Knowledge Production and Contradictory Functions in African Higher Education

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AFRICAN MINDS

CHAPTER 11

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND CITIZENSHIP COMPETENCES IN AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

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The roles of higher education in a democratising society

Taking Castells' notion of development as a starting point, it is possible to appreciate the critical roles that universities play in the development of citizenship and democratic leadership in Africa. According to Castells (2014: 3), development is 'the self-defined process … by which humans, as a collective, enhance their wellbeing by creating the structural conditions for the expanded reproduction of the process of development itself.' As such, development involves a normative dimension that includes desirable values such as 'human rights, animal rights, equality, gender, empowerment and gender equality, solidarity, and the ability to live in a multicultural world …, peace and democracy … which includes and presupposes all other business of development' (ibid.: 6).

From a holistic perspective, the pursuit of social and economic development is necessarily linked to human development. Moreover, both are intrinsically linked to the capacity of the state which, as the key collective agency of development, is charged with creating the required structural conditions for development by means of different state initiatives and policies. The level of Africa's socio-economic development today must thus be understood as a function of the historical and current weakness of its states to act as development agency for the collective (ibid.: 16). Thus, *political* underdevelopment remains a key structural constraint undermining all other efforts at development. While there are, of course, variations between countries as to the extent to which African states are weak, corrupt, inefficient or even predatory (ibid.), what is important is to realise the interconnection between different elements of development and the primacy of politics. As Ghana's first president, Dr Kwame Nkrumah, famously argued: 'Seek ye first the political kingdom and all things shall be added unto you' (quoted in Mazrui 2001: 128).

Over the course of history, universities have played various roles in their contribution to political, social and economic development. While not all universities fulfil all functions, and individual universities combine and recombine them differently over their history, the university system of a country somehow has to combine all of them. The functions have historically been additive; flagship institutions in particular are expected to play multiple roles, which all involve elements of political socialisation. The first role is that of ideological apparatuses and producers of values and social legitimation. The second, which has been the domain of flagship and elite universities especially, is the selection and socialisation of elites and the formation of networks for their social cohesion. Third, universities play the crucial role of high-level skills training, which includes the highly-skilled labour force necessary to run the complex institutions of modern society, such as institutions of modern democracy, other state institutions and civil society organisations. And finally, there is universities' role in producing new knowledge, whereby the socio-economic and political conditions are of major importance to create the structural conditions for development (Castells 2009). In order to be able to fulfil these roles, universities have to be connected simultaneously to the information economy and to the socio-cultural challenges the society is undergoing (see Chapter 1).

In political development, democratisation and the consolidation and sustainability of democracy, education has a special role with respect to political socialisation. In this, universities have been central in the process of shaping civic values, constructing a new basis of belonging and citizenship, educating citizen leaders (Pascarella & Terenzini 2005), as well as 'making possible equal opportunities for people', even in the socio-political realm (Castells 2009). The notion of 'elite' socialisation has a different meaning in a democratising society in that from a democratic perspective – however utopian the democratic ideal – it is inclusive: any citizen is potentially a citizen leader and member of the political 'elite'. The imperfection of political reality in the existing democracies of our time is not to distract from this fundamentally egalitarian political ideal.

With respect to these functions, citizenship education is an essential part of contextually relevant education in democracies. It is premised on the complementarity of the notions that all individuals are entitled to human rights and all citizens are entitled to civil and political rights equally. In the words of UNESCO (2014: 1):

> *All forms of citizenship education inculcate (or aim at inculcating) respect for others and recognition of the equality of all human beings; and at combating all forms of discrimination (racist, gender-based, religious, etc.) by fostering a spirit of tolerance and peace among human beings. Thus when we speak of the purposes to be ascribed to either citizenship education (producing citizens with moral qualities) or human rights education (comprising a knowledge of the social and political rights of all human beings, and their recognition) we inevitably end up with the complementarity between citizenship and human rights.*

The purpose of citizenship education is therefore to further democracy by educating people about their rights and the principles and institutions that govern them; in exercising critical judgement; and in their sense of self and responsibility towards others and their community (UNESCO 2014). This is meant to apply at all levels of education. Yet, citizenship education is more widely studied as a role of general education than specifically in relation to higher education. Meanwhile, being placed at the apex of the education system, higher education has immense potential to contribute to the good of society by contributing to 'the production and consolidation of values – ethical values, personal values – and the formation of flexible personalities' (Castells 2009: 4).

Citizenship competences

The post-apartheid policy-based conception of higher education in South Africa illustrates the roles that education for citizenship can be ascribed to in transforming and democratising a society. The South African statutory advisory body to the Minister of Higher Education and Training averred in 2004 that (CHE 2004: 14):

> *Higher education is charged with developing a citizenry capable of participating effectively in democratic processes, and thus enhancing the project of democracy; with producing intellectuals who can engage with the most intractable problems of society and so develop more generally the ability of citizens to participate politically, economically and socially; and with producing high-level skilled graduates and new bases of knowledge to drive economic and social development, and to enhance the overall levels of intellectual and cultural development.*

Elaborating on these roles of higher education, Badat (2009: 8) emphasises the university's role in democracy and democratic citizenship arguing that:

> *… our societies require graduates who are not just capable professionals, but also sensitive intellectuals and critical citizens. Our academic programmes together with our institutional culture and practices must therefore ensure that we keep ethical questions in sharp focus, and that we advance a democratic ethos and a culture of human rights conducive to critical discourse, cultural tolerance, and a common commitment to a humane, just, non-racist and non-sexist social order.*

Accordingly, Badat (ibid.: 7–8) argues that the 'cultivation of highly educated people' requires that teaching and learning programmes and qualifications take into account the background and social and educational experiences of students, along with 'the kinds of knowledge, competences, skills and attitudes that our graduates require to function in a rapidly changing society, continent and world', which includes the ability 'to think theoretically and

imaginatively; gather and analyse information with rigour; critique and construct alternatives and communicate effectively orally and in writing.'

Contextually relevant citizenship and civic leadership competences, such as those mentioned by Badat, are an important social outcome of higher education which, by extension, contributes to the deepening of democracy in Africa (Mattes & Luescher-Mamashela 2012). In keeping with Hoskins and Deakin Crick (2010: 122), the notion of competences generally refers to 'a complex combination of knowledge, skills, understanding, values, attitudes and desire.' Drawing on a range of definitions, citizenship competences include knowledge, skills, values and behavioural dimensions (AACU 2012: 4). Drawing further on the frameworks offered by the AACU (2012), Hoskins and Deakin Crick (2010) and others, key among these competences are:

· *Knowledge:* familiarity with issues of politics and public affairs; knowledge of democracy and other political systems; exposure to and meaningful interaction with 'others';
· *Skills:* critical thinking and reasoning skills; leadership, argumentation and presentation skills; ability to engage with international perspectives; diversity and social skills;
· *Values:* respect for freedom; open-mindedness and respect for others; responsibility towards others; appreciation of citizenship; and
· *Collective action:* integration of knowledge, skills and values; participation in political processes; collaboration with others in problem solving.

The notion of citizenship competences does not imply that a person who lacks certain competences should be excluded from citizenship; rather, higher levels of competence are pursued to enhance citizens' political efficacy.[1]

Previous research into the nexus between higher education and democracy showed that university-educated political leaders and citizens in Africa play a key role as 'institutionalisers' in the complex institutions of state and civil society that characterise modern democracy (Mattes & Mozaffar 2011). The ability to navigate such institutions and contribute to their consolidation therefore seems to be among the outcomes of the student experience of higher education. Previous studies by the Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa (HERANA) further showed high levels of criticalness among students in African flagship universities, with respect to their evaluation of the quality of democracy in their respective countries, and to very high levels of political engagement of students. While the studies generated important propositions towards further research, the data could not pinpoint specific aspects of the student experience of higher education that would explain these competences. Moreover, the student surveys conducted in the four African flagship universities

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1   Political efficacy refers to individual citizens' sense of political self-competence and regime responsiveness (Finkel 1985). A classic distinction is between 'internal' political efficacy, which is defined as 'the sense of being capable of acting effectively in the political realm', and 'external' political efficacy, which refers to 'the belief that the authorities or regime is responsive to attempted influence' (ibid.: 892–893).

(i.e. the Universities of Botswana, Cape Town, Dar es Salaam and Nairobi) supported both an interpretation of the African university as 'political hothouse' as well as its potential of serving as effective 'training ground' for citizenship competences (Luescher-Mamashela et al. 2011).[2]

The student experience as student engagement

The theoretical framework guiding the analysis of the student experience for the HERANA Phase 2 student surveys draws on recent work centred on the construct of 'student engagement' (Kuh 2009a, 2009b). Student engagement has become one of the latest buzzwords of higher education research (Klemenčič 2013). In common language usage, the meanings of 'engagement' involve notions of commitment, reciprocity and agency. They range from a use that is largely synonymous with participation in an activity, to others that are more in keeping with the original French meaning of '*engagement*' as pledge, thus denoting a (personal) commitment and corresponding action to accomplish a (shared) outcome (such as being engaged to be married). While there are a variety of definitions of student engagement in the literature of higher education and institutional research, the more prevalent ones have become quite focused and technical. George Kuh, who is one of the most prolific authors on the topic, defines student engagement as follows (Kuh 2009b: 683): 'Student engagement represents the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college and what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities.'

Student engagement therefore involves at least two agents in the pursuit of desired graduate outcomes: the individual student (as well as students' peers, friends and family) and the university (particularly academic and student affairs staff). Kuh's definition of student engagement is underpinned by a body of knowledge that has its roots in Tyler's work on time on task, Pace's work on quality of effort, Astin's theory of student involvement, Tinto's theory on social and academic integration, as well as more recent insights into student engagement gained by Kuh and others (see Kuh 2009a: 6). In the last three decades, studies building on this body of knowledge have shown robust relationships and correlations between 'students' investment of time, effort and interest in a range of educationally-orientated activities, and favourable outcomes such as increased performance, persistence and satisfaction' (Trowler & Trowler 2010: 7). Studies of student engagement show that apart from students' backgrounds, academic preparation and motivation, various components of student engagement offer the best predictors of student satisfaction and success in attaining desired graduate outcomes (Strydom & Mentz 2010: 3).[3]

The international knowledge base on student engagement and its positive impacts on student retention and success has grown tremendously in the past five years, spurred by the availability of massive amounts of data from regular student surveys. Best known are surveys

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2   See also Kgosithebe (2014) and Mattes and Luescher-Mamashela (2012).

3   See also Kuh (2009b) and Pascarella and Terenzini (2005).

based on the widely used National Survey of Student Engagement developed in the United States and adaptions thereof in different contexts, such as the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement, the South African Survey of Student Engagement, and local versions in China, Turkey and other national and institutional settings (Strydom & Mentz 2010). Derivatives and independently developed surveys based on the same body of knowledge are done for students in different years of study (e.g. first-year entry surveys and senior-student surveys); students studying for different qualification levels (e.g. undergraduates and postgraduates); and students in different types of institutions (e.g. two-year colleges and research universities) (Kuh 2009a). The Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) survey, from which this study draws a number of constructs, is a student engagement survey developed by the Centre for Studies in Higher Education (CSHE) of the University of California, Berkeley, to study the undergraduate learning experience of students in research universities.

The first and most important purpose of surveys on student engagement is to 'provide high-quality, actionable data that institutions can use to improve the undergraduate experience' (ibid.: 9). Student engagement surveys allow institutional researchers to open the black box of student learning as student engagement indicators act as process indicators of the student experience (ibid.). The analyses of most studies that use the student engagement construct focus on aspects of teaching and learning (Kuh 2009a). Much less work is done on student engagement and the social outcomes of higher education. Among the few and notable exceptions is the work by Nida Denson on diversity-related student engagement, such as her study of the impact of student engagement with diversity on the development of graduate attributes (Denson & Zhang 2010).

The starting point for the student engagement surveys conducted in this HERANA Phase 2 project has been earlier work in HERANA Phase 1 into the nexus between higher education and democracy in Africa (see, for example, Luescher-Mamashela et al. 2011; Mattes & Luescher-Mamashela 2012; Mattes & Mozaffar 2011; Mattes & Mughogho 2010). This earlier work has been incorporated into the SERU survey tool produced by the University of California, Berkeley, to include a wider range of engagement indicators in the present project. HERANA studies on higher education's contribution to democracy have sought to identify aspects of student engagement that contribute to the development of citizenship competences as among the outcomes of higher education.

About the study

Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this chapter is to explore which aspects of student engagement effectively develop high-level citizenship competences among undergraduate students in African universities. It therefore aims to identify specific ways that effectively make the African

university a *training ground for democracy*; that is, to investigate how the student experience and student engagement in academic, social and political activities on campus (taking into account the reality that many African universities are hothouses of student activism) can be harnessed for citizenship education and the education of democratic leaders, in a way that will effectively contribute to the development of their societies. In particular, the chapter investigates the following questions:

- Do students who report higher levels of student engagement (in terms of academic, social and political engagement as well as engagement with diversity on campus) show higher levels of citizenship competences (defined in terms of support for democracy and good citizenship, critical thinking, leadership and presentation skills, and diversity and social skills)?
- What is the role of institutional culture? Are students who perceive a more open and engaged institutional culture more socially and politically engaged, and do they report higher levels of citizenship and diversity competences?

Conceptual framework

The HERANA Citizenship Module provides a framework for investigating the relationship between student engagement and citizenship competences in the form of a conceptual map based on an input–environment–output model of the student experience impact on graduate outcomes (compare Figure 11.1).

In keeping with the definition of student engagement, the point of departure for the development of the model is the proposition that aspects of academic, social and political engagement on campus, including the campus environment, affect the development of citizenship competences. The model hypothesises that apart from student demographic, family and academic background variables, various components of student engagement serve as predictors of students' attitudes towards democracy and good citizenship, and enhanced levels of civic skills, diversity and social skills. Related survey questions measuring student engagement and citizenship competences can be plugged into an existing student engagement survey or be used as a stand-alone mini-survey. The questionnaire draws on the SERU survey developed at the University of California, Berkeley, and incorporates additional indicators on students' political attitudes and behaviours initially developed for the HERANA Phase 1 student surveys as well as a few new questions.

The basic purpose of the HERANA Citizenship Module's conceptual map is to invite questions and hypotheses as to the relationship between its various components.

Figure 11.1 Schematic concept map of the HERANA Citizenship Module

Background	Student engagement	Competences
• Gender • Age • First language • Family social class background • Family educational background • Year of study • Poverty on campus (going without food) • Student goals and aspiration	• Supportive campus environment • Institutional climate • Freedom of expression on campus • Respect for difference/equality on campus • Participation in civic skills training • Leadership and governance skills • Technical and committee skills • Political campaigning skills • Diversity and boundary-crossing skills • Academic engagement • Academic challenge • Time on task • Community engagement, internships and volunteering • Social and political engagement • Interest in public affairs • Frequency of discussing politics • Frequency of media use • Political activism on campus • Leadership in student governance • Active participation and leadership in political student organisations • Engagement with diversity • Interacting with diverse others • Participating in advocacy groups	• Support for democracy • Understanding democracy • Preference for democracy • Rejection of authoritarianism • Citizenship skills • Critical thinking skills • Leadership skills • Presentation skills • Diversity competences and social skills • Appreciation of social diversity • Appreciation of ethnic/global diversity • Understanding international perspectives • International language skills • Social skills • Social responsibility • Self-awareness • Importance of 'good' citizenship • Understanding the constitution and the bill of rights • Understanding the structure of government, political processes • Participating in democratic processes • Critical reasoning and problem solving • Social and communication skills • Social responsibility, compassion, commitment to common good • Citizen identity/patriotism

Survey methodology and sample

Insofar as the HERANA Phase 2 student surveys were considered pilot surveys for the development and refinement of the Citizenship Module, the selection of case institutions was pragmatic. All the HERANA partner institutions[4] were invited to participate in the surveys; however, in the final round of selection, only the two institutions that were most committed were included in the surveys. The University of Cape Town (UCT) in South Africa

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4   The universities of Botswana, Cape Town, Dar es Salaam, Eduardo Mondlane, Ghana, Mauritius, Makerere and Nairobi.

was selected because a SERU-Africa pilot survey had been conducted there in 2013, and the University had been part of the HERANA Phase 1 student surveys into higher education and democracy. Makerere University in Kampala (MAK) in Uganda was included following presentations at the HERANA workshop of November 2012, where HERANA members of the University expressed great interest in participating in the project. During May and June 2012, the SERU questionnaire, including the HERANA Citizenship Module, was developed jointly between the UCT's Department of Student Development, the CSHE at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET). The draft questionnaire was presented to, and discussed and tested, in a series of meetings with student groups and data users.

In South Africa, the survey was piloted and the questionnaire, information sheet and consent form were assessed and approved by the UCT Centre for Higher Education Development Research Ethics Committee. During the periods October–November 2012 and February–April 2013, the survey was opened to all UCT undergraduate students, who were asked via email and in a sustained campaign to complete the SERU online survey to provide feedback on their experiences at the institution. In a series of meetings between CHET and the Director of Quality Assurance, the UCT questionnaire, which was in the process of being administered at UCT, was adapted, shortened and indigenised to suit the Ugandan and MAK context. This process was concluded with meetings at MAK in November 2013 during which the draft MAK questionnaire was piloted with student groups, including representatives of the Student Guild. In addition, the Dean of Students at MAK was consulted and eventually the questionnaire was revised, finalised and ready for implementation. As was the case at UCT, the survey was designed as an online survey and thus transferred to the Survey Monkey platform. Data collection started at MAK in November 2013 and concluded in January 2014. It was accompanied by a highly visible campaign similar to that at UCT.

In keeping with the SERU design, the surveys took a census approach by inviting all undergraduate students on campus to participate. The aim of a census approach is to gain a very large sample that will allow for analyses into various subgroups of students and subunits of the student experience. It can also be argued, however, that it is a somewhat convenient approach to sampling because the resultant sample might not be representative of the overall student population. Hence, the emerging sample was closely monitored during the data collection process, and the ongoing campaign for student participation was directed in such a way as to ensure that not only a large but also a representative sample would ultimately emerge. As such, the UCT survey was extended into 2013 to allow for a greater response rate, and at MAK a drive involving the college student representatives was instituted in January 2013 so as to encourage the participation of students from all colleges. Nonetheless, the online surveying methodology of the study yielded very different samples at the two pilot universities.

In the case of UCT, of the total of 16 168 enrolled undergraduate students (2012 data), 2 502 respondents completed the survey in full, or almost in full, representing a response rate of over 15%. The realised sample of UCT respondents turned out to be largely representative in terms

of gender, citizenship, race, field of study and year of study, with some overrepresentation of about six percentage points of African students; science, engineering and technology students; and first-year students. About 98% of the respondents were bachelor and bachelor-honours students, with the remainder enrolled in certificate and diploma programmes.

In the case of MAK, a sample of 941 was obtained from the total undergraduate population of 34 635 students (2013/2014 numbers), which represents a response rate of just under 3%. When considering the relatively small size of the sample it must be kept in mind that just over half of the undergraduate students at MAK are regular daytime students, 35% are late afternoon/evening students and 9% external students, who were seemingly more difficult to reach. Despite all efforts, the MAK sample turned out rather skewed in terms of broad field of study with an overrepresentation of science, engineering and technology students (and particularly students in the computer sciences), and in terms of gender. The former is undoubtedly an artefact of MAK students' access to computing facilities and internet bandwidth on and off campus. Moreover, this was only the second online survey ever conducted with MAK students, and the first such survey was confined to a very small and targeted sample and administered in computing facilities to sampled students. Given the different sample sizes and representativeness of samples of the two pilot cases, the data for each pilot case has been analysed separately. Table 11.1 presents selected demographic profile indicators of the respective student bodies and survey respondents.

In addition to the demographic data presented in Table 11.1, the survey also includes background indicators for economic and educational disadvantage. Looking at the data from UCT, it shows that a number of the students come from economically and/or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Just over two in five students (42%) are second-language speakers of English whilst three in ten (30%) are first-generation higher education students. Just over one in five students (22%) indicated that they grew up in a poor/low-income working class family, while only 4% said that they had gone often or very often without food for longer than a day during the current academic semester. In terms of university goals, an overwhelming majority of students in the UCT sample – just over nine in ten (92%) – said that their most important university goal was obtaining the skills they needed for their future career. A majority of just over three in five (62%) UCT undergraduate students aspired to obtain a masters or a doctoral degree qualification.

At MAK, 76% of the sample (just over three in four students) were second-language speakers of English and 24% (almost one in four students) were first-generation higher education students. Almost half (46%) indicated that they grew up in a poor/low-income working class family, and the shocking figure of just over one in five (22%) said that they had gone often or very often without food for longer than a day during the current academic semester. Thus, not only was there a notable proportion of students who came from academically and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, but a significant proportion of students at MAK continued to experience economic deprivation while studying. In terms of university goals, just like at UCT, an overwhelming majority of MAK students – just over nine in ten (93%)

– said that their most important university goal was obtaining the skills they needed for their future career. Moreover, close to nine in ten (87%) of the sample of students at MAK aspired to obtain a masters or a doctoral qualification. Conversely, only just over one in ten (12%) aspired to leave university with an undergraduate diploma or degree alone.

Table 11.1 Demographic background of students

Demographic profile indicators	University of Cape Town		Makerere University	
	Total undergraduate (2012)	Sample (2012/2013)	Total undergraduate (2013/2014)	Sample (2013/2014)
Gender Valid N	16 168	2 139	33 782	847
Male	47%	45%	56%	78%
Female	53%	55%	44%	22%
Age Valid N	n/a	2 502	n/a	820
Average Age	n/a	21.1 years	n/a	22.1 years
Nationality Valid N	16 168	2 502	n/a	n/a
Citizen/Permanent Resident	89%	85%	n/a	n/a
International	11%	15%	n/a	n/a
Population Group Valid N	16 168	2 500	n/a	n/a
African	32%	38%	n/a	n/a
Coloured	15%	11%	n/a	n/a
Chinese	1%	1%	n/a	n/a
Indian	8%	6%	n/a	n/a
White	33%	31%	n/a	n/a
No answer/Don't know	11%	13%	n/a	n/a
Broad Field of Study Valid N	16 168	2 502	33 769	936
Social sciences & humanities	32%	30%	48%	15%
Science, engineering & technology	40%	46%	36%	81%
Commerce	28%	24%	16%	4%
Year of Study Valid N	16 168	2 500	34 635	941
1st Year	34%	40%	32%	24%
2nd Year	30%	29%	31%	43%
3rd Year	25%	24%	31%	26%
4th Year	9%	6%	6%	6%
5th Year +	2%	1%	1%	1%

Insofar as the HERANA Phase 2 student surveys were conceived as pilot studies, there are a number of limitations. Firstly, all the survey data is based on students' self-reports. There are various differences in the way students self-assess their proficiencies and report levels of

engagement. On the one hand, generating data based on self-reports is a widely used practice and generally considered to be valid. In the specific case of SERU data, Douglass et al. (2012), in a study using the University of California's SERU and Grade Point Average data, showed that there is a strong face validity of self-reported proficiencies in the SERU survey. However, as will be shown below, students from MAK and UCT use different baselines in their self-assessment. Secondly, the online survey methodology yielded quite different samples for UCT and MAK, whereby the former was more representative of the undergraduate student body than the latter on key criteria and, therefore, captures a more accurate picture of the student population average. Despite bias in the realised samples, no statistical weights were applied to either dataset to 'correct' the samples statistically. Hence, for all these reasons, the analysis of the two datasets proceeds separately and in parallel, and comparisons between the two datasets, as well as the generalisability of inferences suggested in this study, must be treated with caution.

Analytic approach, variables and descriptive analysis

The main purpose of the analysis of the pilot surveys is to identify reliable indicators of the impact of student engagement on students' citizenship competences. Such indicators can be used to generate relevant institutional data in order to change institutional policy and practices, and thereby enhance graduate citizenship competences as a key social outcome of higher education in Africa. An in-depth analysis of the two sets of survey data using descriptive, factor and reliability analyses has highlighted ways in which independent and dependent variables can be indexed and clustered respectively, for the purpose of multivariate analysis.[5]

The descriptive analysis of most student engagement items in the questionnaire shows that the *independent variables* of interest can be clustered under the following rubrics:[6]

1. *Supportive campus environment,* in particular, variables measuring perceptions of a friendly, caring, tolerant and intellectual campus climate; freedom of expression on campus in terms of political opinions and religious beliefs; and respect for difference.

2. *Academic engagement*, which comprises variables measuring active learning, collaborative learning and staff-student interaction.

3. *Co-curricular engagement*, which measures the extent of student participation in civic, leadership and diversity skills training; political activism on campus; leadership in student governance; active participation and leadership in political student organisations; and active participation and leadership in advocacy and developmentally orientated student societies.

4. *Discursive engagement*, which measures the frequency of students having meaningful

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5   Details of the factor and reliability analyses are reported in the HERANA research report (Luescher-Mamashela forthcoming), including the exact eigenvalues, factor loadings and Cronbach alpha estimates of all composites.

6   Note that these do not correspond entirely to the clustering proposed at the outset in the HERANA Citizenship Module (compare Figure 10.1).

conversations with diverse others; their use of a diversity of news media; and interest in and discussion of public affairs.

The descriptive analysis of the UCT data shows that the campus climate was assessed by students as tolerant of diversity; somewhat friendly but also somewhat impersonal; and only somewhat safe. Diversity and intellectualism rated high on the positive side of students' assessment, while elitism and lack of affordability were prominent on the negative side. The main variation in the MAK dataset was that the Ugandan students considered the MAK climate somewhat less intellectual and academically easier, and only somewhat tolerant of diversity. The specific indicators for respect for diversity on campus and freedom of expression show that a sizeable majority of MAK students perceived the institutional climate as respecting of diversity on various measures.[7] Like at MAK, it is concerning that only about half of the UCT students felt that they could express their political beliefs freely on campus, while more than half felt that there was generally respect for diversity on campus.

Typically, the core focus of student engagement surveys is academic engagement. It is also well-established in scholarly literature that certain types of in-class and out-of-class academic engagement activities may contribute positively to citizenship competences (Winchester-Seeto et al. 2012). The analysis in this study shows significant variance in the levels of academic engagement on various indicators. Students at MAK, in particular, reported very high levels of active and collaborative learning and of applying new knowledge in their everyday lives, and of frequently helping fellow students with their academic work. At UCT, the practice of active and collaborative learning was generally lower.

Turning to co-curricular engagement, Mandew (2003: 69–70) argues that student affairs and services can contribute directly to making the African university a training ground for citizenship by offering training programmes for the development of specific competences. The surveys show a rather low uptake of such training programmes in general: only one in six students or fewer at UCT, and only between one and two in five MAK students, participated often or very often in such activities. The surveys also show that participation of student leaders in such training opportunities was much more frequent than among students in general.

Co-curricular, political and social engagement on campus also includes activist-type political participation, especially attending political meetings and protesting on campus, as well as active student participation and leadership in key organisational structures on campus, including students taking on official student representative roles. The HERANA Phase 1 surveys indicated very high levels of political participation and leadership among students, so much so that it was argued that 'university and student life present unmatched opportunities for exercising political activity and organisational leadership at a young age' (Luescher-Mamashela et al.

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7   This excludes questions that deal with sexual orientation. All questions related to sexual orientation had to be excised from the MAK questionnaire given the legally sanctioned homophobia and criminalisation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons in that country. MAK project members were concerned about data security and felt that collecting data on sexual orientation could lead to an exposure of LGBTI persons, with potentially dire legal consequences for them.

2011: 111). In the current survey, a quarter or more of UCT students reported participation in some form of student activism; a sizeable number participated in a diversity of organisational structures. Specifically, about two in five students participated actively in politically orientated organisations on campus, and about one in ten had performed formal student representative roles (e.g. as members of the Students' Representative Council). At MAK, the level of informal political participation was even higher than at UCT. In addition, leadership of MAK students in formal organisational contexts was also high: over three in five students reported active membership or leadership in a politically orientated student organisation and/or holding a formal position in student governance.

Finally, the indicators for discursive engagement with politics, public affairs and diversity show that there was considerable interest in this regard among students. At both UCT and MAK, about two in three students said that they were somewhat or very interested in public affairs and politics, and almost a third reported that they discussed politics frequently (although more so off than on campus). The internet and social media were the most frequently used news media among UCT students, followed by radio and television. In addition, about two in five UCT students read newspapers daily or almost daily. MAK students reported much more frequent use of all news media: between eight and nine in ten students used a diversity of news media daily or almost daily.

Moreover, close to half of the UCT students (48%) had had meaningful conversations often or very often in the last year with fellow students who differed from them in terms of nationality and race/ethnicity, to the extent that they had gained a deeper understanding of other perspectives. In addition, two out of five students (40%) had had such interactions with students of a different class and, less frequently, a different religion (35%) and political opinion (30%). Conversely, there were sizeable proportions of students who said that they had never or rarely had such conversations with students of a different sexual orientation (33%), disability status (60%) or health/HIV-status (72%). At MAK, a sizeable proportion of students – between over a quarter (26%) and close to a half (47%) – reported having had meaningful conversations often or very often from which they gained new perspectives. In particular, more students gained from conversations with students who differed from them in terms of class, religion, political opinion and nationality; conversely, like at UCT, matters of health ranked lowest.

The analysis of *dependent variables* produces the following four sets of citizenship competences:

1. *Civic skills*, which measures levels of critical thinking skills; argumentation and presentation skills; and leadership skills (measured individually as well as in combination with diversity and social skills).
2. *Diversity and social skills* as a latent variable made up of variables measuring appreciation of social, ethnic/racial and global diversity; level of understanding of international perspectives; social skills; sense of social responsibility; and self-awareness.

3. *Attitudes towards democracy*, which measures students' understanding of democracy, support for democracy and the rejection of non-democratic alternatives.
4. *Attitudes towards good citizenship*, which is a latent variable combining variables regarding attitudes towards critical reasoning and problem-solving skills; social responsibility; compassion; commitment to the common good; social skills and communication skills; understanding the constitution, bill of rights etc.; understanding government, political processes etc.; participating in democratic processes; and patriotism.

The descriptive analysis of civic, diversity and social skills shows that all student groups at UCT and MAK rated themselves more proficient in those skills after having spent some time at university, than when they had started at university. It also shows that MAK students generally considered themselves more proficient at the beginning of their studies than the UCT students did, while UCT students reported higher learning gains as they advanced in years of study. Conversely, there was no positive in-college-effect with respect to attitudes in support of democracy; indeed, more senior students tended to be marginally *less* supportive of democracy than first-year students (although this was not statistically significant). Finally, with respect to students' attitudes towards various attributes of good citizenship, MAK students generally rated the importance of all attributes higher than the UCT students did. But, in both cases, about eight in ten students considered critical reasoning and problem-solving skills, as well as social skills and communication skills, to be important or very important, while considerably fewer did so for understanding government and political processes.

Results

By using regression analyses and partial correlation matrices, this section directly addresses the core research question of the project: namely, whether students who report higher levels of engagement also report higher levels of citizenship and diversity competences. The results of the analyses yield important insights into the relationship between student engagement and citizenship competences, thus providing leads towards further study and suggesting institutional policy implications relevant for the two case institutions. However, the main purpose of the pilot was to test the HERANA Citizenship Module's usefulness as a concise, valid and reliable tool for studying student engagement's impact on citizenship competences.

In order to predict empirically the extent to which student engagement influences the development of citizenship competences, two types of analyses were performed: multiple stepwise regressions and partial correlation coefficients. The latter correlates *every* aspect of student engagement with *all* the competences using partial correlation coefficients (controlling for social and educational backgrounds of students).

Partial correlations[8]

For the UCT data, the matrices indicate that combined civic, diversity and social skills most strongly correlate with civic skills training activities (.424, p<0.001), as well as active learning (.317, p<0.001) and collaborative learning (.229, p<0.01). Students with higher levels of skills are also likely to seek staff-student interaction (.360, p<0.001). In addition, they are more likely to be interested in and discuss politics regularly on campus (.261, p<0.01), and to be actively engaged in membership or leadership of student societies, especially in advocacy groups or student-run development agencies (.236, p<0.001). Weaker partial correlations can also be observed with other political and social engagement variables and with respect to diversity engagement. Furthermore, the analysis shows that diversity competences and social skills (on their own and in combination with citizenship skills) correlate well with positive evaluations of the institutional climate. Evaluating the institutional climate as friendly, caring, tolerant and intellectual correlates well with citizenship and diversity skills combined (.270, p<0.01) and also with diversity competences on their own (.251, p<0.01). In addition, the perceptions of the respect for diversity on campus co-varies positively with diversity and social skills (.214, p<0.05) as well as with civic, diversity and social skills combined (.205, p<0.05).

The analysis of the UCT data therefore shows that student engagement positively co-varies with civic, diversity and social skills in the following ways:

· Participation in civic skills training activities co-varies moderately strongly-to-strongly with civic, diversity and social skills in combination, as well as with diversity and social skills and with leadership skills on their own.

· Active learning, collaborative learning and staff-student interactions co-vary modestly-to-moderately with levels of citizenship and diversity competences in combination and, except for leadership skills, consistently on their own.

· The combination of civic, diversity and social skills, and diversity and social skills on their own, correlate modestly-to-moderately with interest in and discussion of politics and with being active in student advocacy societies, student political organisations and student governance. The combined variable also co-varies with student activism.

· A positive evaluation of the campus climate and respect for diversity on campus modestly co-varies with citizenship and diversity competences (but not with the individual civic skills measures).

The analysis of correlations between student engagement variables and attitudes towards democracy and good citizenship in the UCT dataset tends to be less significant and weaker than those observed with respect to civic, diversity and social skills. The analysis also shows that several

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8   Table 11.3 in the Discussion section of this chapter, summarises the findings from the partial correlation matrices in terms of the observed probabilities. For the complete matrices, see Luescher-Mamashela (forthcoming, Appendix 2).

student engagement measures modestly-to-strongly correlate. In particular, the correlation matrices show that it is far more likely that students will have a positive attitude towards various attributes of good citizenship if they frequently have meaningful conversations with students that are different from them (.489, p<0.001) and show an interest in and frequently discuss politics on campus (.440, p<0.001). In addition, moderate-to-modest correlations can be observed with variables in the co-curricular engagement cluster: participation in student activism (.233, p<0.01); active membership or leadership in student advocacy groups (.207, p<0.05) and any other form of student leadership (.182, p<0.05); and participation in specific civic skills training (.186, p<0.05). Lastly, a positive attitude to good citizenship modestly co-varies with academic engagement; in particular, with active learning (.208, p<0.05) and staff-student interaction (.186, p<0.05). Only one aspect of the institutional culture – that is, students' perception of freedom of expression on campus – is significantly, albeit only modestly, correlated with good citizenship (.186, p<0.05). Thus, while there are significant correlations of student engagement with attitudes towards good citizenship, it is quite disappointing to find that support for democracy does not correlate positively with most measures of student engagement that one would expect. Indeed, the analysis shows that only one academic engagement variable – preparing for and attending scheduled academic activities – is modestly correlated with the rejection of authoritarianism (.219, p<0.05), and that doing fieldwork is negatively and moderately correlated with positive understandings of democracy (-.242, p<0.01).

In summary, the correlation analysis of the UCT dataset shows that student engagement co-varies with support for democracy and attitudes of good citizenship in the following ways:

- Higher levels of interest in and discussion of politics and public affairs, as well as conversations with diverse others, show the strongest co-variance with positive attitudes towards good citizenship;
- Participation in various student societies moderately co-varies with positive attitudes towards good citizenship;
- Active learning and participation in skills training co-varies modestly with positive attitudes towards various attributes of good citizenship;
- A positive evaluation of the institutional climate in terms of freedom of expression modestly and positively co-varies with attitudes towards good citizenship; and
- Conversely, the more direct measures for support for democracy (such as indicators for understanding what democracy is, preference for democracy and rejection of authoritarianism) do not have widespread or strong relationships with any measure of student engagement.

Turning our attention to the MAK data, many similar findings can be observed, even if the variables are not entirely the same. Students with higher levels of key civic, diversity and social skills have again been more likely to be involved in civic skills training (.344, p<0.001), and they are more likely to be active learners (.226, p<0.001) and collaborative learners (.318,

p<0.001) who also participate in enriching learning activities such as fieldwork, tutoring or community engagement (.208, p<0.01). In addition, a friendly, caring, tolerant and intellectual institutional culture (.155, p<0.05) that is also perceived as respecting of otherness (.245, p<0.001), and thus enabling of meaningful conversation with diverse others (.166, p<0.05), all correlates modestly with combined civic, diversity and social skills.

When looking at critical thinking skills and leadership skills in the MAK data, the most important new finding is that very high levels of current leadership skills are strongly positively correlated with civic skills training (.494, p<0.001). In addition, participation in student leadership – as a student representative with an institution-wide mandate (.216, p<0.01), a student leader in a student society (.285, p<0.001), a student representative in a university governing body (.171, p<0.05), or a student activist (.166; p<0.05) – all emerge with modest strength as a co-variant of very high leadership skills. Very high proficiency in critical thinking skills also correlates moderately with civic skills training (.265, p<0.001), collaborative learning (.256, p<0.001), and an institutional culture that respects diversity (.214, p<0.01). Few other variables co-vary with very high proficiencies in critical thinking and only very modestly. Finally, a closer look at diversity competences and social skills brings no new statistically significant variables to the fore; all variables correlating with the combined skills set also correlate with diversity and social skills, albeit in the latter case at a weaker strength (compared to the UCT data).

The analysis of the MAK data therefore shows that student engagement positively co-varies with citizenship and diversity competences in the following ways:

- Participation in civic skills training activities co-varies moderately-to-strongly with higher levels of competences, most strongly with leadership skills, but also with all other variables as well as the combined skills set of civic, diversity and social skills.
- Active learning, collaborative learning and participation in enriching learning experiences modestly-to-moderately co-vary with levels of civic, diversity and social skills (but not with all individual skills items).
- Citizenship and diversity competences also co-vary modestly-to-moderately with interest in and discussion of politics and with being active in student advocacy societies, student political organisations, student governance and student activism.
- Participation in student leadership correlates at a modest-to-moderate level with very high self-reported leadership skills.
- A positive evaluation of the institutional culture, and especially respect for diversity on campus and a more positive campus climate, co-vary modestly with citizenship and diversity competences.

Moreover, in the MAK dataset, involvement in civic skills training again emerges as a significant correlate of attitudes towards good citizenship, as indicated by a moderately strong and positive correlation coefficient of .328 (p<0.001). Students who appreciate the importance

of the attributes of good citizenship also tend to be active learners (.300, p<0.001) who are interested in and frequently discuss politics and public affairs on campus (.323, p<0.01). More modest correlations can be observed with collaborative learning (.119, p<0.05), involvement in student leadership (.172, p<0.05), participation in student activism (.189, p<0.01), as well as with all the indicators of a supportive institutional culture (.170, p<0.05 for a friendly, caring, tolerant and intellectual campus climate; .161, p<0.05 for freedom of expression; and .150, p<0.05 for respect for diversity on campus).

Compared to the UCT data, support for democracy correlates with some more measures of student engagement in the MAK data, albeit still only at modest-to-moderate strength. Preference for democracy correlates with positive evaluations of institutional culture, especially respect for diversity on campus (.282, p<0.001), with freedom of expression on campus (.214, p<0.01) and with a friendly, caring, tolerant and intellectual climate (.166, p<0.05). The rejection of authoritarianism also correlates with certain aspects of student engagement. In summary, the analysis of the MAK data therefore shows that student engagement co-varies with attitudes towards democracy and good citizenship in the following ways:

- Participation in civic skills training activities moderately and positively co-varies with support for the attributes of good citizenship, but not with the other attitudinal variables in this set of competences. Only two other variables in the co-curricular engagement cluster modestly correlate with good citizenship (i.e. participation in student leadership and student activism).
- Active learning moderately co-varies with attitudes towards good citizenship and modestly with the rejection of authoritarianism (especially one-party rule and presidential one-man rule). A modest correlation can also be observed with collaborative learning.
- Discursive engagement (with respect to interest in and discussion of politics and public affairs) modestly and positively co-varies with attitudes towards good citizenship, while media use and meaningful conversation with others positively co-vary with the rejection of military rule and one-party rule respectively.
- The covariance of most variables within the attitudes to democracy and good citizenship set of citizenship competences, including preference for democracy, rejection of authoritarianism and positive attitudes towards good citizenship, must be seen in the context of students' evaluation of the institutional culture, especially freedom of expression and respect for diversity on campus, and to a lesser extent the general campus culture (with a modest and positive correlation).

For the purpose of this chapter, the inter-correlation between various student engagement measures is important to keep in mind when considering the results of the regression analysis conducted below. Insofar as a regression analysis indicates the *best* predictors of variation in a dependent variable, an independent variable that is well correlated with other independent

variables can 'mask' the effects of other independent variables on the dependent variable, thus rendering their effect statistically insignificant. In a stepwise regression, the results of well-correlated individual blocks of variables thus typically only produce one – the best – variable per block as significant. This is particularly important for the purpose of inferring policy implications: in the design of an institutional intervention (e.g. a new civic skills training activity in student affairs), one might want to incorporate various engagement aspects that are well correlated as they might have mutually reinforcing effects. Secondly, it is also important when considering what (and what not) to measure in future surveys. The fact that a particular variable is not statistically significant in a regression does not mean that it has no effect on enhancing citizenship competences and can therefore be discarded; rather, its effect may be encompassed (and indicated) by a well co-related variable.

Regression analysis

The results of multiple stepwise regressions performed for the purpose of this study indicate that student engagement variables indeed act as reliable predictors that provide a solid explanation of citizenship competences. In the best and most complete statistically-significant regression model (as summarised in Table 11.2), the various indicators of the student experience explain up to a third of the variation in levels of combined civic, diversity and social skills (UCT Adjusted R^2 = .310; MAK Adjusted R^2 = .307). They also explain, separately, diversity and social skills (UCT Adjusted R^2 = .259; MAK Adjusted R^2 = .249), current critical thinking skills (UCT Adjusted R^2 = .116; MAK Adjusted R^2 = .215) and current leadership skills (UCT Adjusted R^2 = .228; MAK Adjusted R^2 = .372), as well as students' attitudes towards good citizenship (UCT Adjusted R^2 = .227; MAK Adjusted R^2 = .219).

With regard to the UCT data, Table 11.2 shows that the best model predicts up to 31% of variance in the civic, diversity and social skills set and 23% of the variance for attitudes towards good citizenship. For the former, the significant predictors are:

- The number of years a student has spent at university (academic year) as the only significant background variable;
- A supportive institutional culture in terms of students' perception of respect for diversity;
- Staff-student interaction from the cluster of academic engagement variables;[9]
- Participation in civic skills training from the co-curricular engagement cluster; and
- Interest in and discussion of politics from among the discursive engagement variables.

There is additional variation in the set of predictors for the diversity and social skills set, and current levels of analytical and critical thinking skills and leadership skills (when measured

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9   Active and collaborative learning appear as not statistically significant in the regression. However, as noted above, the partial correlation matrices show that both variables are positively correlated with staff-student interaction: strongly in the case of active learning (.576, p<0.001) and moderately in the case of collaborative learning (.318, p<0.001).

Table 11.2 Predictors of citizenship competences

Demographic profile indicators	University of Cape Town					Makerere University				
	Combined civic, diversity and social skills	Diversity and social skills	Critical thinking skills	Leadership skills	Good citizenship	Combined civic, diversity and social skills	Diversity and social skills	Critical thinking skills	Leadership skills	Good citizenship
Demographics										
Disadvantaged student	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Population group (black) (UCT)	NS	NS	NS	NS	.069**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Academic year	.212**	.190**	NS	.145*	NS	.191**	.161**	NS	.191***	NS
Institutional culture										
Friendly, caring, tolerant, intellectual	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Freedom of expression on campus	NS	NS	NS	NS	.136***	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Respect for diversity on campus	.252**	.214*	.221*	.188*	NS	.253***	.267***	.185**	.136*	.136*
Academic engagement										
Active learning	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	.200**
Collaborative learning	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	.178**	.170**	.257***	NS	NS
Staff-student interactions (UCT) Scheduled academic activity (MAK)	.236**	.233**	.219*	NS	NS	NS	NS	.151*	NS	NS
Co-curricular engagement										
Civic skills training	.215**	.178*	NS	.318***	NS	.287***	.243***	.245***	.362***	.263***
Student activism	NS	NS	NS	NS	.065*	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Student leader[1]	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Member/leader: advocacy societies	NS	.194*	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Discursive engagement										
Meaningful conversations with others	NS	NS	NS	NS	.131***	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Media use	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Interest in, and discussion of politics	.280**	.281**	.227*	NS	.284***	NS	NS	NS	NS	.176*
Multiple r	.631	.594	.473	.569	.484	.599	.553	.523	.647	.530
Adjusted R²	.310	.259	.116	.228	.227	.307	.249	.215	.372	.219

Note: Cells display standardised (Beta) regression coefficients. NS p = >0.05, * p = <0.05, ** p = <0.01, *** p = <0.001

[1] Summarised display: NS in all regressions for the variables: student leader at institutional level; student member/leader in various relevant societies; student representative in governing bodies; student member/leader of student political organisations

separately from the combined skills set variable). In this regard, it is noteworthy that active membership or leadership in a student advocacy group serves as a significant predictor for levels of diversity and social skills, while neither the academic year nor civic skills training are significant predictors for proficiency levels of critical thinking skills. However, civic skills training emerges as a good predictor for levels of leadership skills.

Furthermore, Table 11.2 shows that in the case of UCT the best predictors for attitudes towards good citizenship are:

· Population group (race) as the only statistically significant background variable, but with a very marginal effect;
· Students' perception of the extent of freedom of expression on campus as an institutional culture variable;
· Student involvement in student activism (but again, with a very weak effect); and
· Of the discursive engagement variables, having meaningful conversations with diverse others frequently and high levels of interest in discussion of politics and public affairs on campus.

Given the non-significant partial correlations, no regressions were run for the other variables related to attitudes towards democracy.

With regard to the MAK data, Table 11.2 shows that the best model predicts up to 31% of the variance in the combined civic, diversity and social skills set and up to 37% of the variance in leadership skills. For the former, the significant predictors are:

· The number of years a student has spent at university (academic year);
· A supportive institutional culture in terms of students' perception of respect for diversity;
· Collaborative learning from among the cluster of academic engagement variables; and
· Frequent participation in civic skills training from the co-curricular engagement cluster.

While there are differences in the extent to which each of these variables are able to predict the individual citizenship skills sets tested for, it is worthy to note that levels of critical thinking skills are best predicted by academic engagement than any other competences and that, conversely, leadership skills cannot be predicted by any of the academic engagement variables, but rather by participation in civic skills training.

Finally, Table 11.2 also shows that among MAK students, the best predictors for attitudes towards good citizenship are involvement in civic skills training; active learning; and discursive engagement in the context of a supportive institutional culture, especially with regard to students' perceptions of the level of respect for diversity on campus.

Discussion

Three years ago, the HERANA Phase 1 studies showed that highly educated citizens in Africa play a key role as 'institutionalisers' in the complex institutions of state and civil society that characterise modern democracy (Mattes & Mozaffar 2011). However, these studies could not account for specific ways in which this unique contribution of higher education to political development might be enhanced to ensure high levels of citizenship competences among graduates. The same can be said for other findings of HERANA 1 studies: namely, the high levels of criticalness among students, and the limited contribution that higher education made to support for democracy among graduates (Luescher-Mamashela et al 2011; Mattes & Luescher-Mamashela 2012). The aim of the HERANA Phase 2 student surveys was therefore to identify specific ways that make the African university an effective training ground for democracy – in other words, to investigate how student engagement in academic, social and political activity can be harnessed for citizenship education and the education of the next generation of democratic leaders in Africa. The guiding research question for the surveys conducted between 2012 and 2014 at MAK and UCT was therefore: Which aspects of the student experience are responsible for the development of positive attitudes towards democracy and good citizenship, high levels of critical thinking and leadership skills, and a deep appreciation and respect for diversity?

By investigating this question, the study ventured into unchartered territory – not only in the African context, but well beyond – as work on student engagement and the social outcomes of higher education is still scarce. This study has shown that certain aspects of student engagement (which can be clustered under the four rubrics of institutional culture, academic engagement, co-curricular engagement and discursive engagement) effectively develop high-level citizenship competences among undergraduate students in the two African universities of the pilot study.

The study has found that by using the set of questions referred to collectively as the HERANA Citizenship Module, universities can measure the student experience of higher education with respect to its contribution to the development of relevant citizenship competences. The findings of the analysis illustrate how processes of student engagement relate to and enhance citizenship competences and, by extension, provide evidence of a university's contribution to democracy as a key social outcome of higher education. Moreover, they suggest aspects of student engagement for the attention of institutional policies and practices by providing high-quality, actionable data for institutional planning, policy and practical intervention.

Student engagement and citizenship competences

This study's venture into rather unchartered territory has been path-breaking and yet the findings presented in this chapter are not altogether surprising. It is well established that active learning, collaborative learning, and frequent staff-student interaction are beneficial to student

retention and success (Tinto 2014) and to critical and creative thinking (Winchester-Seeto et al. 2012); that student experiences with diversity and a diversity-respecting institutional culture have a positive effect on diversity skills and other graduate attributes (Denson & Zhang 2010); and that social skills, an appreciation of social justice and good citizenship are enhanced through engagement with public affairs, global perspectives and diverse others (Schoeman 2006; Winchester-Seeto et al. 2012). Overall, it is largely accepted that university policies and practices make a difference in civic education and that characteristics of the student experience (such as a campus culture where public debate is encouraged; pedagogies of active and collaborative learning; and students' social and political engagement on campus) are beneficial to civic education (Plantan 2004).

What is new and striking about the HERANA 2 survey findings is to see *exactly how* these characteristics of the student experience uniquely and in conjunction contribute to distinct sets of citizenship competences. It is no less remarkable to be able to demonstrate this in the cases of two African flagship universities and, therefore, to have findings and conclusions that are immediately relevant and more likely transferable to other universities in the African context and to higher education in the developing world.

In terms of specific policy implications, the pilot studies thus suggest that the level of citizenship competences measured by the HERANA Citizenship Module can be increased by:

- Creating an institutional culture that students perceive to be friendly, caring, tolerant, intellectual and respectful of diversity, and where religious and political opinions can be expressed freely;
- Creating a culture of teaching and learning where students become active and collaborative learners along with an academic 'open-door' policy that enables staff-student interaction;
- Offering training opportunities in a wide range of civic, leadership and diversity-related skills; creating platforms for students' meaningful collective engagement with politics (i.e. student activism and formal student representation in university governance); and supporting the establishment and running of advocacy and developmentally orientated student societies; and
- Stimulating students' discursive engagement with politics and public affairs, as well as interaction and meaningful conversations with diverse others.

High-impact practices

The findings invite reflection on what Kuh (2009b) calls 'high-impact practices', albeit focused on the development of citizenship competences. Identifying a set of specific practices with a high impact on citizenship competences is an important step in translating knowledge gained from student engagement surveys into the lived student experience. If well-designed, many of the prominent high-impact practices for teaching and learning success – such as

interdisciplinary first-year seminars on global issues, learning communities, student-faculty research or study abroad (NSSE 2014: 2) – will also have a positive impact on citizenship competences insofar as they correlate with the same academic engagement measures. The HERANA 2 surveys further show that beyond the curricular, there is a critical role to be played by the co-curriculum (particularly, student affairs civic skills training activities), as well as by student politics and volunteering in development agencies and advocacy groups – all of which correlate and co-vary with key competences. Such practices will cumulate with the stimulation of a discursively engaged, diversity-respecting campus culture that is alive with debates on global issues, that stimulates interest in and discussions of public affairs and politics, and that enables meaningful interactions with diverse others, in order to significantly enhance citizenship competences and thus the contribution of higher education to political development and democratisation.

As a starting point for developing high-impact practices, the analysis here proposes to look at the likelihood of particular engagement activities to foster key competences. Table 11.3 illustrates the probabilities of key aspects of student engagement contributing to citizenship competences, based on the partial correlation coefficient matrices calculated for the purpose of this study. It shows that in every one of the four clusters of student engagement there is at least one variable that has very high probability scores for its potential impact on citizenship competences.

Designing high-impact practices involving pedagogies of active and collaborative learning therefore promises a great chance of impacting on citizenship competences (as well as on student retention and success). Moreover, the regression analyses presented in Table 11.2 suggest that there might be a cumulative effect of attending an academic engagement-type high-impact practice *and* a co-curricular high-impact practice, including specific civic and diversity skills training. In both cases, such high-impact practices should involve frequent discussion of global and current affairs topics, and stimulate interaction and meaningful conversations between students from different backgrounds (e.g. in terms of race, class, academic discipline and disability). Finally, the implementation of such high-impact practices should be accompanied by a supportive institutional climate which is perceived as friendly, caring, tolerant and intellectual, and, in particular, that is characterised by high levels of freedom of expression and respect for diversity.

Conducting institutional surveys

The methodology of conducting census-type online surveys with undergraduate students in African universities faces various challenges. Chief amongst these is reliable access for respondents to the online survey platform in terms of access both to on- and off-campus computing facilities, and to WiFi with sufficient bandwidth on campus for access via students' own portable devices (including smartphones). Correspondingly, the online survey platform ought to be hosted on a local server, be compatible with a low-bandwidth environment,

Table 11.3 The probabilities of student engagement contributing to citizenship competences

		University of Cape Town			Makerere University		
		Combined civic and diversity skills	Good citizenship	Support for democracy	Combined civic and diversity skills	Good citizenship	Support for democracy
Institutional culture	Friendly, caring, tolerant, intellectual climate	++	NS	NS	+	+	+
	Respect for diversity on campus	+	NS	+	+++	+	+++
	Freedom of expression on campus	NS	NS	NS	+	+	++
Academic engagement	Active learning	+++	+	NS	+++	+++	++
	Collaborative learning	++	NS	NS	+++	+	+
	Scheduled academic activity	-	NS	+	+	NS	-
	Staff-student interaction (UCT only)	+++	+	NS	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Enriching academic activities	NS	NS	++	++	NS	NS
Co-curricular engagement	Civic skills training	+++	+	+	+++	+++	NS
	Student politics (governance/activism)	++	++	NS	+++	+	+
	Relevant student societies	++	+	NS	++	++	NS
Discursive engagement	Interest in and discussing politics	+++	+++	NS	++	++	+[1]
	Meaningful conversations with others	++	+++	NS	+	NS	+

Note: Table indicates highest probability of a relationship between student engagement variables and citizenship competences
Key: NS = p >.0.05; + indicates probabilities as follows: + p = <0.05, ++ p = <0.01, +++ p = <0.001
[1] Media use

and have functionality for the completion of the survey using a smart device, especially a smartphone. Finally, it is advisable to construct a targeted, small but representative sample rather than to attempt a census-type survey.[10]

Finally, the analyses in this chapter provide the basis for revising the original HERANA Citizenship Module, and the revised model is presented as a conceptual map in Figure 11.4. The related questionnaire is available freely as appendix to the full HERANA report on the pilot studies (see Luescher-Mamashela forthcoming).

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10 HERANA's successes and challenges of using different kinds of methodologies for conducting student surveys in African universities are discussed in a forthcoming article by Luescher-Mamashela, Mugume and Lange.

Figure 11.4 Schematic concept map of the revised HERANA Citizenship Module

Background	Student engagement	Competences
• Year of study Potential additional variables: • Academic/ material disadvantage • Population group • Gender	**Supportive campus environment** • Campus climate • Freedom of expression on campus • Respect for difference **Academic engagement** • Active learning • Collaborative learning • Staff-student interaction **Co-curricular engagement** • Participation in civic, leadership and diversity skills training • Political activism on campus • Leadership in student governance • Active participation and leadership in political student organisations • Active participation and leadership in advocacy and developmentally orientated student societies **Discursive engagement** • Meaningful conversations with diverse others • Interest in and discussion of public affairs • Frequent news media use	**Civic, diversity and social skills** • Critical thinking skills • Leadership skills • Appreciation of social diversity • Appreciation of ethnic/global diversity • Understanding international perspectives • Social skills • Social responsibility • Self-awareness **Attitudes towards democracy and good citizenship** • Attitudes towards good citizenship Potential other variables: • Preference for democracy/ rejection of authoritarianism • Understanding of democracy

Conclusion

Student engagement is known to correlate well with retention and success but its impact on developing citizenship competences has hardly been studied. The HERANA pilot studies have shown that key aspects of the undergraduate student experience have a profound impact on raising levels of citizenship competences. Exploring different statistical models and indicators of the student experience and competences, this chapter has shown that the best models of engagement explain up to a third of the variation in levels of civic, diversity and social skills, as well as separately between a quarter and two-fifths of the variation in diversity and social skills, leadership skills, and student attitudes towards good citizenship, respectively. The findings, therefore, not only confirm the usefulness of the student engagement construct and the HERANA Citizenship Module for studying and improving the student experience to enhance higher education's contribution to citizenship in Africa, but also provide

evidence of the way that processes of student engagement relate to and enhance citizenship competences. The findings thus invite reflection on what Kuh calls 'high-impact practices'. If well-designed, many of the prominent high-impact practices for teaching and learning success are likely to also have a positive impact on citizenship competences insofar as they correlate with many of the same academic engagement measures. In addition, the HERANA surveys show that there is a critical role to be played in the co-curriculum, and particularly in student affairs civic skills training activity, student involvement in student politics, and student volunteering in student-run development agencies and advocacy groups. These aspects of student engagement cumulate with the stimulation of a discursively engaged, diversity-respecting campus culture that is abuzz with debates on global issues, stimulates interest in and discussions of public affairs and politics, and enables meaningful interactions with diverse others.

In the broader perspective, the study shows that the multiple roles that African flagship universities are meant to play in development – in producing and diffusing new values and knowledge, training highly skilled professionals, and developing competent citizens and democratic leaders for state and civil society – coincide empirically in terms of student engagement. As such, these roles can be fostered *simultaneously* by the adoption of practices with high impact on students' academic success and citizenship competences. The model of political socialisation implicit in the HERANA Citizenship Module does not measure teaching success with respect to specific values (although contextually relevant values could be designed into various civic engagement activities). Rather, it focuses on generic citizenship skills and competences that empower graduates to make a positive contribution to development. Institutional and national higher education policy-makers are hereby provided with a conceptual, methodological and practical tool to enhance African higher education's contribution to development.

In conclusion, two decades of democratisation in Africa have made it possible for flagship universities to play a role in the functions of legitimation, social cohesion and civic education, without contradicting but advancing the aspirational socio-political goals and values anchored in national constitutions and development plans. The more pluralistic macro-political frameworks allow flagship universities to engage in critical-constructive ways with public affairs and politics in their country and region, and to move upstream from operative political culture to advance socio-political development and democratisation.

This chapter provides a methodological framework and indicators for research-based institutional and national policy, in terms of an application of the student engagement construct that broadens the HERANA focus on research-informed policy-making, the institutionalisation of data collection, and the development of comparative indicators to measure, as social outcomes of higher education, a set of generic graduate competences that include citizenship competences such as critical thinking skills, leadership skills, and diversity and social skills.

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