The Status of Student Involvement in University Governance in Kenya

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The Status of Student Involvement in University Governance in Kenya

The Case of Public and Private Universities

Munyae M. Mulinge

Josephine N. Arasa

Violet Wawire

Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
DAKAR

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Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop, Angle Canal IV
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List of Abbreviations

AAU	Africa Association of Universities
AIU	African International University
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AKU	Aga Khan University
ANU	Africa Nazarene University
AUA	Adventist University of Africa
BWI	Bretton Woods Institutions
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
CORD	Coalition for Reform and Democracy
CU	Chuka University
CUE	Commission of University Education
CUEA	Catholic University of Eastern Africa
DBA	Doctor of Business Administration
DKUT	Dedan Kimathi University of Technology
EMOD	Executive Master of Science in Organizational Development
EU	Egerton University
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GEMBA	Global Executive Master of Business Administration
GLUK	Great Lakes University of Kisumu
GOK	Government of Kenya
HELB	Higher Education Loans Board
IAU	International Association of Universities
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILU	International Leadership University
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IUCEA	Inter-University Council for East Africa
JKUAT	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology
JOOUST	Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology
KABU	Kabarak University
KACE	Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education

KARU	Karatina University
KCAU	KCA University
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KeMU	Kenya Methodist University
KHEU	Kenya Highlands Evangelical University
KIs	Key Informants
KNEC	Kenya National Examination Council
KSU	Kisii University
KU	Kenyatta University
KUC	Kenyatta University College
KUSA	Kenyatta University Students Association
KWUST	Keriri Women's University of Science and Technology
KYMs	Kanda ya Mikono
LIA	Letter of Interim Authority
LU	Laikipia University
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MKU	Mount Kenya University
MMARAU	Maasai Mara University
MMU	Multi Media University of Kenya
MMUST	Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology
MU	Moi University
MUA	Management University of Africa
MUST	Meru University of Science and Technology
NACOSTI	National Council for Science Technology and Innovations
NWU	North-West University
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAC	Pan Africa Christian University
PIU	Pioneer International University
PU	Pwani University
PUEA	Presbyterian University of East Africa
RU	Riara University
SAC	Student Affairs Council
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Policies
SCU	Scott Christian University
SEKU	South Eastern Kenya University
SONU	Student Union of Nairobi
SPU	St Paul University
SU	Strathmore University

TAWS	Tanganyika African Welfare Society
TEAU	The East Africa University
TNA	The National Alliance
TUK	Technical University of Kenya
TUM	Technical University of Mombasa
URP	United Republican Party
UEAB	University of Eastern Africa, Baraton
UFS	University of the Free State
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UoE	University of Eldoret
UoK	University of Kabianga
UoN	University of Nairobi
UP	University of Pretoria
URP	United Republican Party
USA	United States of America
USIU-A	United States International University, Africa
WASC	Western Association of Schools and Colleges
WERK	Women Educational Researchers of Kenya
USIU	United States International University

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Authors

Munyae M. Mulinge is a Professor of Sociology, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, United States International University (USIU) in Nairobi, Kenya. He holds a BA (First Class Honours) in Sociology and an MA in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Nairobi, Kenya, plus a PhD in Sociology from the University of Iowa, USA. Prof. Mulinge has taught Sociology in various colleges and universities in the United States, Botswana, and Kenya. He has conducted research in varied areas, including Higher Education (focusing on governance and the quality of postgraduate training), job satisfaction and organizational attachment, corruption and economic mismanagement, ethnicity and HIV/AIDS, leading to the authorship and publication of many research works with internationally acclaimed journals and publishing houses.

Josephine Nyaboke Arasa (PhD): Dr Josephine Nyaboke Arasa is currently an Assistant Professor of Psychology, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, United States International University, Nairobi, Kenya. She holds a Bachelor of Education (Science), a Master of Education in Educational Psychology and a PhD in Educational Psychology from Kenyatta University, Kenya, as well as a Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Neuro-Psychology from the Niilomaki Institute in Finland. Dr Arasa is closely involved with issues of quality in higher education in Kenya and the East African region. She has carried out training in quality assurance in a number of African countries and has written on the quality of postgraduate research in Africa. She has also researched the motivation and achievement of children in Kenyan slums. Her research activities have culminated in the authorship and publication of a wide spectrum of research works with internationally acclaimed journals.

Violet Wawire holds a PhD from Kenyatta University and has over 18 years' experience of teaching Sociology of Education, Higher Education and Health Education at the university. She is also a member and lead researcher of the Women Educational Researchers of Kenya (WERK). Her areas of research interest include educational study relating to social inequality issues including gender, disability and poverty. Dr. Wawire has initiated, developed and managed various competitively won grant research projects in the above interest areas sponsored

by international organizations including Ford Foundation, FAWE, SSRC, CODESRIA and OSSREA. As a consultant, she has conducted educational research evaluations for organizations including Hewlett Foundation, Uwezo, Cornell University, WERK and Loreto Sisters. Dr Wawire has presented papers at both local and international conferences and is an accomplished author of several journal papers.

Preface

The book is based on the study on the status of student involvement in University Governance in Kenya using experiences of one public and one private university. It addresses the critical area of governance of higher education in Kenya, given the role universities play in socio-economic and political development for most African countries. Governance of universities has been a challenging issue on the African continent with most universities experiencing poor governance characterized by poor quality of university education and staff and student strikes. The book is conceptualized around the theoretical framework of shared governance to interrogate how students, who are key members of the university community, have been mainstreamed in the democratization of higher education processes that have taken place in Kenya in the last decade. It is premised on the reality that collaborative governance is essential if universities are to attain their visions, missions and goals. The level and nature of student involvement in university governance is interrogated through the examination of key student self-governance processes including the inclusiveness of policies and organizational structures as well as the role of and support provided to, student governance bodies to ensure participation in university decision making. In addition, the objectives of the study center on whether students value and are satisfied with, their involvement in the decision making processes.

The book is organized in six chapters. The first three chapters set the stage for the study by providing a background on the history and state of university governance in Kenya. They highlight the issues that relate to student involvement in decision making processes at the university. Chapter one introduces the book by spelling out the problem statement, objectives, and justification and research issues of the study. In chapter two, the growth of university education in Kenya is discussed providing a platform for analysis of governance in higher education for proceeding chapters. Here, factors responsible for university growth and challenges faced that have implications on the quality of university education in Kenya are highlighted. Chapter three which is on the governance of higher education is mainly a literature and theoretical conceptualization of the study. The concepts of leadership and good governance are not only debated but their intersection is also established and contextualized to the governance of university education. Specifically, the chapter uses Kenya to provide an understanding of the structures and practices of university governance from a student involvement

perspective. Chapters four, five and six delve into how the study was done, its findings and the conclusions that can be drawn from it. In chapter four, details of the study methodology and protocols are underscored. In chapter five, after providing a background on the socio-demographic characteristics of the study respondents, the study findings are discussed along the study objectives. Chapter six concludes the book by discussing the study findings and drawing some implications of the findings in terms of conclusions and recommendations on how to ensure a democratic culture in the governance of Kenyan universities in general and student involvement in particular.

Foreword

For many years in Kenya, universities have been conceived as battlefields where spasmodic violent protests by students, over a variety of grievances, break out frequently. Quite often, lecturers and professors have also taken their own turn to go on the streets to demonstrate against poor remuneration. This perception has overshadowed the mission of university education presented in this book as the production of graduates who respond to the needs of the society, with regards to upgrade of skills of the existing workforce, development of community and business leaders of tomorrow, as well as the empowerment of beneficiaries ability to start new businesses to employ Kenyans and contribute to the country's economic well-being. As institutions of higher learning where the country's top human resource is trained, universities have attracted attention for the wrong reasons. It is against this background that this book, well researched and written by Prof. Mulinge, Dr Arasa, and Dr Wawire, reputable academics, prolific researchers with big publication portfolios and long careers in the service of universities in Kenya, the East African region and abroad, sets to interrogate the governance in universities often blamed for these conflagrations of protest. For the large numbers of academics, politicians, policy makers, and members of the public, this is the book that answers the big question that is often asked: "what is ailing our universities?"

To answer the questions that frequently come to mind about the difficulties that bedevil universities, this book sets a background by exploring the role of university education as the single most important driver of socio-economic development in societies and the sole agent of social mobility and national cohesion, particularly in Kenya and Sub-Saharan Africa. This is the justification for the huge budgetary allocations governments, non-governmental organizations, and aid agencies keep giving to ministries and agencies manning education. The 21st century has however seen the emergence of other influences that have impacted the delivery of quality education. Chief among them have been what the authors call the "massification" of education to accommodate growing populations and human resource needs, the need to ensure efficiency in the delivery of education, and the democratization of nations. These factors have triggered close scrutiny of leadership and governance in higher learning institutions including universities. Kenya, for example, has experienced turbulence in higher education institutions with frequent strikes which have been accompanied by violence and destruction

of property. An intellectual *exposé* of the nature that this book provides is a welcome effort in directing the spotlight on leadership and governance issues in universities that would other wise be lost in the maze of occurrences blamed on a host of societal shortcomings.

Situating their study of governance in university education in Kenya, Prof. Mulinge, Dr Arasa, and Dr Wawire demonstrate the exclusive value of university education in the design and productive use of new technologies for a nation's innovative capacity that outstrips any other social institution in the development of the civil society. They confirm the role of university education in social, cultural, political and economic development of nations through knowledge creation and dissemination. They achieve this by exploring, as part of the background, the evolution of university education from beginnings when the institutions had no focus on the development role through the 'Accra Declaration' to the 1990s and 2000s, when the focus fell squarely on the revitalization of university education to forge a tighter link with development. But for university education to accomplish this link and the noble objectives the country has set for it, it has to be effective. The authors are persuaded that governance issues, in as far as they relate to he shared governance principle of good governance in the running of the universities, is critical in enabling the institutions to achieve the mission of university education. Their investigation reveals that the country's university education is afflicted by violation of the core principles of good governance, particularly shared governance; students, easily recognizable as major stakeholders in university education, are largely excluded from significant structures of governance thereby limiting their influence and participation. Even though their representation is provided via student government organs, such organs do not retain the trust and confidence of the student body. The authors urge a paradigm shift in the involvement of students in the governance of universities in ways that encourage and entrench democratic principles.

This book provides a deeply and exhaustively researched *exposé* of governance issues in university education and shows why the relationship between students and university leadership has been characterized by turmoil. It is incisive as it is exhaustive. It also offers pragmatic solutions for the enhancement of participation by all stake holders of this vital sector of Kenya's development engine.

Tom Onditi Luoch, PhD
Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences
United States International University – Africa
Nairobi, Kenya