater say in selecting senior university administrators. However, for democracy to flourish, and for student activism to be minimised, students, through their leaders, should be given more representation in governing organs of the university. The university management and administrators should make deliberate efforts to strengthen the students' unions and associations. It is important for power and authority to be shared and distributed fairly and decentralised effectively among all the dominant groups within the campus community.

In line with the argument of Obondo (2000), it has been proposed that democratisation of decision-making is important not only because many conflicts arise from such an unequal power relationship, but also because universities are advocates of democratic institutions, and should therefore practise what they preach. Students as stakeholders in the university should have a say in issues affecting them. Through involvement in governance, the student leaders arrive at a self-concept and divergent thinking. The skills they acquire enable them to contribute to society. It is therefore important for university administrators to give student leaders adequate opportunity to play their roles in university governance.

Finally, the article has argued that student activism and the call to 'comrades' power' have undergone changes over the years which may be associated with the changes in national politics in Kenya, the expansion of university education, and changes in the reach and general political attitudes of student bodies. In addition, student activism is more prevalent in public than in private universities. A number of propositions have been advanced in this respect, relating to the size of institutions, changes in teaching content and pedagogy, changes in the size and composition of student bodies, and the status of students and graduates in society. It would be interesting for scholars to undertake a more detailed analysis of student representation and activism in public and private universities in the East African region. Furthermore, university managers should re-examine the suitability of their governance and management models vis-à-vis the orientation of the contemporary university student. Representation and formal participation of students in the governance of universities should be an integral part of each and every aspect of university governance.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Zimbabwe student movement: Love-hate relationship with government?

Blessing Makunike*

Abstract

The purpose of the article is to trace the development of student unionism in Zimbabwe. On the basis of a discussion of the nature of the university, the article argues that because the university environment tolerates and promotes academic freedom and liberal values, it provides an environment conducive to critical thought and oppositional politics, while the university quite often itself becomes the target for student attack. Student representation during the pre-independence period in Zimbabwe sought to engage the institution in its effort to re-order society at a time of racial struggle and class conflict. After independence, student representation was in support of government efforts to create a better Zimbabwe and to consolidate the gains of independence. However, after the first decade of independence, the relationship between students and government soured due to students' opposition to the one-party system as well as the University of Zimbabwe Amendment Bill, among other issues. This article thus documents and analyses the relationship between students and government with reference to three periods and two key moments: the 1973 protests against racial discrimination in the pre-independence phase and the post-1990 developments in Zimbabwean national and university politics.

Keywords

Higher education; student unionism; student activism; national politics; Zimbabwe.

Introduction

Zimbabwe attained independence on 18 April 1980 after a protracted armed struggle. This article discusses three important phases of the development of student representation and unionism in Zimbabwe. The first is that students were an important part of the pre-independence nationalist struggle in Zimbabwe. Through the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland Students' Representative Council (SRC), students belonged to the

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intelligentsia, which assisted in mobilising and disseminating information on the struggle. During the 1970s when the liberation war was being waged from outside the country and when most political leaders had gone into exile, the student unions filled the vacuum. Other social groups had professional, organisational and political weaknesses. The university campus became a breeding ground for political leaders where democratic struggles found a voice.

The attainment of independence heralded the second phase in the development of student unionism. SRCs at the University of Zimbabwe and at a handful of higher education colleges were transformed by the authorities into institutional bodies with recognised responsibilities. They became involved in programmes that focused on students and their experiences, including social advisement, student health, recreation, alumni and fundraising, etc. Student representative bodies ceased to be part of a political vanguard contesting state authority in order to become part of the project of national healing, reconstruction and development. Because of their elitist appeal, the student representative bodies became 'privileged actors' in the state-led thrust for national development. Through the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU), students became a key stakeholder in government planning and policy implementation. The government also rewarded students with grants and loans to finance their studies.

With the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, the government of Zimbabwe's socialist rhetoric toned down in the late 1980s in favour of capitalism. Zimbabwe, which was literally 'orphaned', was 'adopted' by the Bretton Woods Institutions, leading to the introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in 1990, which coincided with the third phase in the development of student representation in Zimbabwe. ESAP eroded the expectation of good jobs and high status for students after graduation. Government cut back on social spending. Although students clung to a self-conscious elitism, the austerity imposed by ESAP resulted in financial problems and poverty for students. Confrontation and upheavals characterised university and college campuses. Criticism of the shift in government policy saw the student representative bodies aligning themselves with trade unions and opposition parties. Student bodies began to use any political event perceived to be unpopular, in order to vent their anger at the authorities.

Methodology

This study was carried out between June 2014 and August 2014 at the University of Zimbabwe. It employed a qualitative research methodology involving both primary and secondary data, interviews and discussions, and participant observation.

The body of historical information was obtained by consulting archival files. These yielded newspaper cuttings, which, however, had some gaps. The tragedy of government departments is poor record keeping. Open-ended interviews without a structured or formal questionnaire were done with randomly selected senior administrators at the University of Zimbabwe. This was deliberate in order to encourage cooperation, because previous attempts to document student unionism through questionnaires was not readily embraced. The tendency is to associate student unionism with radicalism. Discussions were

held with the 2014 academic year SRC members. Participatory observation also helped to fill some of the gaps in the information. The author has been part of the university community since 1994.

Apart from the recent work by Zeilig (2007) and Chibango and Kajau (2010), there have been few attempts to properly document student unionism at the University of Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the study has limitations owing to the attitude of key informants: Students who were interviewed regarded themselves more as recipients than as sources of information, and university officials in central administration and the Student Affairs Division who were interviewed treated the study with suspicion, as 'inquisitiveness' and 'adventurism' on the part of the researcher, as opposed to contributing to knowledge on institutional history.

The University: A conceptual framework

According to Owolabi (2007), the idea of the university refers to that apex institution of learning devoted to the objectives of knowledge and culture production. This resonates with the 1962 (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations UNESCO) declaration which gives the university the responsibility to advance the frontiers of knowledge through teaching and research. These traditional functions are basic and they are the pillars of the academic life of the university. The university is thus expected to engage in critical inquiry into the nature, culture and essence of humans and the environment they inhabit. It should acquire information and develop it into a body of knowledge to be disseminated for improving the conditions of humanity and addressing challenges facing society. Knowledge, in this context, is typically defined as 'those ideas that are universally valid and relevant' (Owolabi, 2007, p.71). In essence, Owolabi (2007, p. 71) sees two roles emerging. The first is that of universal development of human knowledge, while the second is that of applying this to the production of a culture that will meet with the demands and aspirations of the society where the university is located.

Ngara (1995) provides a useful contribution to a conceptual framework for understanding the nature of the university. He concurs that the university stands at the apex of the education system as a place for the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. He, however, suggests that there are three characteristics which distinguish the university from the point of view of its nature rather than its functions. Firstly, a university has both a local and an international dimension; it is characterised by particularity and universality. Secondly, a true university enjoys a high degree of autonomy and academic freedom. Thirdly, a university is a self-motivating and self-perpetuating institution (Ngara, 1995, p. 6).

The nature of a university is determined by history and the environment which it finds itself in. Ngara (1995) cites examples of land grant universities in the United States, such as Michigan State University, which were meant to play a pivotal role in agricultural and industrial development. Further examples are the Imperial College of Science and Technology in London, which was a key factor in Britain's military strategies and successes in the First and Second World War, and the University of London, which reflected the interests and character of the British Empire and, consequently, had a significant influence

in the development of education in Britain and in the colonies. Owolabi (2007, p. 77) observes that, in this age of globalisation, the university – particularly in the African context – is faced with the dilemma of reconciling two roles: attending to the practical needs of society and modernisation. It is torn between the demand to serve humanity in general and the interests of its host community. A university has to establish and maintain links with global trends and development; it has to reassert traditional values but also enter the main stream of global culture.

Another important aspect of Ngara's (1995) conceptualisation of a university is that it must enjoy autonomy and freedom. He observes that, for the university to perform key functions such as sharpening consciousness, developing intellectual faculties and developing skills, a stimulating and free environment unfettered by government rules and regulations should be created. In addition, a university should be a self-evaluating and self-renewing institution; it should be responsible for maintaining and improving itself. By his own admission, Ngara (1995, p. 15) points out that, often external pressures affect the entire fabric of the university system, such as government demands which can come in the form of promulgating Acts of parliament that affect the operations of universities or alter modes of financial support.

In the light of the foregoing framework, the article traces the historical development of the relationship between the university and students in Zimbabwe with the theoretical lens that the university must enjoy freedom to advance the frontiers of knowledge in the context of its historical and environmental – especially its macropolitical – setting. It takes as its starting point that the principles of academic freedom to inquire, to debate, and to acquire and to disseminate knowledge in its many ramifications should not be constrained for students, staff and members of the university community.

Against this, students emerge as critical thinkers and have the right to contribute to advancing and disseminating this knowledge. As will be shown below, as the good intentions of the university drew it into the vortex of political and community life, student unionism emerged in Zimbabwe. Consequently, the university had to grapple with student unionism in areas such as freedom of speech, racial discrimination, freedom of association, and many other rights.

Student unionism in Zimbabwe involves, amongst others, that students come together to express their dissatisfaction and disaffection with current problems affecting society, seeking to eliminate poverty and inequality, and holding institutions accountable to the needs of the people. It is therefore important to underline that student unionism manifests itself in an oppositional manner which is usually dependent on the pressures of the day. Student unionism ought to be understood and not condemned. This emerges from the conceptualisation of a university as a bastion of truth and sharpener of consciousness.

For purposes of accomplishing their goals and objectives, student unions have always sought to direct confrontation with the authorities and law enforcement agents. Confrontation, it was believed, would result in police overreactions and excesses, a situation most beneficial to the success of their cause. They expected the press to see and record a person being injured in order to discredit the police role of law keeping or enforcing agent,

depending on which title best suited the situation. Also the quickest method to create confrontation was the issuing of impossible ultimatums or demands.

Prior to independence in Zimbabwe, student leaders thrived on grievances. This will be illustrated latter though quotes and excerpts from the 1970s. Errors of government provided the opportunity around which to articulate these grievances, which revolutionaries seldom ignored. The goal was to inflame passion, incite violence, and foment disorder in the hope that this would lead to more violence until authority was undermined and delegitimised and government was viewed by citizens as the enemy (Mutape, n.d.).

The University of Zimbabwe: A historical note

The University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which became the University of Rhodesia on 1 January 1971 and later the University of Zimbabwe in 1980, was incorporated by Royal Charter on 11 February 1955. The original impetus for the founding of the university was given by Mr J.F. Kapnek, who, in 1945, donated GBP20 000 for such a purpose. Mr L.M.N Hodson, who was a member of parliament, gathered a group which called itself 'Friends of the University of Rhodesia' to publicise and foster the idea. The group later changed its name to 'The Rhodesia University Association'. On 26 October 1946, the Legislative Assembly of Southern Rhodesia accepted a motion, introduced by Mr Hodson as a private member, that a university should be established as soon as practicable to serve the needs of Rhodesians and neighbouring territories and that a board of trustees be appointed. On 19th May 1947, His Excellency the Governor of Southern Rhodesia established by trust deed the Rhodesia Foundation Fund and appointed as trustees the minster of internal affairs, the secretary for internal affairs and Mr Hodson (University of Zimbabwe, 1991, p. 61).

On 13 July 1953, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother laid the foundation stone at the present Mount Pleasant site. The new university college was admitted to the Scheme of Special Relation with the University of London. Except for the Faculty of Medicine, which was affiliated to the University of Birmingham, the students were registered and prepared for University of London degrees. In November 1953, Dr William Rollo, formerly Professor of Classics at the University of Cape Town, was appointed interim principal for two years; he was succeeded in December 1955 by Walter Adams, formerly secretary for the Inter-University Council. After the dissolution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland at the end of 1963, it was agreed at meetings between governments of the United Kingdom and Southern Rhodesia that the University College should continue as an independent institution of learning, open to all races and serving and contributing to the advancement of knowledge within the international community of universities.

In January 1970, the University College and the University of London agreed to a phased termination of the Scheme of Special Relation so that the last intake for degrees of the University of London was in 1970. In April of the same year, the formal association with the University of Birmingham was also terminated and the last intake for medical degrees of the University of Birmingham was that of 1970. In September 1970, the University

College Council enacted new statutes in terms of the Charter establishing the University of Rhodesia, governed by a council and a senate. Full university status was achieved on 1 January 1971. On the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, the University of Rhodesia became the University of Zimbabwe. In 1982, a Bill to make further and better provisions for the governance of the university was enacted by the Zimbabwean parliament, thereby replacing the Royal Charter (University of Zimbabwe, 1991, p. 62).

Demonstrations: Pre-independence era

The University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland opened its doors as a teaching institution in March 1957. This coincided with the rise of African nationalism in Southern Rhodesia. The goals of African nationalism therefore received maximum attention from the student community. Students, being familiar with the ideals legitimised by the United Nations, such as human rights and opposition to discrimination and segregation, expressed full acceptance of the aims and tactics of the African nationalists. Their approach to issues was marked by insistence on moral solutions.

Cefkin (1974, p. 145) further observes that issues which affected campus life were essentially the same issues facing the country, and that the political organisation of students reflected parent political groupings in the country. In 1963, African students formed the National Union of Rhodesian Students (NURS). This was necessitated in part by the need to continue with activities of nationalist parties which had been banned under the Law and Order Maintenance Act, and also as an alternative to the mainstream Students' Representative Council (SRC) which had negligible African representation. The split in the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) in 1963 elicited a lot of interest on campus. Since the split arose over a conflict of leadership within nationalist ranks rather than over principles, a good basis remained for student support through the NURS. The NURS invited the leaders of ZAPU and the newly formed Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) to address students on campus and answer their questions.

On 11 November 1965, Ian D. Smith issued the so-called Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain. According to Cefkin (1974), this was at a time when students were writing end-of-year examinations and hence there was no immediate reaction from students. However, when campus reopened the following year, on 16 March 1966, there were demonstrations on campus. Students demanded that the College should denounce the UDI and condemn restrictions and harassment of students by law enforcement agents. Nine lecturers and nine students were arrested and expelled from the country because of the demonstrations and class boycotts.

Student unionism and the associated disturbances in pre-independence Zimbabwe were political in the sense that they were more of an ideological follow-up of events than based on the practical needs of an academic nature. From its conception, a university should be regarded as part of the society in which it is located. It follows therefore, that, since the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was multiracial, it was bound to be faced with many controversies. As Cefkin (1974) notes, segregation and racial conflict clearly became a function of the polarisation in the larger society. Student protests and demonstrations

signified a moral outrage and moral pressures affecting society. Authorities were expected to, and should be rightly challenged to, take a second look at their decisions and policies.

From the archival files which were accessed, the following selected incidents at the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland can be noted, with a specific focus on the 1973 racial conflicts:

5 July 1973

The president of the Students' Representative Council (SRC), Mr Witness Mangwende, had applied for a Rhodesian passport so that he could attend the conference of the Southern African Students Movement from 25 to 28 June, 1973. Mr Mangwende was among those students who had signed a recent letter sent to the British newspapers asking for the withdrawal of the invitation to the University of Rhodesia to send representatives to the 11th Conference of the Association of Commonwealth Universities to be held in Edinburg. It was not clear if Mangwende's views were known to the government before the passport was denied.

Although the invitation was not withdrawn, the University of Rhodesia did not attend because opposition to the university's presence from some students in Britain and some Commonwealth countries made it impossible for the congress to be held if the Rhodesian delegation attended (*Rhodesia Herald*, 5 July 1973).

27 July 1973: Unity with whites

Students from the University of Rhodesia held a demonstration outside the Houses of Parliament and the Office of the Prime Minister to protest against allegations made in the House of Assembly by a white lawmaker that black students were not using ablution facilities, resulting in filthy conditions. About 200 students, all but half a dozen of whom were blacks, waved placards and clenched fists in Black Power salutes in the peaceful demonstration lasting about half an hour (*The Umtali Post*, 27 July 1973).

29 July 1973

Two hundred African students occupied parts of the administration block at the University of Rhodesia hours after the demonstration outside parliament. Among their demands was that 50% of all administrative and teaching posts at the university be filled by Africans (*The Sunday Mail,* 29 July 1973).

4 August 1973

African students wielded tools and other equipment collected in the raids on dining halls, residences and faculties in demonstrations over rates of pay and conditions of black workers at the university, described as the 'Pots and Pans' protests. Two cars belonging to white students were stoned (*The Rhodesia Herald*, 4 August 1973).

7 August 1973

About 150 African students staged a protest at the University of Rhodesia, while 20 of their colleagues were appearing before a disciplinary committee charged with taking part in a demonstration at the multiracial university against the wage levels of employees there (*Evening Standard*, 7 August 1973).

8 August 1973

After rioting following the expulsion of six students, 155 African students were arrested (*The Times,* 8 August 1973).

17 August 1973

Racial discrimination had intensified since 1965 and there was now talk of segregation in higher education to increase opportunities for white school leavers and thus help solve Rhodesia's acute shortage of skilled and professional – and, of course, white-workers. Recently, there had been calls in the Rhodesian parliament for the expulsion of self-styled 'African nationalists' from the university and the restoration of 'normal standard of decency and hygiene'. One government backbencher even called the University of Rhodesia, 'with its ambivalent multi-racialism, an ulcer on society' (*The Times Higher Educational Supplement,* 17 August 1973).

17 August 1973

The majority of African students at the University of Rhodesia boycotted classes on the grounds of discrimination. The university principal, Professor Robert Craig, said this when 37 students appeared in court on a charge of public violence. Another 62 appeared on the same charge later in the day. All 99 pleaded guilty (*Rhodesia Herald*, 17 August 1973).

The unrest on the campus of the University of Rhodesia could not be dissociated from the wider political context. It was in response to attacks from a government minister that students held their first demonstration. The university's actions towards black students revealed a strong identification with white Rhodesia. Its inability to adjust to changing circumstances, the expressed determination not to compromise, and its dependence on the armed police force were all important characteristics of settler colonialism.

1 November 1973

Ninety-eight African student rioters were banned from entering the city of Salisbury. These restriction orders were served as the students were released from prison and barred them from coming within a 20-km radius of the city. The Students' Representative Council immediately condemned the government action (*The Rhodesia Herald*, 1 November 1973).

14 November 1973

Society benefited from people with iniversity education and it was harsh for a judge to say that it was a privilege to attend an institution whose capital costs were met, in the main from public funds – defence counsel said this at the trial of University of Rhodesia students (*The Rhodesia Herald*, 14 November 1973).

19 November 1973

Herbert Makoni, Peter Molife and Eveready Changata, who were expelled from the University of Rhodesia earlier in the year for leading a demonstration against racial discrimination on campus, began a campaign to have the university thrown out of the Commonwealth Universities Association. If the campaign succeeded, it could mean that Rhodesian degrees might no longer be recognised internationally. (*Guardian*, 19 November 1973).

22 November 1973

Another African student from the University of Rhodesia, Mr Davis Karimanzira, was restricted to Highfield Township, Salisbury. He became the 104th African student to be served with restriction orders following riots on campus (*The Rhodesia Herald*, 22 November 1973).

These excerpts from newspaper clippings were the most relevant ones, relating to students, in the archival file on the University of Rhodesia before 1980. They were selected, firstly, to show the problems which arose when members of the university community felt that the government of the day was not doing enough to address societal problems. In such instances, students, who commonly refer to themselves as 'the voice of the voiceless', and in the name of academic freedom, openly challenged the government. Secondly, they demonstrate that the relationship between students and government is shaped by circumstances and events of the day. Thirdly, the excepts help to illustrate how government reacts when it is directed by members of the university community, who view themselves as critical thinkers, on how to conduct its affairs. But, more importantly, and with reference to the conceptualisation of the university, the excerpts help in locating the university as an integral part of the community, yet it uses the freedom, from a point of objectivity, to criticise the very same society which it is part of.

Students in independent Zimbabwe

Students (and graduates) possessed one of the resources of greatest relevance for obtaining elite status in post–independence Zimbabwe: the credential of an advanced Western education. University graduates had prestige and influence that would otherwise have been impossible to obtain at their age. Graduates were treated differentially and were granted concessions that their less educated counterparts would not receive. For example, a university student or graduate-returning to his or her home in the country-side would be greeted as a 'god'; they were approached, admired, and flattered, and they were subject

to no restraints, except perhaps an overly solicitous protection from harm. This deference led to influence within many segments of society; at the extreme, students were touted as the future leaders of the country. Even if it was not probable that every university graduate would become a member of the ruling elite, it was quite likely that the future political elite would include many former university students.

It is also important to note that students had international and Western frames for judging their own country's standing and progress. Students were therefore acutely aware both of the gap between international modernity and national reality and of the potential of political action. Students often believed that their leaders should do better and they also often thought that it was their responsibility to lead public opinion.

Independence also bequeathed a tradition of activism and oppositionalism among student bodies. This is because students were part of the broader movement which opposed injustice, and their focus now shifted to critically assessing the performance of the new, independence government. This tradition had its roots in the colonial era when nationalists opposed foreigners in their quest for independence and where opportunities for upward mobility were restricted on racial grounds. Although independence moderated oppositionalism, this was short-lived. Oppositionalism was sustained by the students' disillusionment with the slow pace of development in communities and with the human weaknesses which appeared to be at fault, bearing in mind that, at independence, many administrative appointments were filled before there was an adequate pool of well-trained and educated Africans.

Another factor which made students potentially important in the political life of their society was that the university brought intellectuals together physically, which made it easy to communicate with one another and to organise for political purposes. Youthful exuberance is also another propitious condition for oppositional activities. Generational conflict usually exists between older political leaders and the youthful university students.

Students and politics in the first decade of independence

Zimbabwe attained independence from Britain in 1980 and the University of Rhodesia was renamed the University of Zimbabwe. The euphoric crowds which celebrated independence included graduates from the university and those from foreign universities who had come back to assist in rebuilding the newborn country. Also present were young men and women who had left high school and others university to join the war, whose feeling was that they had played a significant role in the attainment of independence and that it was their responsibility to consolidate it and contribute to the prosperity of the nation.

The new government immediately declared a Marxist-socialist ideology and a leadership code which meant that the people were their own government. The government was inclined to treat students with care and respect in order to prove that it was different from the colonial regime (Chibango & Kajau, 2010, p. 20).

Chibango and Kajau (2010) note that the removal of bottlenecks in the education system resulted in an increase in enrolment at the University of Zimbabwe, which would

be a source of problems in the future. The increase in enrolment meant an increase in campus accommodation on which, in turn, spurred on student unionism. Indeed, the first demonstration in 1981 by students against racism saw the resignation of Professor Lewis and ushered in Professor Kamba as the first black vice-chancellor of the University of Zimbabwe.

The University of Zimbabwe Act 27 of 1982 provided for the establishment of an association of students to be known as the 'Students Union'. The aims and objectives of the union were:

- To provide for the representation of students in matters that affected their interests both as individuals and as a body in the pursuit of academic freedom;
- To promote intellectual, scientific, artistic, cultural, athletic, political, religious, social and economic activities arising among its members, and to promote their general welfare;
- To provide, encourage and develop among its members the formation, organisation and operation of clubs and societies for such purposes as mentioned above;
- To provide an effective channel of communication between the student body and the university authorities and the people of Zimbabwe in general; and
- To organise students on the basis of a love for peace, democracy and progress, as well as the elimination of racism, tribalism, regionalism, nepotism and imperialism. (*University of Zimbabwe, Students Union Constitution,* as amended 1997)

The Student Union was led by the SRC, which consisted of the Student Executive Council (SEC) and the Students Representative Assembly (SRA). The SEC exercised the administrative functions of the SRC, and, in the exercise of its powers, was directly accountable to the SRA and, by means of a general meeting, to the Students Union. The ordinary general meeting of the Students Union was held at least once every academic semester.

The SEC was composed of ten members elected by the whole Students Union. There was a president, a vice-president, a secretary-general, a treasurer and six other members. Each of the six would discharge their duties in terms of different offices, for example: transport and non-resident students' secretary; social welfare secretary; academic and legal affairs secretary; sport and entertainment secretary; external, publicity and information secretary; and properties secretary. The SRA was composed of three representatives from each of the ten faculties of the University of Zimbabwe, voted for by students in their faculties. There were also two seats each reserved for the physically challenged and the visually impaired.

The University of Zimbabwe Act of 1982 was also significant in shaping the relationship between government and students in the future. The Act had a provision which made the state president the chancellor of the university. However, during this period, the office of the president was ceremonial and so this did not affect anything until 1987 when the Constitution of Zimbabwe was amended to create the executive president. There was now increased government control of the university. Thus, the appointment of the vice-

chancellor and pro vice-chancellors by the university Council was now subject to approval by the responsible minister. The executive president's influence on ministerial decisions also increased. This created divergent views between the government and students on issues such as government corruption, academic freedom, university decision-making and financial support for students.

The second decade of independence: A relationship gone bad

After the first decade of independence, the hitherto cordial relationship between government and students began to freeze. The year 1989 saw the birth of the first opposition political party in Zimbabwe, namely the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). This party was formed by a former secretary-general of ZANU (PF), Edgar Tekere, in protest against corruption and divergence from socialist tenets. Students were enthused by the formation of this new political outfit.

The local crescendo of student activism in the second decade of independence was the formation of a national union of students, namely the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU), in 1989. Its objective was to create a platform for students to lobby and advocate for good governance, human rights and the empowerment of the youth. It became a member of the Southern African Students Union, the All Africa Students Union, and the International Union of Students. It began mobilising and participating in civic issues under the moto 'Struggle is our birthright'.

With the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, students became particularly opposed to the one-party ideology. It was felt by the students that the one-party ideology led to a cult of personality, politics of domination, inefficiency, corruption and primitive accumulation (Chibango & Kajau, 2010, p. 32). Student unionism filled the gap created by weak and disorganised workers, peasants and others. Students observed and scrutinised all the activities of government and began to question the responsibility of government towards its citizens and its intolerance of criticism. Students became aligned to opposition politics and ZUM became popular. Eventually, the introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment, the tabling of the University of Zimbabwe Amendment Bill in October 1990, the arrest of student union leaders, and the arrest of Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) Secretary-General, Morgan Tsvangirai, marked the divorce between students and the government. The SRC, led by Arthur Mutambara, turned to demonstrations to express disapproval of government policy.

The University of Zimbabwe Amendment Bill, which curtailed academic freedom, was particularly vigorously resisted by students. Of particular interest in the Bill were the rules on student conduct and the powers vested in the vice-chancellor to discipline students. A section of the Bill empowered the vice-chancellor to discipline students deemed to have disrupted normal business on campus. Indeed, in the past, students had disrupted official university meetings and barred invited speakers of the university. It also empowered the vice-chancellor to suspend any student or staff member as deemed necessary pending a disciplinary hearing. This Bill was seen as taking away academic freedom and at the same time magnifying the powers of the vice-chancellor. Students felt that they had a right and

deserved to speak out on issues affecting society. The vice-chancellor at the time, Professor Walter Kamba, also felt that the Bill had the effect of putting too many fingers in the running of the university. In protest, he went on early retirement.

Eventually, together with other civic and workers groups, ZINASU participated in the formation of the opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), in 1999. Several former leaders of ZINASU moved from representing students to become political leaders of the opposition in the parliament of Zimbabwe.

Conclusion

From its conceptualisation, a university is a community of members who are engaged in seeking the truth. In so doing, a university is granted the privilege of academic freedom. The primary concern for the university should therefore be scholarly and only secondarily reformist. The starting point for judging a university should be its academic prowess in terms of generating and contributing to the advancement of knowledge. However, an inevitable product of knowledge and enlightenment is the desire to bring change to the status quo in society. In the same vein, student politics in Rhodesia mirrored the national politics of the day. The essential facts about everyday life in Rhodesia impinged upon student representation and political activities. At the same time, the enduring culture of revolutionary protest can best be summed up by Karl Marx's observation that the history of society is indeed a history of class struggle. In a way, students viewed themselves as a class, with a special identity, place and role to play in society.

For Zimbabwe, the first decade after independence was a honeymoon period in the relationship between government and students. Having had a marriage of convenience during the liberation struggle forged in their shared disdain for colonial rule, this marriage of convenience was to collapse in the second decade after independence. Thus, student unionism's dominant characteristic throughout the pre-independence and post-independence history of Zimbabwe can be defined as a product of reactions to perceived government shortcomings. This article has outlined this argument in relation to three periods and with specific reference to two moments in the history of the Zimbabwe student movement and its relationship with government.

Endnotes

1. The neo-liberal agenda of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank suggested that, in Africa, the returns on investment in university education were too low and unjustifiable. The Zimbabwe government working under the IMF and World Bank conditionalities also found it difficult to finance universities.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Are African flagship universities preparing students for citizenship?

Lucky Kgosithebe* and Thierry M. Luescher**

Abstract

This article investigates the contribution of higher education to democratisation in Africa by studying the political attitudes of undergraduate students at four African flagship universities in Botswana, Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania. It analyses students' attitudes against those of youths without higher education and mass publics in their respective countries. The study focuses on flagship universities because of their role as important players in the development of the social, economic and political leadership of their respective countries. The surveys used stratified random samples of third-year students across all faculties and years of enrolment, which resulted in a weighted sample of 400 students from each of the participating institutions. Students' attitudes are compared with those of the same age percentiles of youths without higher education, and those of the entire population sample, from the nationwide public opinion surveys conducted by Afrobarometer. The analysis of the data uses the notions of commitment to democracy, critical citizenship and political engagement to show that students at the four flagship institutions have significantly higher levels of political awareness and political participation, and higher levels of criticalness, than youths without higher education and the general mass public. However, no consistently higher levels of commitment to democracy were found among students. We therefore argue that the study provides evidence of the political hothouse conditions typical in many African universities. It also provides grounds for the call that African higher education institutions should be more conscious of, and explicit in, the cultivation of the norms, values and practices conducive to democracy in order for higher education to contribute in enduring ways to citizenship development and the deepening of democratisation in Africa.

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Higher education and democracy in Africa

In the course of the 1990s, a great number of African nations embarked on transitions to economic and political liberalisation and democratisation, embracing competitive, multiparty electoral systems within an enabling framework of political and civil rights (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997; Lass, 1995). More recently, the wave of popular protests and uprisings known as the 'Arab Spring' has again raised the hopes for the political emancipation and democratisation of countries in North Africa and parts of the Middle East. The global history of democracy shows, however, that the democratisation of state and society is not an event; it is an ongoing project that comes in 'waves' and has its 'reverse waves' (Huntington, 1991; Brown, 2011). Moreover, while there is a broad consensus on what constitutes a well-designed institutional framework to make democracy work, democratic institutions like popularly elected and representative legislatures, responsive and responsible executives, and well-functioning judiciary systems constitute only the 'hardware' of a democratic system (Mattes, Davids & Africa, 1999). In order to deepen and consolidate, democracies require people committed to democracy, that is, committed democrats, critically thinking and actively participating citizens, as well as democratically minded leaders and professionals to staff the complex institutions of modern democracy. Sustainable democracy is said to require a critical mass of educated people who believe in and support democracy, and who have the cognitive skills to act as critical citizens and the organisational experience and relevant expertise to take on democratic leadership roles in state and civil society. These democrats constitute the 'software' of a modern democratic system and vibrant civil society (Mattes et al., 1999); they form the constituency to enhance the quality of democracy and its endurance, particularly in times of stress (Gerring, 2011).

Whether, and to what extent, African higher education contributes to democracy and development has come into the spotlight of research conducted by the Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa (HERANA). Among the HERANA studies, four have looked specifically into higher education's contribution to strengthening democracy (i.e. Mattes & Mughogho, 2010; Mattes & Mozaffar, 2011; Luescher-Mamashela et al. 2011; Luescher-Mamashela, et al. 2015). There are good reasons for including democracy in the HERANA studies on higher education and development: democracy and development are closely interlinked. In Sen's terms, democracy has intrinsic, instrumental, and constructive roles to play in the process of development (2001, pp. 146-159). Correspondingly, Gerring argues that 'a transition [to democracy] that is consolidated (and thus maintained over a long period of time) is likely to bring manifold benefits – economic, infrastructural, environmental, educational, public health, and gender based' (2011, p. 231).

Past research conducted mainly in Europe and North America has found that education in general, and higher education in particular, plays an important role in the development of a democratic citizenry and democratically minded leaders (for details see: Mattes & Luescher-Mamashela, 2012). In their landmark study, Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry argue that 'formal education is almost without exception the strongest factor in explaining what citizens do in politics and how they think about politics' (1996, p. 2).

Education increases society-wide literacy levels, thus enabling larger sections of the

citizenry to follow politics using a variety of media sources, including print and online newspapers; education stimulates other forms of cognitive engagement with politics, and interest in and discussion about politics; education increases knowledge of basic facts about the political system, government, and political incumbents; and, overall, education plays a role in the inculcation of democratic norms and values. Higher education in particular is said to enable students to acquire and interpret new information in a more critical manner. Increasing levels of education also translate into improved communication and organisational skills which enable people to persuade and mobilise others. The sum effect of education is therefore higher levels of political efficacy, which result in specific political behaviours such as citizens joining civil society organisations, contacting elected representatives and other government officials, working together with other citizens and participating in community action groups, acquiring attitudes of tolerating political opponents and refraining from violent protest, and, ultimately, supporting democracy and defending it if it comes under threat (for a detailed overview of the literature see: Mattes & Luescher-Mamashela, 2012; and Brown, 2011).

Studies that empirically investigate the contribution of higher education to democracy in the African context are hard to come by. On the one hand, access to higher levels of education in Africa has been limited to an elite few; the average higher education gross enrolment ratio in sub-Saharan Africa is only around 6.1% of the 18-24 years age cohort (even if it has been growing at a fast pace) (UNESCO, 2011; 2008 figures). In addition, limited access to basic political infrastructure such as independent news media has further hampered the development of the type of cognitive skills demanded of ordinary citizens in Africa to act as full democratic citizens. In a recent study involving representative mass publics from 18 African countries, Mattes and Mughogho (2010, p. 1) note:

> Along with limited access to news media, the extremely low levels of formal education found in many African countries strike at the very core of the skills and information that enable citizens to assess social, economic and political developments, learn the rules of government, form opinions about political performance, and care about the survival of democracy."

Hence, poorly performing government leaders are often afforded surprisingly good performance evaluations by citizens, while democracy gets low levels of support. Mattes and Mughogho conclude that this produces an anti-democratic concoction of attitudes aptly named 'a particularly corrosive form of uncritical citizenship' in Africa (Mattes & Mughogho, 2010).

The few empirical studies that have specifically investigated the contribution of higher education to democratic attitudes among citizens in Africa have produced ambiguous results. While some have shown strong positive correlations between increasing levels of education and democratic attitudes and behaviours (Evans & Rose, 2007a; 2007b), others have argued that the analyses used in these studies have failed to isolate the specific 'higher education effect' (Mattes & Mughogho, 2010). Rather, Mattes and Mughogho (2010) argue that, if studied in isolation – and thus controlling for the primary and secondary education level effects – higher education produces *diminishing returns* for support of democracy

and the development of democratic attitudes among citizens in Africa. They arrive at this conclusion from the analysis of data from Afrobarometer surveys that cover 18 African countries. It shows that African university graduates are *not* significantly more supportive of democracy than citizens with lower levels of educational attainment; they thus suggest that African universities fail to deliver on a key aspect of their public-good mandate, that is, 'the socialisation of enlightened, responsible and constructively critical citizens' (cf. *White Paper on Higher Education*, Republic of South Africa, 1997, section 1.3).

The above overview of the literature shows that the higher education–democracy nexus has been analysed by several scholars, most of whom argue that higher education contributes in varying degrees to popular support for democracy and thus the consolidation of democracy. Typically, previous studies have looked at the political attitudes of citizens with different levels of education. The present article, in contrast, seeks to nuance these findings by adding to the analysis the attitudes and behaviours of students *while at university*. In addition, the analysis is meant to show whether participation in student politics influences support for democracy, for exmaple by analysing whether student leaders are significantly more committed to democracy than students not in leadership and whether their participation in campus politics is matched by increased participation in the democratic process beyond the campus.

The student surveys

Against the background of findings of previous studies into the nexus of higher education and democracy, HERANA conducted surveys with students and student leaders on the campuses of four African universities to establish what kinds of citizens and future leaders of state and civil society are emerging from some of the most prestigious public universities in East and Southern Africa. Surveys were conducted with a representative sample of third-year undergraduate students at the University of Botswana (UB) in 2011, and at the University of Cape Town (UCT), the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Tanzania, and the University of Nairobi (UON), Kenya, in 2009. The universities were not selected to be representative in any way; rather, it is their unique 'flagship' status as the oldest and presumably most prestigious institutions within their respective higher educational and national contexts, and thus their potential significance in the (re-)production of the social, economic and political elites of their countries, which warranted their selection for the study.[1]

The HERANA student surveys were conducted on the understanding that macropolitics and public higher education are closely interlinked – as the history and legacy of apartheid in South African higher education show. For instance, the apartheid legacy is still evident in the constitution of the sector itself: in the higher education landscape which, even after the bail-outs of the late 1990s, the mergers and incorporations of the early and mid-2000s, and subsequent developments in the sector, still discernibly reflects historical inequities on key indicators (Bunting, Sheppard, Cloete & Belding, 2010; Mngomezulu, 2012). Apartheid social engineering has its legacy in students' class backgrounds and academic preparedness, and, as the Soudien Commission highlighted, in students' lived experience on campus, in that, after almost two decades of South African

democracy 'discrimination, in particular with regard to racism and sexism, is pervasive in [South African higher education] institutions (Ministerial Commission, 2008. p.13).

The surveys use the micropolitical dimension of students' and student leaders' attitudes to democracy as indicators to be described and understood in comparative terms, thus seeking to measure the so-called educational effect of higher education on democratic attitudes and citizenship at university level. The analysis of the data uses a heuristic of three basic conceptions of democratic citizenship: the notions of 'committed democrat', 'active citizen' and 'critical citizen'.

- *Committed democrat* refers to a notion of citizenship that highlights unwavering commitment to democracy; it is measured in terms of consistent preference for democracy over non-democratic regime alternatives on an index with four survey items.
- *Active citizenship* refers to the classic Kantian distinction between active and passive citizens; it measures on an index of six survey items not only support for democracy (one indicator), but also participation in democratic politics by means of involvement in formal political leadership and participation in informal political activity such as mass meetings and demonstrations (measured on five items).
- The notion of *critical citizenship* is based on Norris's work (1999) and Jeevanatham (2005) and is measured here as support for democracy (one item) alongside a critical stance towards the level of democracy in the country. It therefore combines in one index both regime support and the critical evaluation of regime performance (three-item index).

The student surveys produced 400 weighted responses of third-year students (and student leaders) at each university (but it excludes from the sample international students at UCT). Having designed the student survey instruments based on Afrobarometer's methodology, the article compares the findings of the student surveys with national public opinion data from Botswana, Kenya, South Africa, and Tanzania, both in aggregate form as well as disaggregated to youths of the same age cohorts as students but who do not have higher education.[2]

The student responses from the four East and Southern African universities and national data from Afrobarometer have to be understood within their respective institutional and national contexts, which provide important variation for comparative analysis. While it is not possible to go into details here, it is important to keep in mind that, even though all four countries are democracies, Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania are of to the African group of the post-Cold War (or 'third wave') democracies, while Botswana has been a multi-party democracy since its independence in 1965 and is widely hailed as the 'African success story' in consolidating democratic politics on the continent (Cook & Sarkin, 2010). Moreover, various comparative indicators show that the three younger democracies have succeeded to varying degrees in consolidating democracy and good governance in the past two decades. Kenya and Tanzania are only considered 'partly free' by Freedom House and neither of the two qualifies as a genuine electoral democracy. South Africa and Botswana, in contrast, are

considered two of the few fully free electoral democracies in Africa (Puddington, 2009). Moreover, during data collection, Botswana (2011) and Tanzania and South Africa (2009) were politically stable – and all three have been ruled by the same political party since their transition to multiparty democracy. Kenya, in contrast, saw a change of political party at the helm of government in 2002 after it made its transition to multiparty democracy in 1997. However, in 2007/2008, the country experienced the worst case of electoral violence in its political history. By June 2009 (when the student surveys were conducted), Kenya was also still recovering from the aftermath of the election violence and a new constitution had not yet been adopted. The effect of the macropolitical context on the attitudes of students and mass publics is evident in the data. For Kenya, it is fair to conclude that Kenyans' opinions reflect in part the political instability that occurred due to post-election violence in the 2007/2008 elections (Luescher-Mamashela et al., 2011). The interpretation of cross-country analyses must therefore be mindful of the different national and institutional contexts present at the time of data collection.

African students' political attitudes in comparative perspective

Students and the idea of democracy: Are African students committed democrats?

A first 'requisite' for democratic citizenship and leadership is presumably knowing the basics of what democracy is and is not. Yet, democracy is not only in political theory a contested concept; it means different things to different people. The student surveys conducted at UB, UCT, UDSM and UON did not presuppose a particular conception of democracy; rather they investigated students' understanding of the term 'democracy' and their views on what features of society were essential for a country to be called a democracy as part of the investigation.

The data shows that more than nine out of ten student respondents can provide a comprehensible and valid definition of democracy in their own words. Almost all definitions carry a positive connotation. In closer analysis, students of the four flagship universities have predominantly procedural, liberal and/or participatory ideas of what democracy is. Half of the students (51%) define democracy first in terms of political rights and civil freedoms; just under a third (31%) as popular participation and deliberation in politics; meanwhile less than a tenth define it in substantive terms as equality, fairness or justice. Concerns with socio-economic development (such as access to basic services) are almost completely absent from students' conceptions of democracy. Only when students are prompted with a multiple-choice 'wish list' of potentially important features of a democracy, socio-economic goods (such as provision of basic services; equality in education; and full employment) come to top the list marginally ahead of political goods such as freedom of speech or majority rule.

Taking the notion of 'committed democrat' as the touchstone, the analysis shows the extent to which students prefer democracy over authoritarian regime types. Almost three-quarters of students (72%) prefer democracy over any other regime type, and over 88% always reject non-democratic regime types, such as one-party rule, military rule

and presidential strongman rule, as alternatives to democracy for the way their national government should run.

However, overall, only a minority of students at UON (45%) and UDSM (36%) can be described as unreservedly committed democrats in that they *always prefer democracy* and *always reject non-democratic regime alternatives* in the survey. The students from these two East African universities also emerge as *less committed to democracy* than the same-age cohorts of youths without higher education and the general mass public in their respective countries. Thus, at UON and UDSM, the Mattes and Mughogho (2010) finding that citizens with higher education[1] are not necessarily more supportive of democracy than citizens without higher education is confirmed – albeit not at UB and UCT, where a majority of students are committed democrats. At the UB, more than two in three students qualify as committed democrats (69%). At UCT, 54% of the students are committed democrats by this definition, which is considerably more than the South African mass public and their age peers without higher education (where only about a third are fully committed to democracy) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Committed democrats
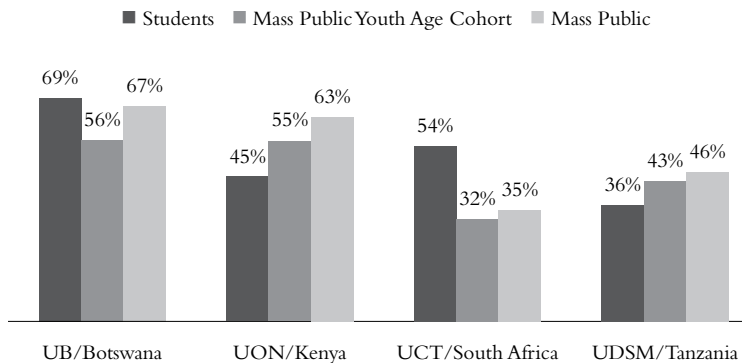
N students = UB, UON, UCT, UDSM 400 each

N valid Afrobarometer national mass publics: BW=971; KNY=1104; TZN=1208; SA=2400

N valid Afrobarometer national age cohort without higher education: BW=229; KNY=157; TZN=162; SA=312

Moreover, considering the argument made in literature on student activism (e.g. Altbach, 2006), it is perhaps surprising – or even shocking – that there is no significant correlation between involvement in formal student leadership on campus[2] and being a committed democrat, as various statistical tests have shown (for details see Luescher-Mamashela et al., 2011, p. 58). For example, despite the difference in proportions of commitment to democracy between ordinary students and student leaders, a Chi-square test indicates that there is no statistically significant association between commitment to democracy and student leadership. Therefore, current or prior involvement in formal student representation

and student leadership seems to have no significant positive impact on commitment to democracy in any of the four universities. It follows that, if there are student leadership development interventions that specifically aim at citizenship development, they presently do not result in any significant increase in support for democracy among these students. Contrary to expectation, participation in formal student leadership on campus (along with related student development interventions) therefore does not act as a distinct student leadership pathway to democratic citizenship. Similarly, the attempt to explain support for democracy among the students of the four flagship universities in terms of demographic features (e.g. gender, class), institutional and cultural factors, and attitudinal and behavioural variables, has yielded very weak and few statistically significant results (for a very detailed study on the Tanzanian data set, see Mwollo-ntallima, 2011).

Therefore, only the students in the two Southern African universities, the University of Botswana and the University of Cape Town, are significantly more committed to democracy than their age peers without higher education or the national mass public; at the University of Nairobi and University of Dar es Salaam this is not the case. If the latter universities are aiming to contribute over and above previous levels of education to a new generation of highly educated democratic citizens and leaders in their respective countries, they are currently not succeeding on those terms.

Students evaluating the performance of democracy: Are they becoming critical citizens?

To what extent do the present political systems of Botswana, Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania actually satisfy students' political ideals? How do students and student leaders see the level of democracy in their country and the performance of the democratic system? Analysing students' evaluation of democracy's performance, the surveys use the notion of 'critical citizen'. It characterises those who *prefer democracy* and are *critical or very critical* of the current level of democracy in their country (i.e. those who consider the political system in their country as not yet fully democratic).

In the analysis, the majority of the students from the three universities in the newer democracies consider their country 'not a democracy' or 'a democracy with major problems'. Most critical are students from the University of Nairobi where less than 15% consider their country a full democracy or a democracy with minor problems. In contrast, almost 90% of the students at the University of Botswana say that Botswana is a democracy with, at most, minor problems. The contrasting views of students reflect only partially the national context. On the one hand, the extremely low democracy endorsement that Kenya's democracy receives from UON students must be understood in relation to the post-2007 election turmoil there and the fact that Kenya found itself under a transitional government at the time of the survey and the new constitution still needed to be approved in a referendum in the coming months. On the other hand, the surveys also show that the students from all the universities are generally *very critical* of the extent of democracy in their country and, except in the special case of Kenya, students are *far more critical* than their age peers without higher education and the mass publics in their respective countries (see

Figure 2). As will be shown below, the heightened criticalness of students may reflect the generally higher levels of political awareness of students compared with citizens in general in their country and the youth without higher education.

Figure 2: Critical citizens
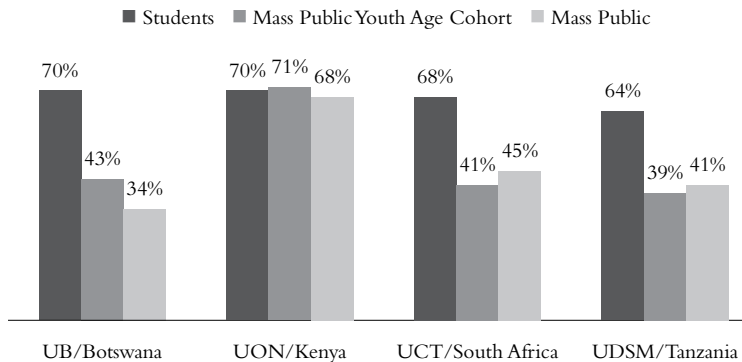
N students = UB, UON, UCT, UDSM 400 each

N valid Afrobarometer national mass publics: BW=944; KNY=867; TZN=937; SA=1996

N valid Afrobarometer national age cohort without higher education: BW=225; KNY=146; TZN=146; SA=309

Critical regime performance evaluations also emerge from questions considering the extent to which students are satisfied with the way democracy works in their country. Most students at the two East African universities are not satisfied at all with the performance of democracy in their respective countries (UON 87%; UDSM 70% not satisfied). At UB, about one in two are not satisfied (52%) with Botswana's democracy, while, at UCT, a majority of the students (57%) is 'fairly' or 'very satisfied' with South Africa's democratic system, which is more than South Africans in general (49%).

Students therefore emerge in all cases as highly critical of the performance of democracy in their respective countries; only the Kenyan mass publics – and for good reason – realise equally that the way democracy operates in their country needs improvement. Having said this, other analyses show that there are high numbers of fairly uncritical democrats and complacent (inactive) democrats in these universities – occasional armchair critics, so to say. For example, almost a third of respondents from UCT fall into this category (cf. Luescher-Mamashela et al., 2011). Nonetheless, in the national comparative perspective, the students from all campuses emerge as highly likely to be critical democratic citizens, and, in all cases but Kenya, they are much more critical than their respective fellow citizens and their same-age peers who do not have higher education. On this account, the universities therefore seem to be succeeding in producing more critical democrats in the region.

Participating in democratic politics: Are African students active citizens?

Democratic processes require more than critical thinking; they require critically constructive behaviour. In terms of the classic Kantian distinction between active and passive/inactive citizens, only those citizens who in one way or another actively participate in decision-making are indeed different from the subjects of a non-democratic polity (Weinrib, 2008). Firstly, in order to successfully participate in politics, citizens need to be cognitively engaged with and aware of, public affairs and politics around them. Contrary to inactive citizens, who are completely disengaged, passive citizens may participate in democratic politics at least through remaining cognitively aware (e.g. by following the news); active citizens, however, act upon their convictions.

In the student surveys, cognitive engagement with politics was measured mainly by investigating the *levels of interest in,* and *frequency of discussing, politics* and public affairs. Here, the surveys show that universities provide a privileged space for young citizens to engage with politics. Although the surveyed students are *not generally more interested* in politics than non-students, students discuss politics far more frequently than their age peers without higher education and the general public in their country. Talking politics, it appears, is highly common in all four universities. In addition, while students make frequent use of a diversity of news media (e.g. radio, TV, newspapers) at a level at least equal to that of mass publics, the frequency of students accessing news online is striking: Internet access to news is almost entirely a student privilege – in all four countries. Of the students in all three universities, 85% or more say they have access to and use the Internet daily or almost daily to gain access to news, whereas only around 10% of mass publics have this kind of access. Even among the relevant age cohort without higher education, Internet use is no higher than among publics in general. Thus, when it comes to cognitive awareness of politics, there can be no stopping students becoming actively involved in the democratic politics of the day.

Proxies for active citizenship measure *participation in formal (and conventional) roles in civil society,* in particular formal leadership in voluntary associations (including participation in campus-based student representative roles and relevant student organisations), and *participation in mass meetings, demonstrations and protests* as less conventional forms of participation. Do the advantages of increased political awareness provided by the university translate into actual participation? Are these cognitively aware students behaving as active citizens?

The survey data shows that higher levels of cognitive engagement indeed correspond to very high levels of political activism, both on- and off-campus. Participation in political meetings and protests is highest at UDSM, followed by UON and UCT. At UB and UDSM, half of the students have taken part in a student demonstration in the preceding 12 months and about two in five students in a demonstration or protest off-campus (39% at UB and 36% at UDSM); 29% of UON students participated in a demonstration on-campus and 28% off-campus; and 21% of UCT students demonstrated on-campus and 17% participated in an off-campus/national demonstration. Except at UCT, where students have participated in national protests and demonstrations about as much as South Africans

in general, students at UB, UON and UDSM are around twice as likely to demonstrate as their compatriots.

Leadership and active participation in voluntary associations on- and off-campus is another indicator for measuring students' attitudes to civil society. As far as active membership or leadership in non-religious associations off-campus is concerned, students are much more likely (at UB, UCT and UDSM) and moderately more likely (at UON) to participate than their respective peers without higher education. In addition, students are, of course, also highly involved in campus-based student organisations. Student leadership on campus also correlates strongly with student leadership in off-campus voluntary organisations, whereby students are considerably more likely to be leaders in civil society organisations off-campus than their less educated peers.[4]

Figure 3: Active citizens
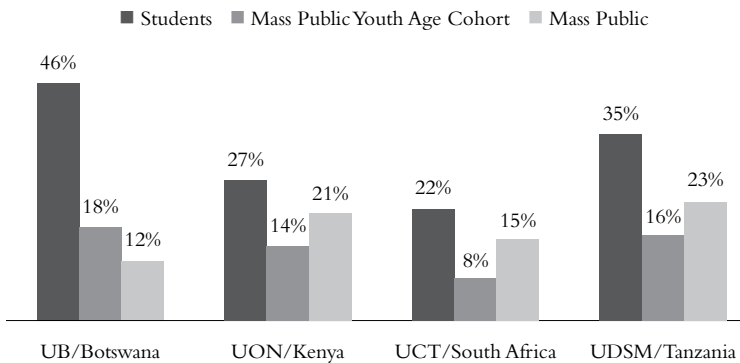
N students = UB, UON, UCT, UDSM 400 each

N valid Afrobarometer national mass publics: BW=899; KNY=1028;TZN=1121; SA=2112

N valid Afrobarometer national age cohort without higher education: BW=207; KNY=147;TZN=147; SA=264

It is clear that, with respect to all measures of political engagement, both in terms of cognitive engagement and active participation and leadership, all four flagship universities offer significant advantages to the politically interested and politically participatory student. Figure 3 shows that, compared with their fellow citizens, students are much more likely to be active democratic citizens. Moreover, the disaggregation of mass data into the relevant age cohort shows that it is not youthfulness that accounts for the more activist political disposition of students, but conditions (or predispositions) associated with studying at an African flagship university that have the effect of students being more likely active citizens.

From hothouse to training ground: Conclusions and implications

Against the background of the questions in the HERANA studies – that is, what contribution higher education makes to democracy in Africa – the student surveys show

that the four flagship universities clearly offer a privileged space for critical thinking and discussions on democratic politics and a base for formal and informal political participation. In the light of the importance of critical thinking skills in society in general (Jeevanantham, 2005) and for the quality and endurance of democracy (Norris, 1999; Gerring, 2011), this is an important contribution of African higher education to democracy. Moreover, the flagship universities offer clear advantages for participation and leadership in formal settings such as student government on campus and voluntary associations on- or off-campus. In Nie et al.'s terms (1996), students at these universities are therefore not only seated closer to the political action as observers, but they are also more likely to be on stage themselves, and more likely to be politically participating at a young age than their peers without higher education and the public in general in their respective countries.

The findings of the analyses provide evidence of the familiar phenomenon of student activism in Africa: the university as a political hothouse. They go a long way in illustrating why students tend to be at the forefront of political movements in Africa, which has inspired a diverse literature on student activism dating back to the mid-1960s and before (e.g. Lipset, 1965; UNESCO, 1994; Munene, 2003; Luescher, 2005; Altbach, 2006). Political participation, it appears, is not so much a matter of interest in politics; it is about having access to, and being informed of, current affairs; about discussing politics with peers and thus being 'cognitively engaged'; along with being placed where participation and leadership are possible. The political hothouse effect of the university observed in the surveys harbours a distinct potential for African universities to engage with the democratic mandate in order to develop democratic citizenship and leadership. On the one hand, Mattes and Mughogho's (2010) work suggests that the high levels of political engagement disappear once a student leaves the university and thereby loses the advantages for cognitive engagement and political participation offered by student life. This may be explained in terms of the findings on commitment to democracy (above) which seems to be insufficiently developed in the course of the university experience. It may thus be argued that there is a need for a more conscious and explicit cultivation of the norms, values and practices conducive to democratic attitudes and behaviours among students in order for higher education to contribute in lasting ways to citizenship development and, by extension, the deepening of democratisation in Africa.

We believe that the hothouse conditions observed in the surveys offer the very potential for universities to act as training grounds for critical and active democratic citizenship through the opportunities presented to students, namely 'to learn *how* democracy works' and '*that* democracy works' as proposed by Bleiklie (2001, p. 1; *emphasis in original*). In order to harness the potential of making the university an effective training ground, we therefore recommend that student affairs and academic departments develop strategic interventions – in and outside the classroom; and in-curricular and extra-curricular activities – that consciously cultivate democratic norms, values and practices on campus. Moreover, we recommend a sustained research effort drawing on local and international best practice, and informed by and relevant to the local, institutional and national contexts, to measure the extent to which student engagement contributes not only to students' academic success

but also to their attainment of relevant graduate attributes and competences related to democratic citizenship.

Acknowledgements

Endnotes
1. In the Mattes and Mughogho study, the 'citizens with higher education' refers to both students and graduates; in contrast, the present study only includes students who are currently at university.
2. 'Student leaders' has been defined in the surveys as students who were previously or are currently in elected student leadership positions at residence, faculty or institution-wide level, e.g. serving on a House/Hall Committee, a Faculty or School Council, or Students' Representative Council (SRC), Student Guild structures or the University Senate/Council.
3. While the selection of UB in Botswana, UDSM in Tanzania and UON in Kenya is relatively straightforward, there are other potential choices in the South African case, i.e. the University of Pretoria, the University of Stellenbosch, or the University of the Witwatersrand in some respects, as well as universities that have been important in the production of the black social and political elite such as the University of Fort Hare, the University of Durban-Westville (now part of the University of KwaZulu-Natal), and the University of the Western Cape. However, with the given criteria of age and current prestige, UCT emerged as the most defensible choice.
4. For details of the methodology, sampling, response rates, weighting, etc., of the HERANA student surveys as well as the Afrobarometer data, see Luescher-Mamashela et al. (2011). The relevant age cohorts of youths without higher education taken from the Afrobarometer sample reflect the age groups of the 10 to 90 percentile age group of the student surveys. They are: Batswana of 21-27 years of age; Kenyans of the ages of 22-25 years; South Africans of 20-23 years of age; and Tanzanians of the ages of 22-26 years. Provided that the students are selected from flagship universities, while the youths without higher education are from a representative national sample (based on Afrobarometer data), the analysis could also be interpreted in terms of differences in political attitudes between elite offspring and the youth in general.
5. Details of the correlations can be accessed from Luescher-Mamashela et al. (2011).

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Research article

The effectiveness of student involvement in decision-making and university leadership: A comparative analysis of 12 universities in South-west Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines student involvement in university leadership and decision-making and its impacts on leadership effectiveness in universities in Nigeria. The study uses a descriptive survey conducted among students and staff in all 12 of the public and private universities in South-West Nigeria.[1] The research findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between student involvement in decision-making and leadership effectiveness. It also reveals that there are significant differences between decision-making with student involvement and decision-making without student involvement. Conversely, no significant difference was found in leadership effectiveness between decision-making in public and private universities. The study finally reveals that there is a significant relationship between the management-student relationship and teaching effectiveness. The results therefore show that, for leadership and teaching effectiveness to be improved in Nigerian universities, provision should be made for the adequate involvement of students in decision-making on important matters relating to university administration.

Keywords

Student representation; leadership; student politics; public higher education; private higher education; university governance; effectiveness; teaching and learning.

Background and introduction

Universities in Nigeria exist to achieve specific goals in teaching, learning, research, and the development of citizens, among others. In Nigeria, the functions of the university head, that is, the vice-chancellor, are to manage people, tasks and resources in order to achieve these goals. All the activities of the institution's management, whether working with the general public, the management ranks, academics, the board of directors, staff or the student

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union, are ultimately meant to contribute to this end. In this process, both conscious and unconscious processes are involved. When these processes are conscious, decision-making is already evoked and is in use.

Decision-making is the process of identifying and choosing among alternatives based on values and preferences. It is synonymous with management. Nobert (1996) believes that control of a system is achieved through the use of feedback from the environment. He defines a system as a means of appreciating how organisation parts interact with their environment. Decisions made affect all parts in a system. For effective decisions to be made, every role player in the system needs to participate at one level or another. Thus, Mullins (2004) and Edem (1992) identify three levels of participation in a system, namely:

1. The technical level: Operational or processing level (the actual work, e.g. teaching);
2. The managerial level: Human resources; and
3. The community level: The Environment.

It suffices to say that decision-making is the kernel and an essential aspect of an organisation, including the school system, which determines the daily operations or activities of an organisation. Student involvement in decision-making is not well embraced and accepted in Nigerian universities as a result of the organizational structure and bureaucratic nature of our educational system. (Adeleke, 2000).

'Student participation in decision-making', according to Jeruto and Kiprop (2011), refers to the work of student representative bodies such as school councils, student parliaments and prefectorial bodies. It is also a term used to encompass all aspects of school (or university) life and decision-making where students may make a contribution informally through individual negotiation as well as formally through purposely created structures and mechanisms. It thus refers to participation of students in collective decision-making at school or class level and to dialogue between students and other decision-makers, and not only consultation or surveying student opinion (Ajayi,1991). Student participation in decision-making in universities is often viewed as problematic owing to the fact that students may be viewed as minors, immature and lacking in the expertise and technical knowledge that is needed in making decisions regarding the university. Thus, student participation in decision-making is often confined to issues concerned with student welfare, with students not being involved in core governance issues (Fajana, 2002).

Oke, Okunola, Oni and Adetoro (2010) argue that most university-school administrators do not allow their students to participate in decision-making in their universities. They assert that the major problem confronting their universities is the alienation of students from decision-making. This present situation in our universities is described by Fletcher (2004, p. 18) as 'tokenism and manipulation' where students are given a voice but in fact have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate. There is no meaningful involvement of students in deciding some of the issues that affect them directly.

Despite the usefulness and relevance of student participation in decision-making in university management, it has been established that not all university administrators encourage and practise student involvement in decision-making in their university. Savage

(1968) points out that administrators vary greatly in the extent to which they encourage or allow other staff and students to participate in the decision-making process. Such variation may be due to an administrator's view concerning her/his roles and the staff members, as well as the confidence and trust an administrator has in the ability, sincerity, competence and performance of her/his subordinates. It needs reiteration here that decisions give rise to policies and plans, which, of course, are mere intentions when not implemented. The actual task of implementation rests with all the staff of an organisation. It has been argued that there should be participatory decision-making if the implementation is to be successful.

It seems, however, that not very many Nigerian universities encourage student involvement in decision-making, and, even among the few vice-chancellors who try it, fewer still understand the basic principles of student involvement in decision-making. This is evidenced in the many staff strikes and student demonstrations in Nigerian universities, which are caused by faulty decision-making (Tonga, 1997). The state of the art of decision-making therefore seems to be defective in Nigerian universities, owing to the way decisions are imposed on students, as evidenced even in the structure of the university system (see Appendix III). The lack of effectiveness results in cases of stress, tension, frustration, isolation, selfishness, and conflict between staff and management, between students and staff, between students and management themselves, among staff themselves, and in the management rank and file (Salisu, 1996). The Nigerian student unions thus often complain about the lack of involvement of students in decision-making. Consequently, wrong decisions are made on issues involving student admission, student housing, tuition fees, allowances, students' general welfare, and disciplinary matters.

Buttressing the need for involvement of students in decision-making, Alani, Isichei, Oni and Adetoro (2010) highlight the need to include students in the school's decision-making process. Oke et al. (2010) further argue that failure to involve students in decision-making in the schools can lead to difficulty in the planning and implementation of school goals, which can degenerate into inadequacies in respect of human, material, financial and physical resources. Representation of students in university decision-making, according to Luescher-Mamashela (2013), is one of the main ways in which universities engage with students, listen to them, and involve them in their internal decision-making processes. Empirical studies indicate that the representation of students in decision-making at the institutional level is close to universal (Salisu, 1996; Mullins, 2004). However, there is considerable variability between and within institutions so far as representation at lower organisational levels (e.g. faculty, school/department and course levels) and across different issue-based governance domains (e.g. teaching and learning, students' social issues, and staffing) (Luescher-Mamashela, 2013).

Oyedeji and Fasasi (2006) observe that, while some leaders would want to take decisions without involving subordinates, others would want to encourage participatory decision-making. This trend abounds in Nigeria universities, both private and public, whereby students have little or no say in decision-making concerning academic and administrative matters. Meanwhile, there is that conviction that students' decisions are less prone to favouritism than decisions made by the leadership alone, which will have far-reaching effects on its academic and

administrative achievements (Fajana, 2002). Moreover, Ajayi (1991) states that the importance of student involvement in decision-making in universities cannot be overemphasised owing to its spill-over effect on the overall academic achievement of students. Ejiogu (1995) is of the opinion that educational leaders are expected to be equipped with the academic knowledge and professional skills to enable them to cope with changes in teaching and learning situations, coupled with the administrative demand for efficiency and effectiveness. That is why, in the US and UK higher education systems, formal student involvement in university decision-making became an established feature of university governance, not only in student affairs governance, but also with respect to certain aspects of teaching and learning as well as institution-wide strategy and planning (Luescher-Mamashela, 2013).

The value of actively involving students in decision-making can generally be described from one of three perspectives:

- Functional: How does student involvement in decision-making benefit the university?
- Developmental: How does student involvement in decision-making benefit the students?
- Social: What are the benefits to society of student involvement in decision-making?

In addition, it can be argued that student participation in university decision-making processes is part of an emerging and related discourse on education for democracy (Tenune, 2001) and universities as sites of citizenship (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont & Stephens, 2003). Thus, student involvement in decision-making in their university may facilitate their introduction to democratic ideals and practices.

Research has therefore indicated that student involvement in decision-making has various related benefits. A benefit of effective participation is that students will find it easier to accept decisions in which their representatives have had input as participants. They are also more likely to understand the motives for an otherwise objectionable policy and to appreciate that the motives were not malicious, even in the case of mistakes. Obondo (2000) observes that, if students are involved in making decisions about salient issues concerning their lives, they are likely to identify with the outcomes of such processes, and colleges with institutionalised participation will experience less student-related administrative problems. If governance is shared, students then feel more positive about college goals and objectives (Obondo, 2000). Obondo further asserts that, in the transformation of universities, students should be involved. A student association represents an important resource in university efforts to confront challenges as they arise. Student representatives have been noted to have the capacity to diffuse potential conflicts. This they can do through regular meetings with their members and the university administration, and by designing a mechanism for regular communication, thereby restraining their colleagues from engaging in unnecessary conflict (Obondo, 2000).

Similarly, Wood (1993) conducted a study in three colleges on faculty, student and support-staff participation in governance and found out that these groups constituted valuable sources of information on decisions. Respondents were found to be positive about student participation and the ability of students to make significant contributions to the

quality of decisions (also see: Zuo & Ratsoy, 1999; Menon, 2005). However, he further argues that students may not be in a position to effectively represent the interests of their groups if they have no place on university boards. This would simply promote the interests of a specific group, which may lead to conflict.

Greg (1998) defines involvement in decision-making as creating an environment in which people have an impact on decisions and actions that affect their jobs. Staff and student involvement in decision-making is not a goal per se. Rather, it is a management and leadership philosophy about how people are most enabled to contribute to the improvement and the ongoing success of their work in the organisation. According to Melvin (2004), involvement is conceived in terms of a process of dialogue, decision-making and action-taking (DDA) regarding particular changes under way in a school.

The main goal of university-based decision-making is to ensure that there is student involvement to accomplish the university's mission through its strategic plan. Buttressing this view, Onyene (2002) argues that decision-making is more or less an administrative behaviour directed toward articulation and actualisation of the goals and objectives of the school. In other words, it involves a particular kind of leadership style. In this respect, Orest (1999) indicates the importance of the school climate not only as a determining factor in the type of educational programme carried out within the school, but also in terms of the close relationship between school climate and leadership. Leadership styles may characterised as autocratic, laissez-faire or democratic. The style of leadership and school climate are therefore determining factors for staff and student involvement in decision-making which can lead to leadership effectiveness or ineffectiveness in overall university performance.

As a result of the foregoing, there have been calls for increasing the extent of inclusion of students in decision-making in Nigerian universities, owing to the frequent occurrences of student unrest, student militarism, cultism, and gangsterism in the sector. Proponents of student participation in decision-making have justified their support for this idea on the premise that decisions in a school affect students in latent and manifest ways. Largely, they are recipients of final decisions (Sushila & Bakhda, 2006); hence, recommendations made by students may be very constructive and, if approached in the right manner, could make a positive contribution. In this way, students' rejectionist tendencies with regard to decisions imposed upon them by university management would change to ownership and acceptance of decisions arrived at with their participation. Thus, persistent agitation by students highlights the urgent need for student involvement in decision-making, as it is believed that, if students were part and parcel of decision-making, they could ensure that their interests are adopted in the administration of universities. Nonetheless, despite laudable student agitation in this regard, not much research has been conducted to find out how far, or to what extent, students are involved in decision-making in Nigerian tertiary institutions; the role and contribution of students in university decision-making in Nigeria are relatively neglected areas of inquiry. This study therefore investigates the extent of student involvement in decision-making and its impact on leadership effectiveness in universities in South-wesr Nigeria with a view to filling the knowledge gap between the theory and practice of participatory university management.

Statement of the problem

The governance of the university has not been smooth since its inception all over the world (Tonga, 1997). In Nigeria, in particular, university management has been faced with various challenges since early 1980s, including high rates of youth restiveness, poor academic performance, examination malpractices, increasing conflict on campus, and indiscipline among students in universities across the country. Moreover, part of this scenario is that Nigerian students have resorted to cultism, riots, robbery, cybercrime, theft, prostitution, hooliganism, and drug abuse, and have shown a general lack of interest in academic matters during the course of their university education (Alani et al., 2010). In some cases, the situation deteriorated to the extent where government was forced to close down some universities to enable law enforcement agencies to re-establish law and order. Many researchers believe that these problems indicate leadership deficiencies, as a result of which university managements prove ineffective in ensuring academic excellence, providing good communication network, motivating both teachers and students, and even enforcing discipline among students (Salisu, 1996).

There is therefore increased urgency to think of ways to give recognition to all actors affected by university decision-making. Are these lapses in decision-making, which culminate in strikes and a strained student–management relationship, the result of the incompetence of decision-makers? Or are they due to the nature and structure of universities? Could the problem be inherent in the nature of the decision-making process? Or could some other factors be responsible? The thrust of the present study is to investigate the extent of student involvement in decision-making and how it impacts on university effectiveness in South-west Nigeria's universities with a view to advancing suggestions on how to improve governance practices for the purpose of bringing about more efficiency in the administration of these universities.

Study objectives

The objectives of this research are therefore as follows:
1. To identify the leadership styles used in private and public universities in Nigeria;
2. To assess the influence of student involvement in decision-making on universities' effectiveness;
3. To examine the difference in leadership effectiveness between decisions made in public universities and decisions made in private universities in South-west Nigeria; and
4. To examine the relationship between the management–student relationship and teaching effectiveness in public and private universities in South-west Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are tested in the course of this study:
1. There is no significant relationship between student involvement in decision-making and leadership effectiveness in Nigerian universities.

2. There is no significant difference in decision-making with student involvement and decision-making without student involvement.
3. There is no significant difference in leadership effectiveness between decisions made in public universities and decisions made in private universities in South-west Nigeria.
4. There is no significant relationship between the management–student relationship and teaching effectiveness in public and private universities in South-west Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive-survey design. An attempt was made to determine the relationship between student involvement in decision-making and universities' effectiveness in both public and private universities in South-west Nigeria. The population of the study comprises all 134 universities in Nigeria, students and staff (in all the public and private universities). The sample for the study comprises 1 750 students and staff drawn from 12 selected public and private universities in the six states that make up South-west Nigeria, namely Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti. The method used for sampling students and staff was the simple random technique for selecting the participants and the universities.

The research instrument used for the study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was made up of two sections. Section A comprised participants' personal data while Section B comprised 20 statements. Each participant had the opportunity of choosing one of four options to agree or disagree with a statement: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). The statement items were designed to determine the perception of students and staff with regard to the relationship between student involvement in decision-making and leadership effectiveness. The items are presented in the appendix. Prior to conducting the survey, the questionnaire was given to colleagues, who provided suggestions and comments on the appropriateness of the items. Their suggestions were taken into consideration for validity purposes before the researchers made the final corrections to the questionnaire and conducted the survey.

The reliability of the research instrument was ascertained by conducting a pilot study using universities not included in the study. This was done to ensure that results could be generalised to other universities that were not included in the main study. To pre-test the reliability of the research instrument employed in the study, the researchers gave out the questionnaire to 100 participants who did not take part in the study and a test–re-test reliability coefficient of 0.67 was established.

Ahead of surveying, the researcher sought the permission of the respective university authorities to conduct the research. Assistant researchers were recruited from among graduate students of the University of Lagos. The assistant researchers were adequately briefed about the objective of administering the questionnaire. Participants were encouraged to express their views about each of the statements. All the administered copies of the questionnaire were completed.

The collected data were analysed using frequency tables, percentages, and t-test and Pearson product-moment correlation statistical tools. The t-test was used to determine the

significant difference in decision-making with student involvement and decision-making without student involvement, as represented in Hypothesis 2; as well as the significant difference in leadership effectiveness between decisions made in public universities and decisions made in private universities, as per Hypothesis 3. The Pearson product moment correlation statistical tool was used to test the relationship between student involvement in decision-making and leadership effectiveness, as well as the relationship between the management–student relationship and teaching effectiveness in the sampled universities. The copies of the questionnaire were scrutinised to ensure that they were properly completed by the participants. The responses from each participant were based on proportion and percentages, which were used to analyse the data. Also, the t-test statistical tool used showed whether or not there was had any significant difference between the observed frequencies and the participants' set of expected frequencies.

Results

Student involvement in decision-making and leadership effectiveness

Hypothesis 1 (H_{o1}): There is no significant relationship between student involvement in decision-making and leadership effectiveness in Nigerian universities.

Table 1: Student involvement in decision-making, and leadership effectiveness

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$ (Mean)	SD	Df	r–Cal	r-tab	Remark
Student involvement in decision-making	1 750	$\bar{x}$ =20.63	11.47	1,748	0.549	0.195	Significant
Leadership effectiveness		$\bar{y}$ = 11.22	8.97				

p < 0.05

The results presented on Table 1 show the relationship between student involvement in decision-making and leadership effectiveness in universities in Nigeria. The results reveal that there is a significant relationship between student involvement in decision-making and leadership effectiveness in both public and private universities in Nigeria. This is evident from the fact that the r-calculated value of 0.549 is found to be greater than the r-critical (r-table) value of 0.195. This implies that regular involvement of students in decision-making by the universities authorities was found to enhance leadership effectiveness in Universities in South Western Nigeria.

Decision-making with and without student involvement

Hypothesis 2 (H_{o2}): There is no significant difference in decision-making with student involvement and decision-making without student involvement.

Table 2: Difference in decision-making with student involvement and without student involvement

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$ (Mean)	SD	Df	r-Cal	r-tab	Remark
Decision-making with student involvement	1 750	$\bar{x}_1 = 16.14$	SD1 = 6.74	1 748	2.49	1.98	H_{o2} rejected
Decision-making without student involvement		$\bar{x}_2 = 17.09$	SD2 = 8.55				

p < 0.05

The results in Table 2 reveal that the r-calculated is 2.49, while the r-tabulated gives 1.98 at p<0.05 and 1 748 degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis H_{o2} is therefore rejected. This means that there is a significant difference in decision-making that involves students and decision-making that does not involve students in South-west Nigeria's universities.

Leadership effectiveness in public and private universities in South-west Nigeria

Hypothesis 3 (H_{o3}): There is no significant difference in leadership effectiveness between decisions made in public universities and decisions made in private universities in South-west Nigeria.

Table 3: Difference in leadership effectiveness between decisions made in public and private universities

Variables	Leadership effectiveness						
	N	$\bar{x}$ (Mean)	SD	Df	r-Cal	r-tab	Remark
Decisions made in public universities	1 750	$\bar{x}_1 = 3.04$	SD1 = 1.39	1 748	1.31	1.98	H_{o3} accepted
Decisions made in private universities		$\bar{x}_2 = 2.17$	SD2 = 1.20				

p < 0.05

The results in Table 3 show that the r-calculated is 1.31, while the r-critical (table) is 1.98 at p < 0.05 given 1 748 as the degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis H_{o3} is hereby accepted. This implies that leadership effectiveness in both public and private universities in South-west Nigeria is the same based on either decisions made in public universities or decisions made in private universities in South-West Nigeria.

The management–student relationship and teaching effectiveness

Hypothesis 4 (H_{o4}): There is no significant relationship between the management–student relationship and teaching effectiveness in public and private universities in South-west Nigeria.

Table 4: The management–student relationship and teaching effectiveness

Variables	N	$\overline{x}$ (Mean)	SD	df	r-Cal	r-tab	Remark
Management–student relationship		$\overline{x}$ =18.98					
	1 750		13.28	1 748	0.547	0.195	H^{o4} rejected
Teaching effectiveness in public and private universities		$\overline{x}$ =10.38	9.79				

p < 0.05

Table 4 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.547 is greater than the table value of 0.195 given a 0.05 level of significance and 1 748 degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis H_{o4} is therefore rejected. There is therefore a significant relationship between a cordial management–student relationship and teaching effectiveness in public and private universities in South-west Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between student involvement in decision-making and leadership effectiveness in South-west Nigeria's universities. The study also revealed that there is a significant difference in decision-making with student involvement and decision-making without student involvement. Furthermore, it showed that there is no significant difference in leadership effectiveness between decisions made in public universities and decisions made in private universities in South-west Nigeria. Finally, there is a significant relationship between the management–student relationship and teaching effectiveness in public and private universities in South-west Nigeria. The results therefore show that, for leadership and teaching effectiveness to be guaranteed in Nigerian universities, provision must be made for adequate involvement of students in decision-making on important matters relating to university administration.

The findings of this study are therefore similar to those of Jeruto and Kiprop (2011), who studied student participation in decision-making in terms of the work of student representative bodies such as school councils, student parliaments and perfectorial bodies. The findings are also in line with those of Oke et al (2010), who assert that the major problem confronting our universities is the alienation of the students from decision-making, and the position of Ajayi (1991), who states that the importance of student involvement in decision-making in universities cannot be over-emphasised due to the spill-over effect on the overall academic achievement of students.

Summary, recommendations and conclusion

On the basis of data collected through a survey of staff and students in public and private universities in six states of South-west Nigeria, this study has shown that regular involvement of students in decision-making by university authorities has the potential to enhance leadership effectiveness of university administrations in universities in South-west Nigeria. The results of the study also show a significant difference in decision-making that involves students and decision-making which does not involve students. Moreover, a cordial management–student relationship significantly affects teaching effectiveness in public and private universities in South-west Nigeria's universities. Conversely, the study has revealed that there is no significant difference between leadership effectiveness in public and private universities in South-west Nigeria. These results therefore suggest that university authorities and management should endeavour to involve students in their decision-making, whether or not the universities are private or public entities. Furthermore, attempts should be made to ensure that students participate in all matters of interest that are meant to improve the teaching effectiveness of academic staff. A cordial relationship and mutual understanding between the student body and university authorities will enhance the smooth administration of universities in Nigeria and thus provide for a more peaceful environment that guarantees teaching effectiveness.

Endnote

1. University of Lagos, Lagos; University of Ibadan, Ibadan; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; University of Agriculture Abeokuta; Federal University of Technology, Akure; Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti; Lead City University, Ibadan; Convenant University, Ota; Lagos State University Ojo Lagos; Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye; Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti; Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho.

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Appendix I: Student questionnaire

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS, NIGERIA
STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participants,

Please respond to these items provided by putting a tick (✓) against your responses. The items are mainly for research purposes. Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Yours faithfully,
A.A. Oni (Ph.D.) & J.A. Adetoro (Ph.D.)

Section A: Biodata of Participant

  1. Age range
     16–20 [ ]
     21–25 [ ]

  2. Gender
     Male [ ]
     Female [ ]

  3. Course of study_____

  4. Level_____

  5. Type of iniversity: Public [ ]   Private [ ]

Section B

Please tick (✔) as an indication of whether you agree or disagree with the options presented in the column below.

Key: Strongly agree [SA]; Agree [A]; Disagree [D]; Strongly disagree [SD]

S/N	Item description	SA	A	SD	D
1.	Students should not participate in decision-making in the university.				
2.	Decision-making ought to be the priority of the university management.				
3.	Participation of students in decision-making of the university involves them in the day-to-day running of the university.				
4.	Students get demoralised when they are not involved in decision-making in the university.				
5.	Participation of students in decision-making will enable them to implement some of the decisions of the university effectively.				
6.	Students feel they belong when they are involved in the decision-making.				
7.	To boost students' productivity, they should be allowed to partake in the decision-making process in the university.				
8.	Getting students to partake in decision-will affect their academic activities.				
9.	Students should remain in the classroom and not get involved in the decision-making process.				
10.	Students should not be involved in decision-making, which is the managerial attribute of university management.				
11.	The university management should operate an open-door policy in the school.				
12.	Vice-chancellors who operate closed-door policies in the school are not friends of their students.				
13.	Students are not trained to take decisions in the management of the university.				
14.	Students who are involved in decision-making in the university work with great zeal.				
15.	To motivate students, they must be involved in the decisions made in the university.				
16.	Students tend to develop an 'I don't care' attitude if they are not involved in decision-making in the university.				
17.	Students' academic achievement is high when their universities' managements involved them in university activities of a management nature.				
18.	Students perform better if they are involved in decision-making in the university.				
19.	Students do not like non-participation in decision-making in the universities.				
20.	Students do not bother much about participation in decision-making in universities.				

Appendix II: Staff questionnaire

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS, NIGERIA
STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participants,

The following questionnaire is aimed at eliciting information from staff in the university on students' involvement in decision-making and universities' leadership effectiveness in South-west Nigeria. Your honest and prompt responses to the items are hereby solicited. Please note that your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses are fully guaranteed.
You need not provide your names.

Yours faithfully,
A.A. Oni (Ph.D.) & J.A. Adetoro (Ph.D.)

Section A: Bio-Data of Participant

Please tick (✔) where appropriate:
1. Name of university_____

2. Type of university : Public [ ]   Private [ ]

3. Gender
   Male [ ]
   Female [ ]

4. Age range
   23–30 years [ ]
   31–38 years [ ]
   39–46 years [ ]
   Above 46 years [ ]
   Above 53 years [ ]

5. Highest qualification
   NCE/ND [ ]
   HND/BA/BSc [ ]
   MA/MSc./MBA/MPA [ ]
   Ph.D. [ ]

6. Status
   Teaching staff [ ]
   Non-teaching staff [ ]

Section B

Below are four options to choose from the questionnaire. Tick (✔) in the column that strongly expresses your feelings.

Key: Strongly agree [SA]; Agree [A]; Disagree [D]; Strongly disagree [SD]

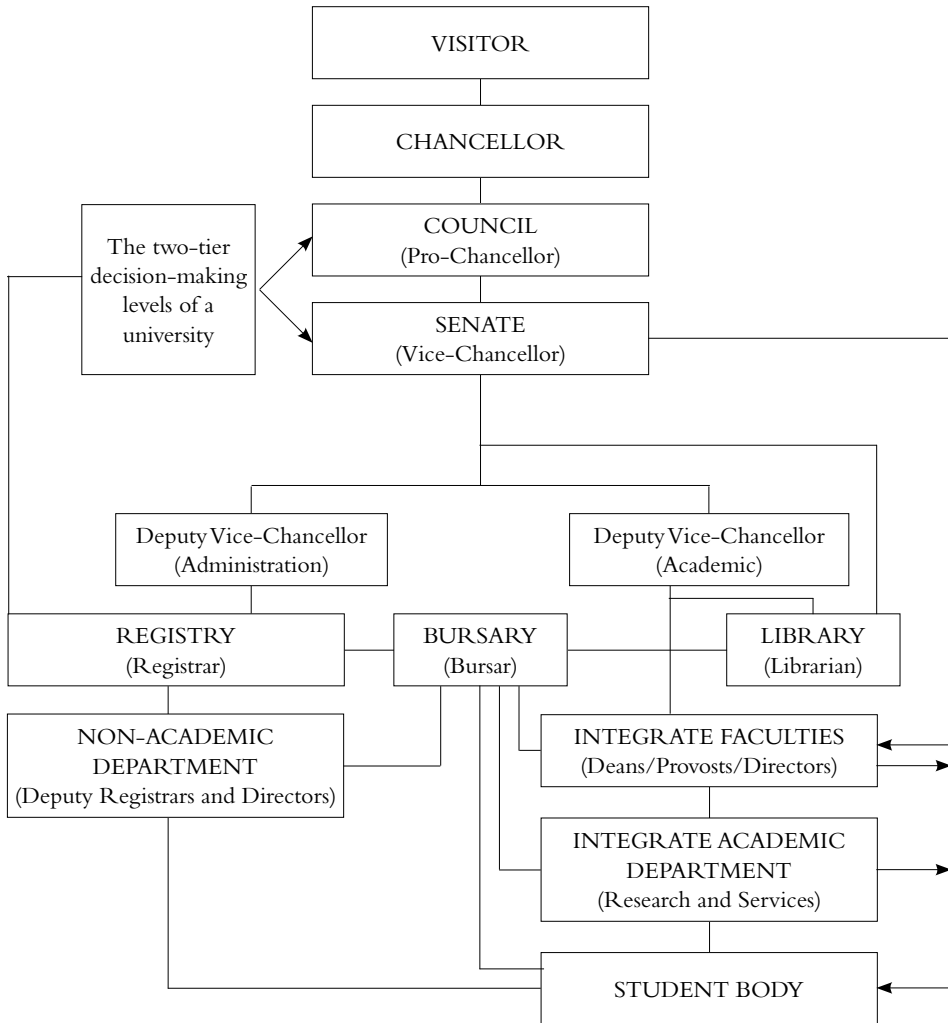| S/N	Item Description	SA	A	S D	D
1.	Your university management allows students to give their opinions on university administration.				
2.	Your university management encourages students to take part in the school programme.				
3.	Students are actively involved in the university leadership programme.				
4.	Your university management is always annoyed when students contribute ideas to university governance.				
5.	Students always look forward to meetings between themselves and universities' authorities so as to contribute their ideas.				
6.	Your university's management accepts students' opinion at any point in time.				
7.	Students take part in decision-making whenever the university has a problem.				
8.	Your university vice-chancellor allows students to exchange ideas freely without fear.				
9.	My university vice-chancellor is happy whenever any student contributes his/her opinion on university problems.				
10.	My vice-chancellor's leadership style can move the university forward.				
11.	My vice-chancellor's presence in any student activities arouses a sense of fear.				
12.	My vice-chancellor motivates students to give their opinions during the decision-making meeting.				
13.	It takes the students conscious extra effort to contribute promptly to solving the university's problem.				
14.	My vice-chancellor finds it difficult to involve students in decision-making.				
15.	My vice-chancellor involves the students in the making of school rules and regulations.				
16.	In my university, students have very little freedom to decide in management meetings.				
17.	Students have a lot to say about what happens in their university, but are afraid to say it.				
18.	The vice-chancellor really values students and also involves them fully in the university decision-making process.				
19.	My vice-chancellor's job is hectic so he does not have time for meetings.				

20.   What type of leadership style is being operated in your university?
Democratic leadership style [ ]
Autocratic (authoritarian) leadership style [ ]
Laissez-faire leadership style   [ ]

Appendix III: Administrative structure of Nigerian universities

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                              ┌──────────────────────┐
                              │       VISITOR        │
                              └──────────────────────┘

                              ┌──────────────────────┐
                              │      CHANCELLOR      │
                              └──────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────────┐
│  The two-tier   │ ──────▶  │       COUNCIL        │
│ decision-making │          │   (Pro-Chancellor)   │
│   levels of a   │          └──────────────────────┘
│   university    │ ──────▶  ┌──────────────────────┐
└─────────────────┘          │       SENATE         │
                             │   (Vice-Chancellor)  │
                             └──────────────────────┘
```

VISITOR

CHANCELLOR

COUNCIL
(Pro-Chancellor)

The two-tier decision-making levels of a university

SENATE
(Vice-Chancellor)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor
(Administration)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor
(Academic)

REGISTRY
(Registrar)

BURSARY
(Bursar)

LIBRARY
(Librarian)

NON-ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT
(Deputy Registrars and Directors)

INTEGRATE FACULTIES
(Deans/Provosts/Directors)

INTEGRATE ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT
(Research and Services)

STUDENT BODY

Internationalisation and the role for student affairs professionals: Lessons learned from the International Student Engagement Meeting Initiative

Allen M. McFarlane*

Internationalisation in higher education is not new; as past studies indicate, it dates back to the beginning of formal higher education (Bhandari & Blumenthal, 2013, Guruz, 2011). What is new is that it has intensified and, as a result, a growing number of universities and colleges in countries around the world are developing plans to increase international student enrolment. Universities around the globe are thinking strategically about how best to attract and graduate international students, as reported in *University World News* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. In fact, at the African Higher Education Summit, Claudia Costin of the World Bank said that, 'higher education is growing globally and they are highest in Africa.' Professional associations such as the NAFSA: Association of International Student Educators have long provided a forum for professional engagement and best practice with still more new emerging organisations that include the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS). In the US, according to the Institute of International Education (2014) *Open Doors* report, almost 900 000 international students enrolled at colleges and universities. This number represents an 8% increase from 2012.

This reflection piece presents some of the lessons learned from an initiative at New York University (NYU) that could be used by other student affairs professionals in other parts of the world, including Africa. The vision and motivation to embark on such a path have been inspired, in part, by three major developments in higher education. The first and most recent has been the growth of the university by expanding its reach outside its own confines, extending its borders, and reaching across boundaries, as we have done at New York University with the establishment of two branch campuses in Shanghai, China, and in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The concept, albeit not new, has been elevated with the creation of stand–alone facilities, a defined school identity, and common–ground government partnerships. This is not common among universities in Africa, even though the University of South Africa has always operated beyond its country's borders owing to the nature of its

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programme offerings, and there is potential for other institutions to do the same, even if it is within the African continent. The second major development is the push for international student enrolment at home institutions, and this is encouraged among African universities through numerous agreements such as the establishment of the Pan African University as well as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Education and Training. Universities' desire to create and implement proactive plans to increase international student enrolment in an effort to build a global community of learners and global citizens has taken on a sense of urgency. And, finally, it is no surprise that international student enrolment is indeed a source of revenue that remains hotly debated as a rationale for recruitment. The results of increasing revenue by way of an enrolment strategy devoid of strategic and shared outcomes for student affairs, campus stakeholders and, ultimately, the international student would be an opportunity lost by the institution. The tragedy would have a multitude of consequences, for example, it would be a failing in what we know and continue to discover with respect to the deliberate and determined mindset of international students studying in countries other than their own.

New York University has committed to an increase in international student enrolment. In 2014, about 18% of our incoming undergraduate student body of 5 000 students is international. Students come to our campus from more than 100 countries. The rise in enrolment at the NYU campus presents challenges and opportunities. As caretakers of students' educational experience, institutions must address and embrace a greater level of expectation and engagement in order to positively affect student satisfaction. The options to engage in activities that affirm aspects of their cultural identity, introduce and broaden intercultural experiences, and provide resources to meet student needs will be a feature and responsibility of student affairs and services.

When considering what is at stake in how we engage and support our international students, I am reminded of Gordon Brown, former prime minister of the United Kingdom, speaking at NYU in his new role as Distinguished Global Leader in Residence in 2013. Brown said that governments must think more about instituting or cultivating a 'global dimension'. Brown was questioning the motivation and the outcome of governments in their commitment and level of engagement to solve the world's problems. He believes institutions of higher learning can and will play a huge role in how we help prepare our students to lead in a world that is fraught with challenges and unrealised potential that cross all of our borders (Brown, 2013). Where institutions enrol international students, inevitably such students will encounter student affairs programming, personnel and policies, and unbeknownst to the student, student affairs is charged with ensuring that the out-of-classroom experience, a student's development, campus life and related activities complement the rigor and expectations of the classroom, the parish, county, province, village, town or city, and nation where the school resides.

In preparation for an influx of international students at NYU New York[1], including serving as a study-away site for enrolled NYU Shanghai and NYU Abu Dhabi branch campus students, the university knew that being proactive in steps to position itself to discover the goals, motivation and challenges of new first-year students and transfer

undergraduate international students enrolling at NYU New York would guide our thinking, and approaches and manage the complexity of student transition and mobility. Finally, the university decided to place emphasis on being thoughtful and strive for innovation as well.

As an institution, to think more intentionally about how to build a campus community with strong cross-cultural student engagement and highly developed intercultural competence is essential. The hope is that such an environment would lead to a transformative experience. The rise in enrolment at the NYU campus presents a multitude of challenges and opportunities. NYU student affairs has been proactive in addressing this change. The institution was concerned with how well prepared it was in the Student Affairs section of the university to manage the change in the student body. Questions raised included how student affairs professionals would remain a step ahead and prepared to ensure a smooth and successful student transition to a new campus, climate, country and culture. What can we create, implement and learn that will help international students meet their goals for a total campus and community experience? What information and feedback are needed for thoughtful and well-informed practitioners? These and broader questions resulted in the establishment of the NYU Division of Student Affairs International Student Engagement Meeting Initiative.

Approach

Launched in 2012, the International Student Engagement Meeting Initiative includes conversations with approximately 800 international students. I met with undergraduate first-year students and transfer students individually. We designed this project to include 20-minute individual appointments with a senior student affairs professional who was not a staff member of the international student affairs office (i.e. the NYU Office of Global Services). Additionally, this approach, to entrust this assignment to a colleague outside the international student office, was in direct response to the growing chorus that the responsibility of the international student office should be a campus-wide endeavour that exists in all corners of the institution.

The questions I asked during the student meetings were designed in partnership and collaboration with the NYU Division of Student Affairs, Office of Research and Assessment. Students responded to questions that addressed why NYU and New York City became their destination of choice, and the current state of their transition with regard to classes, friendships, activities and challenges. In addition, students were encouraged to ask questions and make recommendations to address current needs in support of their academic and student life goals. The students asked whether the meeting was mandatory. We were upfront and direct about the fact that the initiative was not compulsory. I explained that the meetings were an opportunity to share what is important to them at the present stage of their transition and goals. The meetings were intended as a moment to share information and make referrals, if needed, to a variety of resources, units, and personnel in support of their transition and needs. The final question asked of students is introduced at the beginning of each meeting as part of the introduction. I would ask if there is anything that they recommend that the university address to assist in their transition? In order to use time with students efficiently,

responses were recorded by using an iPad that captured responses for summary and analysis by the NYU Division of Student Affairs, Office of Research and Assessment. Finally, I informed the students that their participation would result in the creation of a year-end report and recommendations submitted to the Senior Vice-President for Student Affairs.

The project: The International Student Engagement Meeting Initiative

At first glance, the NYU International Student Engagement Meeting Initiative may appear to be a complex strategic method. In reality, it was an earnest desire to learn what was on the minds of our new international students. Our curiosity took hold, for it allows us to envision how what we learn can help us indeed manage the complexity that institutions hope will lead to a vibrant campus. We were concerned about the transition, adjustment and acculturation of our students. With the latest information in support of existing programmes, short- and long-term goals, and creating new initiatives, change, which is inevitable, could be managed. Further, we wanted our colleagues in Student Affairs to have the latest knowledge on what our international students were thinking and experiencing as a source of support specific to a school, department and/or unit. We wanted to think about this as a project that could inform what we already knew about first-year students' transition to college. From the outset, it was critical and essential to welcome our international students in a personal and thoughtful way, and with a focused intentionality, in order to better understand their goals, concerns and ideas about how we can make NYU a better place.

With several goals and objectives in mind, the Division of Student Affairs wanted to establish a welcoming experience that offered a more personal touch for students. In this way, we could discover personal goals and objectives the students had in mind for their time at NYU. The meeting could shed light on why they chose to come to NYU and New York City and position the university to respond quickly to any challenges they may have encountered. We could learn about challenges, career interests, academic pursuits, and their unique identity and global mobility experience.

The lessons I learned from the project are outlined in 15 key areas. These areas provide a type of roadmap for the future of international student outreach and transition to college. The lessons reveal what mattered in the heart and mind of the international student, identified how we in Student Affairs should direct resources, enhance programme development, review policy, manage expectations, establish collaboration and improve the intercultural competence of staff, students, faculty and administrators.

1. International student community building on campus

- Establish campus traditions intended for international student community-building that utilise country and international region to foster connecting.

The interest and recommendation of international students to meet other international students from their home country (and city/town) was a recurring theme in the student meetings. Students are clear that this suggestion is not an attempt to become isolated but serves more as a bridge to transitioning to the new campus and New York City.

Students view the interaction as an opportunity not only to meet other students, but also, in particular, to meet upperclassmen who could be a source for developing informal mentoring and gaining knowledge from their experience.

2. Cultivating friendships between international and domestic students

- Create co-curricular programming with outcomes that address friendship-building and networking. Place emphasis on the spaces that students currently cite as the best places to make friends (classes, residences and clubs).

International students are very interested in meeting and becoming friendly with domestic students. Friendships are critically important and serve as a gauge for international students as to how well they are transitioning and functioning in their new environments. Additionally, there is an awareness expressed by international students that domestic students are comfortable in the US yet overwhelmed by their own adjustment to college life. Meeting an international student offers a complexity for domestic students in that domestic students, display a lack of competence or comfort level on which to engage (even mispronouncing a student's name can alter first impressions). Further, we have unintentionally labelled international students as educational transients and not as a vibrant and diverse community of fellow scholars and potential friends and networks.

3. Intercultural competence and community building

- For consistency, clarity, and unity, investigate the establishment of terms and definitions for intercultural competence at your institution.

Social norms, customs, behaviours and daily-living skills present a range of difficulties in the ways students engage one another in residences, classrooms, co-curricular activities and campus environments. Acknowledging the diversity among residents is important, but cultivating a supportive and respected environment gets high marks from international students. There is the concern of offending a student (especially a domestic student) through a bias act or comment, thereby effectively derailing a student's ability to establish friendships. Additionally, defining terms such as social justice, human rights, community service, and diversity is where international students want to gain understanding. Finally, a best practice that emerged was the mention of Model United Nations. Students cited its success in bringing students from global backgrounds together, and those same students were planning on joining or have already joined, the Model United Nations Student Organisation at NYU.

4. Academic advisement services

- Self-review of school policy, information, and outreach about high school/post-high school credit acceptance and communication with an academic advisor.

Academic advisors are, in many ways, first responders by way of an introduction to the

norms of academic choice and the fulfilling of requirements. Be mindful, for themes may emerge that reveal the frustration with the process of acceptance of high school academic credit and/or post-high school credit for college. Students find themselves caught in the middle because a conflict arises from the policies of the students' schools in their home countries, a conflict which can last for months. In addition, most international students plan to study abroad. The result will place greater demands on academic advising to meet student expectations in providing a seamless and global academic experience.

5. Mentorship from upperclassmen

- Create mentoring options for students. Criteria for matching should place emphasis on transition, shared interests, adjustment, and home country/region/continent.

International students have expressed the desire to have a mentor to enable them to navigate and become acquainted with their new surroundings. It appears that the peak time when mentoring is needed most is during the first semester after arrival. Students have recommended that mentors be international upperclassmen or students trained in helping other students to transition to campus life.

6. Career development, student health and wellness

- The complexity of searching for employment, beginning especially with internships and remaining in compliance with US federal policies and the requirements of International Student Services Offices, is confounding for many students.

Collaboration between the international student office, career development, and the study-abroad office can present a united front to help students understand the processes involved in a consistent way. For international students, minimising the challenge of having to visit several offices, and attend various programmes and sessions, would be liberating. Collaboration may also offer units a way to maximise staff time and student participation. For further insights, I recommend the article published by my colleagues in the NASPA Leadership Exchange magazine entitled *International Influx: Student Services Go Global* (Spring 2015).

9. Dining services, options and schedule

- Dining services: Investigate keeping facilities open and/or extending the hours during holidays in the fall, spring and winter breaks.

With the increase in international students remaining on college campuses during the holidays, requests for extending hours and dates to cover these periods will be on the rise. Additionally, there will be an increase in demand for a 'taste of home' by way of menu items and a variety of healthy food choices. Finally, holiday home-stays (Thanksgiving, US), with

international students spending a portion of a holiday with domestic families will grow in demand, creating a shortage of families available.

10. International student transition consulting services

- Offer direct consultation to departments, units and committees at your university.

As a result of the international student meetings, information learned is shared with a variety of units, departments and initiatives charged with the internationalisation of the campus. For example, at NYU, there was: an Internationalizing Washington Square Committee; the Center for Multicultural Education & Programmes: ACT Institute (Administrators Cultural Training Institute) programme for staff intercultural competence training; the NYU Student Affairs Staff Development Committee, and, of course, the Office of Global Services (i.e. the international student services and scholars unit); and NYU schools that range in specialty from business to engineering and education.

12. Financial aid

- Address the growing interest in financial aid, grants and scholarships. Create resources and easy access to information and advisement.

Students in need of financial aid and other forms of monetary support will increasingly look to their university to provide the resources. The issue could become a source of frustration and be contradictory to the university's mission if international students are excluded from forms of aid, but are expected to be full-fledged members of your global student community. Clarity of services, awareness of shifting global economies, up-to-date information, new sources, and sensitivity are paramount when an international student is seeking financial aid.

13. The classroom, culture and environment

- Arrange tutorials, webinars and events that describe the classroom culture at your institution.

Students have commented that, if they knew more about how the US classroom functions, in advance of their first class, this might have decreased their anxiety and provided them with an advance look at what to expect and how to prepare. This service could prove to be an important tool in support of international student adjustment to the classroom culture and norms and create a foundation for making friends. For innovative ideas and resources, NAFSA: The Association for International Educators is an essential source of best practices.

14. Diversity in China

- Yes, there is diversity in China, India, Canada, and Peru…

The countries that send the most international students to New York University are China, India, South Korea and Canada. When the topic of diversity in China was raised with a student from China, she raised her hands in agreement! There is a difference between citizens of Shenzhen and Beijing, Boston and New York. (Bostonians just raised their eyebrows.) Students living in cities and those from rural communities have a language, idioms, lingo and culture that differ in certain respects, and this is a reminder that all communities are diverse. Student affairs professionals must constantly be reminded that the 'international student' moniker tells only part of a student's story. As third culture children, students with identities that reflect a diversity of places of birth, cultural identity, language and where they call home tells us that where a person calls home is subjective. As student affairs professionals, how best can we consider and discover the complexity of our international students and what can that knowledge provide us with in building a respectful and engaged student community, taking full advantage of what such a community has to offer? For further reading, I recommend the *2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics*.

15. Communications, language and cultural acquisition

- These are acute and impact the classroom, student affairs, employment interests, friendships, and academic and research pursuits.

Students who learn English as a second language are in dire need of understanding the culture, historical context, idioms and slang. Students are eager to learn, practise and understand the language, cultural norms and etiquette in a slower-paced environment where they can receive direct support, ask questions and receive explanations. Plagiarism as a result of cultural differences in the gathering, dissemination and exchange of information may indicate that increased collaboration across units is needed. As writing centres are thriving, cultural-centered activities that promote opportunities to understand a culture are less of a responsibility of international student offices.

Conclusion

When you reflect on the journey, figuratively and literally, of international students, the moment their sights are fixed on your part of the world, your institution, is the moment that they have made a courageous choice to entrust their hopes to the vision and mission your college holds most dear. It is known to student affairs professionals that the day a student arrives on campus, being admitted and entering the hallowed halls of your institution, brings joy that we wish could be maintained throughout their academic career. In reality, this joy can wane at times, buffeted by a new-found independence as a young adult. They are in a new and often strange place that can be frightening and then exhilarating, or they can be so experienced that you have ambassadors among you who can serve as catalysts for the community goals that you seek to achieve.

What I discovered and learned doing this work is that the International Student Engagement Meeting Initiative offered the student a moment to reflect, check in, ask

questions about the big picture, and share wonderful feedback that will no doubt make NYU a better place for international students, domestic students, faculty, staff and administrator alike.

Endnote

1.   NYU New York is an improved designation, as the university now has in its portfolio a study-away location in Washington DC, as well as several overseas campuses.

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The South African National Resource Centre (SANRC) for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition Conference 2015

Annsilla Nyar*

Over the past two decades, the South African higher education community has introduced many diverse and innovative programmes to improve the first-year experience (FYE) for students, such as orientation, peer learning, supplemental instruction, academic support services, and different curriculum initiatives. However, such initiatives have tended to be institutionally based and without the benefit of coordination and integration. South Africa is yet to conduct a system-wide conversation about its collective goals for first-year students at South Africa's universities and the most effective methods to attain such goals. As such, South Africa's higher education system remains continually plagued by the matter of student success and throughput. Increasing pressure is brought to bear upon universities to recruit, retain and, ultimately, graduate those students who become lost to the system in the first year of study.

It is to this end that the South African National Resource Centre (SANRC) for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, in collaboration with the National Resource Center (NRC) for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition based at the University of South Carolina (USC) in the United States, has been set up for the dual purpose of integrating FYE initiatives and providing national resources aimed at improving student transitions and success. The SANRC was established through a collaborative Teaching Development Grant (TDG) from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

A key event for the SANRC is the annual convening of the SANRC First-Year Experience (FYE) and Students in Transition Conference. The conference is broadly intended to serve as an opportunity for university leaders, educators, and academic and professional staff who work with first-year students to exchange both scholarly and practical information about student success and transitions.

The inaugural SANRC FYE and Students in Transition Conference took place from 19 to 21 May 2015 in Johannesburg. The conference was preceded by a workshop comprising a number of intensive, thematically-based 'research incubator' sessions. These

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pre-conference sessions were led and facilitated by leading scholars and experts in the FYE field. Dr Nelia Frade and Dr Jenni Underhill from the University of Johannesburg (UJ) addressed the role of senior students in enhancing and transforming the first-year experience for students. Dr Merridy Wilson-Strydom from the University of the Free State (UFS) led a session on the pre-university experience and the extent to which it informs the first year of study for students. A critical perspective on the concept of student success was jointly shared by Dr Danny Fontaine from the University of Cape Town (UCT) and Ms Soraya Motsabi from UJ. A dedicated research incubator writing session was led by Prof. Brenda Leibowitz from UJ and Prof. Chris Winberg and Prof. James Garraway from the Cape Peninsula University Technikon (CPUT). Dr Jennifer Winstead from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) led a session on the learning outcomes of out-of-the-classroom involvement, including those found within FYE programmes at NMMU. All of the sessions garnered huge interest and support from delegates and clearly indicated the 'appetite' which exists among FYE scholars and practitioners for sustained critical engagement with one another.

The conference began in earnest with keynote presentations by the NRC's Dr Jennifer Keup, Director of the NRC (20 May 2015) and Dr Dallin George-Young, Assistant Director for Research Grants and Assessments at the NRC (21 May 2015). The work of the NRC was highlighted in both presentations. Dr Keup spoke of the conceptual foundations of the FYE 'movement', at both a national and international level, and the key role played by the NRC in grounding and consolidating this FYE constituency through its core commitments to thought leadership, scholarly research, the nexus between research and practice, and collaborations and networking. Dr Keup placed particular emphasis on the mutuality aspect of the partnership between the SANRC and the NRC, highlighting shared aspirations and strategies as well as the intention to commit to a dual transfer of learning between the two institutions.

The keynote presentation by Dr Dallin George-Young focused on key findings from the SANRC 2014 South African Survey of Peer Leaders. This survey is based on the International Survey of Peer Leaders conducted by the NRC. It was conducted for the SANRC by Dr Nelia Frade, who is based at the Academic Development Centre (ADC) at UJ. Dr Young's contention that the student peer group is the single-most important source of influence on the growth and development of students allowed many delegates to reflect critically on their respective institutional experiences with peer leaders. The SANRC is currently working on writing up the completed findings of the 2014 South African Survey of Peer Leaders.

In addition to conference presentations, an FYE Summit was held on the last day of the conference. A selected group of higher education stakeholders were invited to the FYE Summit in order to help the SANRC clarify and define its research agenda based on the multiple, varied needs of the South African FYE constituency. Several interesting strands of thinking about the FYE experience emerged from the summit.

One strand of thinking focused on the basket of multiple issues, often socio-economic in nature, which affect student retention in the first year, including financial problems,

stressful home environments, accommodation, food insecurity, etc. The discussion also focused on issues at the institutional level, such as curriculum design, admission procedures, and career guidance. The summit recognised that such issues related to retention are highly complex and often beyond institutional control. As such, it was agreed that they require a systemic and multipronged approach.

Another strand of thinking related to the matter of funding. The question was posed: To what extent does the allocation of funding influence student retention? A tentative proposal emerged that national funding sources for FYE programmes should be explored in a collaborative context. The SANRC was requested to consider exploring possibilities with the DHET and the NSFAS (National Student Financial Aid Scheme) for a differentiated model of funding which takes into account the different needs of students. The SANRC was asked if it might possibly support the NSFAS in thinking critically about the existing NSFAS funding model.

A final aspect of the thinking at the FYE Summit was that of key interventions at an institutional level which would make a tangible difference to the FYE experience for students. It was argued that the first year can be seen as the time to prepare students academically and to develop the behaviours required for persistence beyond the first year into undergraduate and postgraduate transitions. In terms of the matter of persistence in higher education, certain 'change-behaviour models' could be deployed in order to change student behaviours and attitudes in respect of the first year.

The SANRC FYE and Students in Transition Conference provided a rich source of insights and information around which the SANRC is now designing its research agenda. A forthcoming edition of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* (*JSAA*) will also feature a range of articles and papers from the conference. More information about the SANRC FYE Conference 2015, including the SANRC 2014 South African Survey of Peer Leaders, can be obtained from the SANRC website: http://sanrc.co.za.

Global Summit on Student Affairs: Africa joins the global conversations

Lisa Bardill Moscaritolo* and Birgit Schreiber**

Close to a hundred selected international delegates from student affairs divisions at universities and colleges met in Rome at the 2nd Global Summit for Student Affairs on employability, soft skills and leadership development. The first summit organised by the International Association for Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) and the US Association for Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education (NASPA) was held in Washington DC in 2012. The 2nd Global Summit in Rome in 2014 was hosted by the European University College Association (EUCA, www.euca.eu) in collaboration with both IASAS and NASPA.

Focus and organisation of summit

The issue of soft skills and civic engagement for employability was the main topic of 'Rethinking Education', the initiative launched by the European Commission in 2012 to encourage student affairs and higher education to take measures to ensure that young people's development is articulated according to their civil lives and labour markets.

The four main topics of the summit were the following:

1. Integrating soft skills in the university educational path: The role of student affairs and services;
2. Soft skills development for better employability: Student affairs and services as a facilitator for the dialogue with the labour market;
3. Fostering an entrepreneurship mind-set and creative thinking on university campuses; and
4. Enhancing civic participation, a global approach, and social inclusion.

Selected senior student services and affairs staff, rectors, vice-rectors, university presidents and senior university executives from 37 counties across the developed and developing world on six continents came together to share ideas and best practices on how student

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services and student affairs professionals can create and develop programmes on soft skills/ leadership development to assist in closing the employability gap.

The aim of the Global Summit was to initiate high-profile debate on how student affairs and services can promote access, inclusion and integration, support and development, and employability. Special focus was on issues that arise from massification of higher education and the role of education in social justice, such as employability, entrepreneurial thinking, civic engagement and student mobility within a context of disciplinary and theoretical development of the student affairs divisions within higher education.

The event was opened by the president of the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS), Prof. Dr Rob Shea, who was followed by the president of the US Association of Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education (NASPA), Prof. Dr Kevin Kruger. Jigar Patel, Principal of McKinsey & Co, UK, then presented the EU report *Education to Employment, Getting Europe's Youth Into Work*.

The McKinsey report is one of the most important cross-national studies on the relationship of higher education with employment: it is based on rigorous research that involved more than 8 000 participants (students, student affairs, university executives and the corporate sector) in eight countries (France, Spain, Germany, Greece, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Italy). The report highlights the articulation gap between higher education and the labour market and makes suggestions for closing the gap. The research is premised on the notion of the university within the instrumentalist framework of higher education, and of higher education as a key role player in the construction of the national and regional economic and social fabric.

'The years at university', says Prof. Gian Luca Giovannucci, president of the EUCA, 'are fundamental for academic engagement, but are also the time when young people can best develop all the complementary competencies needed to meet the challenges of living an active civil life and making contributions to the national and global economy'. (Personal communication, 23 October 2014)

Silvia Costa, chair of the Culture Committee of the European Parliament, reminded delegates that student affairs divisions at universities are poised to play a key role in shifting the university's gaze towards developing responsible and responsive global citizens who take on the mantle agency to ensure sustainable conditions for a globalised world.

Dr Saloshni Pillay (South Africa, University of KwaZulu-Natal), Dr Birgit Schreiber (South Africa, University of the Western Cape) and Gugulethu Xaba (South Africa, Tshwane University of Technology) were invited to join the Global Summit. Dr Pillay is the president of the Southern African Federation of Student Affairs and Services (SAFSAS) and Dr Schreiber is the Africa chair of IASAS and NEC member of the South African Association for Senior Student Affairs Practitioners (SAASSAP). Gugulethu Xaba is the president of NASDEV, the South African Association of Student Development Practitioners.

Dr Lisa Bardill Moscaritolo, General Secretary of the IASAS, was on the Planning Committee for the summit. She indicates that the summit was a unique opportunity for universities from across the globe and from across dissimilar educational spaces to share lessons and to build solidarity with core issues facing students and institutions.

The Global Summit participants were asked to reflect on the framework of the summit and how the overall summit impacted their work, university or institution and/or region in the world. Participants noted that they had gained a better understanding of the employability gap as noted in the McKinsey report, and appreciated the opportunity to engage with others on how student services and student affairs staff can lessen on this gap. Staff shared how they are creating opportunities for students to develop their soft/leadership skills. Some noted that this is happening through networking with companies, offering internships, working with community organisations in order to engage students in their surrounding communities, and encouraging student mobility/study abroad.

There were many examples of how staff are introducing events and education in halls of residence to develop the skills necessary for students to be strong leaders. Lastly, other peer programmes and co-curricular and curricular programs on soft/leadership skills assist in students gaining the skills they need to be competitive in today's marketplace and be successful in their personal life. Some institutions are developing leadership programmes targeting women.

Participants commented on how meeting others from different parts of the world helped them to see commonalities in their work and brought a needed level of understanding, as many in the field outsideof the US feel isolated. Additionally, those who attended appreciated the opportunity to collaborate and borrow ideas. Lastly, apart from the main concepts of the summit, participants appreciated networking and finding a shared understanding around student issues such as equity and lack of academic preparation.

Birgit Schreiber notes that the summit allowed her to share and to learn from others regarding the similar issues facing her and those who work in South Africa. Africa's role in global conversations has unique potential to influence global events and to assist in shaping global conversations. The lessons learnt within the African context, which is clearly not a homogenous higher education environment, are invaluable to other regions.

In South Africa, the concerns relate to socio-economic challenges, and other regions in the world are dealing with the same kind of issues. This can, at times, make our student affairs work different from that in Westernised countries. For the developing world, the gap between the skills needed for college graduates to do well in the world of work (a topic discussed in the McKinsey report) is much larger than in the Western world, as can be seen in some of the high unemployment statistics. However, through our work in student affairs, we do need to equip and educate students in the soft skills they need to be successful, and hearing from other developing countries and how they are doing this work was helpful.

The written proceedings of the 2014 summit are available on the website and will provide more specific feedback from participants from certain regions of the world, as well as background on the summit and the topics covered. These proceedings are shared with Global Summit participants and with IASAS members. You are encouraged to join IASAS at iasas.global (membership is free) to learn more.

2016 Global Summit

Applications to host the 2016 summit will be shared, in mid–2015, with professional associations around the world and with key leaders. This information will also be shared with IASAS members and everyone is encouraged to apply to host this prestigious event.

The Planning Committee feels strongly that dialogue with as many student affairs and student services professionals around the world as possible will assist us in serving our students better and in understanding our work in different regions of the world.

Book review

Cloete, N., Maassen, P., & Bailey, T. (Eds.). (2015). *Knowledge Production and Contradictory Functions in African Higher Education.* Cape Town: African Minds.

Birgit Schreiber*

Manuel Castells (2001), who is regarded as one of the most influential social scientists commenting on the role of higher education in contemporary global consciousness, describes the roles of universities as the generation of new knowledge, the conceptualisation and diffusion of ideology and forms of knowing, the recreation of elites, and the development of skilled labour. The tension between the utilitarian role, on the one hand, and the generation of new forms of knowledge and the contradictions inherent in this, on the other, is the focus of this widely influential new book. The African university, despite calls for it to act as an instrument of development in the post-colony and engine of an African renaissance, has struggled to assert itself within the paced global knowledge economy which requires the university to 'become a central actor of scientific and technological change' and to become the centre of 'cultural renewal and cultural innovation … linked to the new forms of living' (Castells in Cloete et al., 2015, p. 2).

Knowledge Production and Contradictory Functions in African Higher Education builds on these premises and explores the trends and debates around the intended and emerging identity of African flagship universities in eight countries by relying on comparative indicators and sets of data. Empirical data from universities and governments on research levels and outputs, numbers of students and staff, and contextual factors, are used to present a textured analysis of the eight flagship universities, which are the University of Botswana, University of Cape Town (South Africa), University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Eduardo Mondlane University (Mozambique), University of Ghana, University of Mauritius, Makerere University (Uganda) and University of Nairobi (Kenya).

These eight universities formed the sites of the extensive and comprehensive HERANA (Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa) project, initiated by the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) in 2007 with funding support from the Carnegie Corporation, the Ford Foundation and other benefactors, and which has focused on exploring the multitude of factors which influence universities' ability to contribute to knowledge creation and development more broadly, and, indeed,

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on the importance of the role and function of the research-intensive institution itself. The book cogently argues that only a select few institutions are required to drive the African knowledge and research agenda, but that this function needs to be performed in order to remain part of the global debates in the global knowledge economies and to ensure the innovative renewal of knowledge which creates possibilities of change.

The book is divided into four sections, and each section engages in depth with issues of performance, research incentives, governance and policy context, and the 'universities' third mission of engagement' understood in systemic terms. Overall, African flagship universities are struggling with playing 'catch-up' (Scott in Cloete et al., 2015, cover) with any of the comparative regions, including those of South America and India, and many factors are discussed which may assist regions and countries in focusing their energy on developing conditions which encourage a differentiated higher education sector in which a research-intensive university can flourish (Altbach in Cloete et al., 2015, p. 20).

The desirability of a flagship and world-class university is not left uncontested. Cloete et al (2015, p. 22) cite Altbach (2013) and assert that flagship universities play unique roles within the academic system. Even though only a small percentage of universities in the developed regions fulfil the criteria for research-intensive institutions (China 3%, US 5%), at least a select few are required to serve the range of functions espoused by Castells, which is to renew and innovate in order to carve new ways of knowing so as not only to reproduce existing systems and ways of being. Even secondary knowledge production sectors rely on PhD productions of the universities and, based on the data presented in *Knowledge Production and Contradictory Functions in African Higher Education,* African universities need to develop their capacity and need to engage policy contexts, so as to become more enabling to contribute significantly to the region's knowledge generation and systemic renewal (Cloete et al, 2015).

In discussing the extensive and detailed evidence from the eight flagship universities in Southern, East and West Africa, the editors Nico Cloete, Peter Maassen and Tracey Bailey have attracted the most impressive collection of contemporary scholars, authors and researchers. Each chapter is authored by a team of widely published African scholars and scholars of Africa. Manuel Castells describes the book as 'mandatory reading for academics, policy-makers and concerned citizens, in Africa and elsewhere' (Cloete et al, 2015, cover) which sums up the extraordinary value and significant contribution these authors make to the evolution of our thinking about higher education in Africa and beyond.

The chapters are embedded into the framework discussed in Chapter 1. The following chapters describe performance, alliance and international research cooperation by means of in-depth and accessible comparison and discussion of empirical data. Chapter 5 argues cogently that political will beyond the higher education sector with a lens across the African region is required to vitalise the notion of 'brain circulation' and PhD mobility, which has the potential to significantly stimulate research and knowledge creation. The following chapters then discuss research incentives exploring contextual, policy and individual factors. The chapters also discuss governance and funding councils and their intended and implicit roles in terms of steering and coordination in the eight countries.

Chapters 10 and 11 present research on the university's 'third mission' around issues of dialectic interconnectedness of the knowledge creation project with society and the world 'out there'. Useful indicators are presented which assist in navigating the 'ideological quagmire' of the engagement terrain (Van Schalkwyk in Cloete et al., 2015, p. 205). As part of the university's 'responsiveness' to local development needs (DoE, 1997), and in line with notions of the co-creation of the academic agenda, facilitated in problem-focused pedagogies, the importance and complexity of the 'contextual factors that are impacting on knowledge production' (Bailey, 2010, p. 18) are deliberated.

Chapter 10 asserts that 'citizenship education is an essential part of contextually relevant education in democracies' (Luescher-Mamashela et al. in Cloete, 2015, p. 231). This chapter links higher education's role in citizenship development via the notion of student engagement to the academic project and the development of graduate attributes. In the course thereof, it shows that 'the multiple roles that African flagship universities are meant to play in development ... coincide empirically in terms of student engagement' (p. 257). This expansion of the HERANA project to include key aspects of the student experience makes this book particularly relevant to student affairs professionals.

The chapters present extensive data in extensive and accessible tables, graphs and figures on each university's knowledge production, based on mined data, with a focus on many variables. This is the area which, on the one hand, is the strength of the book, having clearly required extensive empirical research. However, on the other, while not supporting the reductionist notion of the quantification of higher education into parts such as 'outputs' and 'rankings', the book bases its important findings and conclusions on these indicators. There is much critique which laments the 'quantification and evaluation of academic work; and increasing dependence on these quantitative measures to define and assess academic productivity and efficiency' (Bode & Dale, 2015). The 'uncritical dependence on quantification not only masks but also exacerbates problems in higher education' (Dale, 2012, p.5), which might include 'development challenges in the university's own backyard' (Duncan in Chetty & Merrett, 2014, p. iii). The book's heavy reliance on data is its strength, in that it is a sober voice among the romantic and melancholic narratives about African higher education. At the same time, this heavy reliance on data shifts the indicators of success into a reductionist framework and – because this book is likely to be highly influential and referenced widely – it might make the quantification discourse normative.

Having said this, I thoroughly enjoyed the neatness of the empirical research on which the book rests, even while knowing that African higher education, much like higher education across the globe, is anything but neat, but full of messy contradictions and paradoxes.

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Author biographies

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Dr Jeremiah Adetoro is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Educational Administration, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Nigeria. He specialises in educational planning, policy analysis and statistics. He has over 15 years of experience of successful teaching and research in the university and associated institutions, teaching especially research and quantitative analysis, educational administration, planning and policy courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Dr Adetoro's research focuses on institutional planning and policy analysis. He has aslo published widely in these areas in local and international journals.

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Ms Claudia Frittelli is Program Officer, Higher Education & Research in Africa, International Program, at the Carnegie Corporation of New York. She develops the programme's higher education research, policy and governance initiatives in order to sustain higher education reform through external regulatory bodies and non-profit advocacy organisations. As part of the corporation's investment in strengthening African universities and developing the next generation of academics as a means to national development in Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa, and Ghana, her work has included supporting university strategic priorities in research and graduate studies, staff development, information and communications technology (ICT) and e-learning, gender mainstreaming and community engagement. Prior to joining the foundation, she held management positions in the global telecommunications and private Internet sector in Paris and New York and served as an advisor to international not-for-profit agencies. Ms Frittelli holds an MBA from the

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Mr James Otieno Jowi teaches comparative and international education in the School of Education, Moi University, Kenya. He is also currently a PhD candidate at the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) at the University of Twente, the Netherlands, and has been a student leader at the University of Oslo, Norway, and at Moi University, Kenya. Mr Jowi is the founding executive director and secretary general of the African Network for Internationalisation of Education (ANIE). He has published on the internationalisation of higher education in Africa, as well as on matters of student leadership, management and governance in higher education. He is also a co-editor of *Student Politics in Africa: Representation and Activism* (African Minds, 2015).

Mr Lucky Kgosithebe

Mr Lucky Kgosithebe graduated with a Bachelors in Animal Science from Botswana College of Agriculture in 2008. Upon graduation, he worked for the Tertiary Education Council (TEC) of Botswana as an intern and, later, as a junior researcher by virtue of his former role as student leader that saw him represent tertiary students on the TEC board. In 2010, he was admitted to the Higher Education Masters in Africa programme, that is a NOMA Masters programme in Higher Education Studies offered jointly by the universities of Oslo (Norway) and Western Cape (South Africa). Despite embarking on a totally new field, at least in terms of his undergraduate studies, Mr Kgosithebe comfortably completed his graduate studies, an experience which he speaks fondly of. He has developed an interest in research on student affairs, such as student activism, representation and leadership with a particular interest in the contribution of higher education to democracy. Currently, he works for the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) of Botswana.

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Dr Manja Klemenčič is a Fellow and Lecturer in Sociology of Higher Education in the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University. She researches, teaches, advises and consults in the area of international and comparative higher education, with a particular interest in the implications of contemporary higher education reforms for students. She has also researched questions relating to institutional research, internationalisation, the academic profession and student representation. Her publications include guest-editing two special issues on student governance in Western Europe in the *European Journal of Higher Education* 2012 and on a global perspective in *Studies in Higher Education* (2014). She has also co-edited books on *Student Engagement in Europe: Society, Higher Education and Student Governance* and *Student Politics in Africa: Representation and Activism*. Moreover, she is the editor of the *European Journal of Higher Education*, associate editor of *the International Encyclopaedia of Higher Education Systems and Institutions*, co-editor of the book series *Understanding Student Experience in Higher Education* with Bloomsbury, and serves on

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Dr Thierry M. Luescher

Dr Thierry M. Luescher (Dr Thierry Luescher-Mamashela) is Assistant Director of Institutional Research at the University of the Free State, South Africa. Prior to this, he was Senior Lecturer in Higher Education Studies and Political Studies at the University of the Western Cape and a Senior Researcher in the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET), Cape Town. He obtained his PhD in Political Studies from the University of Cape Town. He researches, teaches and consults on matters of international and comparative higher education, with a particular interest in the nexus of higher education with politics in Africa, higher education policy and governance, student politics, the student experience, and higher education development. He has published in local and international scholarly journals, including *Studies in Higher Education*, *Tertiary Education and Management* and *Perspectives in Education*, as well as authored chapters in books. He is journal manager and an editor of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* and the editor of the book *Student Politics in Africa: Representation and Activism* (with M. Klemenčič and J. Otieno Jowi). His publication list can be viewed at: https://ufs.academia.edu/ThierryLuescher.

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Dr Blessing Makunike is Director of Quality Assurance at the University of Zimbabwe, Harare. Prior to this appointment, he was Senior Assistant Registrar for Academic Affairs at the University of Zimbabwe. He obtained his PhD in Africa Studies from the University of the Free State in South Africa. His research focuses on land reform, indigenous knowledge systems, and poverty alleviation. He is an emerging researcher on issues concerning management theory and practice in higher education.

Mr Allen M. McFarlane

Mr Allen M. McFarlane is Assistant Vice-President for Outreach and Engagement at New York University. With more than 30 years of engagement in higher education, he presently conducts outreach and assessment in respect of incoming New York University undergraduate international first-year students and transfer students. The goal of this strategic initiative is to gather information and knowledge that will foster innovation and intentionality in support of international student transition. He advises the Senior Vice-President for Student Affairs, university colleagues and faculty in support of international student transition and campus community-building for all students. Additionally, Allen serves as co-facilitator for English Conversational Groups for International Graduate Students. He has amassed a notable list of accomplishments and has championed innovation for award-winning student affairs units in the areas of student diversity and student development. He conceived, co-developed with Dr Candace Collins and co-taught a course entitled Black Diversity Contributions to America. The course examines how differences in the choice of career, religion, politics and dissent in the black community shape individual and societal identity. He holds three degrees from New York University and is a veteran of the United States Air Force.

Mr Taabo Mugume

Mr Taabo Mugume is a Researcher in the Monitoring and Institutional Research Unit of the Directorate for Institutional Research and Academic Planning, University of the Free State, South Africa. He previously worked as Research Assistant on the HERANA Student Experience and Democracy Project at Makerere University, Uganda, and in the Political Studies Department at the University of the Western Cape and the Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation, Cape Town. He has a Masters in Political Science from the University of the Western Cape. He has co-authored publications for *Studies in Higher Education* and the books *Knowledge Production & Contradictory Functions in African Higher Education* (edited by N. Cloete, P. Maassen & T. Bailey, 2015) and *Student Politics in Africa: Representation and Activism* (edited by T.M. Luescher, M. Klemenčič and J.Otieno Jowi, forthcoming).

Ms Annsilla Nyar

Ms Annsilla Nyar is the newly appointed Director of the South African National Resource Centre (SANRC) for the First Year Experience (FYE) and Students in Transition. Prior to joining the SANRC she held the post of Manager: Research and Policy Analysis at Higher Education South Africa (HESA). She is a researcher and academic with expertise in both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. She holds a Masters in Political Science from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and is currently completing a doctorate through the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits).

Dr Adesoji Oni

Dr Adesoji Oni, a Fulbright Scholar, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Nigeria. He specialises in the sociology of education. His research focus includes: social problems in education, social change in education, social deviances/social disorganisations in education, with a particular focus on students' secret cults in Nigeria. He has published widely in these areas in the form of chapters in books and articles in scholarly journals. He also edits a number of national and international scholarly journals. He is the associate editor of the National Association of Sociologists of Education's *Nigerian Journal of Sociology of Education*, and managing editor of the *Journal of Educational Review* and the *Journal of Sociology and Education in Africa,* among others.

Dr Birgit Schreiber

Dr Birgit Schreiber is Director of the Centre for Student Support Services at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa. She holds a PhD from the same university. She has worked within student affairs, with a focus on student development and support, for the past 18 years at various higher education institutions. She has published in national and international academic journals on student support and development, has presented research papers and keynote addresses at national and international conferences, and has given lectures at the University of California, Berkley, the University of Leuven in the Netherlands, and the University of Oslo (Norway). She was a Visiting Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley, where she was involved in their student affairs department. Birgit Schreiber has also been involved with various quality–assurance panels reviewing student affairs at South African universities and has taken part in the national review of the South African Student Engagement tool (SASSE). She has been a member of the national executive of various national professional organisations, including the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP). She currently serves on the Executive of the Southern African Federation of Student Affairs and Services (SAFSAS) and is the Africa Regional Coordinator of the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS). She has published in several local and international journals and books on student affairs, including a chapter in the book *Perspectives on Student Affairs in South Africa* (African Minds, 2014). She is a founding member of the Editorial Executive of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*.

Thank you to our reviewers

The *JSAA* Editorial Executive wishes to thank the peer reviewers of Volume 2 of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* for their time and expertise in helping to select and improve the submissions received for this Journal.

Kate Baier	Llewellyn MacMaster
Umesh Bawa	Martin Mandew
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Call for papers

Vol 4 2016
Open call

Submissions are invited from student affairs practitioners and researchers in student affairs and higher education studies. The *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* is seeking contributions for its Volume 4 issues (2016). The Editorial Executive of the *JSAA* welcomes theoretical, practice-relevant, and professional-reflective contributions from across the scholarly field and professional domains of student affairs and services that are relevant to the African higher education context. Details of the scope and focus and editorial policies of the Journal can be found under 'JSAA About' on the Journal's website www.jsaa.ac.za. Particularly welcome are:

- Case studies of innovative practices and interventions in student affairs in the context of African higher education (e.g. in career development, citizenship development, community engagement and volunteering, counselling, leadership development, residence management, student sport, teaching and learning, student engagement, student governance and politics, as well as all aspects of student life);
- Conceptual discussions of student affairs and development, and key enablers and inhibitors of student development in Africa;
- High-level reflective practitioner accounts of an empirical, normative or conceptual nature. By this, we mean to both critical-reflective accounts of practices as well as personal reflections which can provide the building blocks for future case studies and grounded theory approaches;
- Explorations of the nexus of student affairs theory, policy and practice in the African context and beyond; and
- Syntheses and explorations of authoritative literature, theories, and professional trends related to student affairs in Africa.

The Journal also publishes relevant book reviews and professional and conference reports and notices from scholarly associations and institutions.

Please email the Journal Manager, Dr Thierry Luescher-Mamashela, with any queries or suggestions for contributions (Email: jsaa_editor@outlook.com). To send us a manuscript

for consideration, please register as an author and consult the submission guidelines on the Journal's website (www.jsaa.ac.za). Manuscripts can be submitted directly to the Journal Manager via email. The *JSAA* is a peer-reviewed publication and adheres to the ASSAf Guidelines for best practice in scholarly publishing. The Journal is committed to assisting emerging scholars and professionals in developing promising manuscripts to the point of publication.

The **closing date** for receiving papers to be considered for Volume 4 issues is 31 January 2016 (issue 1).

Please note: There are no processing fees or page fees. No costs accrue to authors of articles accepted for publication.

International Association of
Student Affairs and Services

The International Association of Student Affairs and Services was officially founded on March 1, 2010. The purposes of IASAS are to:

- Strengthen and diversity cooperation among individuals and organizations in the student affairs and services field worldwide.
- Promote the student affairs and services profession at the international level through advocacy with governmental and higher education organizations, networking and sharing information among practitioners and student groups, and encouraging high quality preparation and professional development programs.
- Provide a platform for the improvement of multi and intercultural communication and understanding.
- Promote the welfare of students in higher education worldwide through collaboration with international governmental and non-governmental organisations and addressing such issues as access, retention, quality, student rights, and the cost of higher education.

IASAS utilizes technology for conducting most of its activities. This includes such applications as the IASAS website, email, internet and video conferencing, and social networks, etc. Occasional face-to-face meetings are held in various locations around the world and in conjunction with existing meetings of international, national, and regional groups whenever possible.

IASAS Africa Regional Coordinator:
Dr Birgit Schreiber (South Africa), Email: africaregion@iasasonline.org
IASAS website: http://www.iasasonline.org

Latest publications by African Minds

The goal of the book *Perspectives on Student Affairs in South Africa* is to generate interest in student affairs in South Africa. The chapters contained herein are based on best practice, local experience and well-researched international and local theories. The chapters deal with matters pertaining to international and national trends in student affairs: academic development, access and retention, counselling, and material support for students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. They are linked to national and international developments, as described in the first two chapters.

This publication will assist both young and experienced practitioners as they grow into their task of developing the students entrusted to them. All contributors are South Africans with a great deal of experience in student affairs, and all are committed to the advancement of student affairs in South Africa. The editors are former heads of student affairs portfolios at two leading South African universities.

Perspectives on Student Affairs in South Africa is edited by M. Speckman and M. Mandew and was published in May 2014 by African Minds. It is available in print from the publisher's website www.africanminds.org.za at R150. The full PDF can be downloaded free of charge from the same site.

Knowledge Production and Contradictory Functions in African Higher Education
Edited by Nico Cloete, Peter Maassen & Tracy Bailey, 2015.

"This volume brings together excellent scholarship and innovative policy discussion to demonstrate the essential role of higher education in the development of Africa and of the world at large. Based on deep knowledge of the university system in several African countries, this book will reshape the debate on development in the global information economy for years to come. It should be mandatory reading for academics, policy-makers and concerned citizens, in Africa and elsewhere." – Manuel Castells, Professor Emeritus, University of California at Berkeley.

It is available in print from the publisher's website www.africanminds.org.za at R200. The full PDF can be downloaded free of charge from the same site.

Submissions

Please register as an author and read the Author Guidelines at www.jsaa.ac.za. Submissions must be made by email to the Journal Manager at jsaa_editor@outlook.com.

The *JSAA* typically has themed issues. However, submissions that fall within the general scope and focus of the Journal can be made at any time and may be published irrespective of the overall theme of the Journal. Particularly encouraged are open-theme manuscripts that address the following:

- Case studies of innovative practices in student affairs in the context of African higher education (e.g. in teaching and learning, residence management, student governance, student counselling).
- High-level reflective practitioner accounts.
- Explorations of the nexus of student affairs theory, policy and practice in the African context and beyond.
- Conceptual discussions of student development, and key enablers and inhibitors of student development in Africa.
- Explorations of authoritative literature, theory and professional trends related to student affairs in Africa.

Please note that there are different requirements for different types of manuscripts:

- **Research articles:** Contributors are encouraged to submit research-based manuscripts. Research articles must include an extensive consideration of recent literature and relevant theory. Research-based articles must be original and research-based and must make a significant conceptual (or empirical or normative) contribution relevant to the scope and focus of the *JSAA*. The length must be approximately 5 000 words, including all references, notes, tables and figures. Manuscripts should be accompanied by an abstract of approximately 150–300 words.
- **Reflective practitioner accounts:** High-quality reports on professional campus practice are screened and reviewed according to the same criteria as for research articles, albeit with a different emphasis. Unlike a research article, they do not need to include an extensive consideration of recent literature and theory, but they must nonetheless comply with standard academic convention and scholarly practice. Reflective practitioner articles must be original, must make a significant empirical contribution, and must significantly enhance our understanding of student affairs practice within their respective scope and focus. Typical length should be 2 500–5 000 words. Manuscripts should be accompanied by an abstract of approximately 150–300 words.
- **Book reviews** should be between 800 and 1 000 words in length. Competent reviews of key student affairs books are published at the discretion of the Editorial Executive.
- **Comments and critique**, of no more than 2 500 words, are also welcome.
- **Proposal for the Journal's Dialogue/Interview section and Calls and Notices** should be emailed directly to the Journal Manager. The publication of calls and notices (for conferences, vacancies, etc.) may incur a nominal fee.

Authors are required to check their submission's compliance with all of the following items, and submissions that do not adhere to these guidelines may be returned to authors.

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7. If submitting a proposal for the Dialogue section, a Call/Notice, or a Comment/Critique, this should be emailed directly to the Journal Manager.
8. The final text of the article has been professionally edited and proofread prior to submission.
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10. Permission to reproduce any copyrighted material has been obtained and can be produced should this be requested by the Editorial Team.

Section review policy and process

The *JSAA* publishes research articles (peer-reviewed); high-quality reflective practitioner accounts (peer-reviewed); dialogues/interviews (non-reviewed); and book reviews (non-reviewed). The Journal is committed to assisting emerging scholars and professionals in developing promising manuscripts to the point of publication.

Editorial commentary
☐ Open submissions   ☑ Indexed   ☐ Peer reviewed

Research articles and professional practitioner accounts
☑ Open submissions   ☑ Indexed   ☑ Peer reviewed

Campus dialogue/interview section
☑ Open submissions   ☑ Indexed   ☐ Peer reviewed

Book reviews
☑ Open submissions   ☑ Indexed   ☐ Peer reviewed

The editorial and peer-review policy adheres to the *ASSAf National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review for South African Scholarly Journals* (ASSAf Council, 2008). All submitted manuscripts undergo an initial careful examination by the Editorial Executive Committee to ensure that authors' submissions fall within the mission, scope and focus of the *JSAA* and conform to scholarly best practice. Qualifying scholarly research-based articles and high-quality, relevant reflective practitioner accounts are blind-reviewed by at least two peer reviewers, who would typically be members of the International Editorial Advisory Board of the *JSAA*. Peer reviewers have proven scholarly and/or professional expertise in the subject matter of a manuscript. Reviewer reports are assessed by a member of the Editorial Executive and form the basis of any decision by the Editorial Executive on how to proceed with a manuscript. The suitability of a manuscript is evaluated in terms of originality, significance, scholarship, scope and interest, and accessibility.

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