

Trends in Research and Teaching of Development Studies in Kenya (2000 – 2019)

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Abstract: - The role of development studies in the developing world and Kenya in particular, cannot be gainsaid. Teaching and research in development studies is meant to unearth and understand development challenges and thereby inform policies for posterity of the developing world through paradigm shifts in management process. However, despite several years of research and teaching development studies in Kenya, it is unclear on whether development study is still relevant both as an academic discipline and as a practice, and how the discipline has contributed to solutions of development challenges. This study sought to investigate the trends in research and teaching of development studies in the Kenyan universities. The study applied cluster analysis on secondary data from government statutes and policy documents, published books, articles, journals and university websites and repositories. Findings indicate a widespread diversity in teaching development studies across the Kenyan universities. In addition, the study holds that teaching of development studies does not demonstrate commitment to national development goals.

Key words: Development, Development studies, research, teaching, trends, universities.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the year 2000 when the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Nairobi introduced the teaching of development studies at postgraduate level, a lot has happened in the teaching and research in the discipline to justify a review. The critical question to ponder is: is development studies still relevant as an academic discipline and a practice? Has the discipline contributed to the understanding of developmental challenges as well as solutions to these challenges? These questions are not only valid, but also pertinent, especially because development studies have a normative orientation.

In part, the above questions can only find answers in two explorations, the first being the evaluation of whether scholarly work and teaching in development has contributed to deeper and acute understanding of the phenomenon of development and the second, being whether the scholarly works have contributed to policy shifts in the management of the development process. The study of development has become academically difficult due to a dearth of technical and conceptual definition. Indeed, an analysis of literature on the subject both as a discipline (Leys 1996; Ramenyi, 2004, Schuurman, 1997) and a practice (Moss 2007; Thomas, 2002, Olukoshi et al 2004, 2004; Njeru, 2009)), gives the impression that development studies is based on principles and tenets that

are not clear and not widely shared as is the case with other disciplines in the social sciences. This has created a conceptual and policy 'impasse' (Schuurman, 1997)

This view has prevailed even when there was a consensus that development refers to the process of creating the conditions for the realization of human personality. Generally, the term development is synonymous with progress, improvement, positive change and making life better for everyone (Seers, 1979). In the context of developing countries social transformation should include changes in rural poverty (chambers 1983), improved role of the state (Cowen and Shenton, 1996; Hyden, 1986) narrowing of all forms of inequalities (Allen et al 2002, World Bank 2000), regional integration and mitigation of environmental degradation (Allen et al 2002, Moss 2007) and promoting democratization via measurable indicators such as Gross National Product (GNP) and per capita income (Sen 1999, Ramenyi, 2004). This view of development resonates well with the dominant western development models such as modernization (Rostow, 1960; Peet et al, 2009) and economic growth (Lewis, 1955) as cited by Wanyama (2012). Practically, modernization models argued that progressive values and norms should be diffused through education and that science and technology and foreign aid should form the anchor point for development. Modernization theory blamed the undevelopment on "traditionalism," and failure by the poor countries to follow the example of western countries in treading the path to development through industrialization, entrepreneurship, the rule of law and democratic system of governance based on mass communication of scientific information and technology (Wanyama, 2012)

The adoption of the basic needs theory by International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1974 re-focused the objective of development towards provision of minimum requirements of household needs of poor people, food, housing, clothing and essential services provides by and for the community at large, e.g. safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport and health and security (Seers 1979; Streeten 1981; Wanyama, 2012). Since the basic needs theory tended to emphasize consumption needs of the poor at the expense of productive capacity, a need was created to move towards Neoliberalism (Allen et al 2002). Neo-liberals argued that equal opportunities for all would best be articulated in a market economy that was regarded as more efficient than the state in allocating and distributing resources (Wanyama, 2012). In this

context, the Neo-liberals blamed the ‘over-grown state’ for the development crisis owing to its inefficiency, parasitic and inclination to corruption. In this case “Rolling back the state from development” in favour of private and voluntary actors was considered not only urgent but innovative approach to development (Matanga 2011). However, serious difficulties were experienced with Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in Africa. This included discrimination against social development programmes like child immunization, sports and family planning programmes, right sizing of the civil service through early retirement programmes (retrenchment) which tended to increase the numbers of the unemployed and marginalization of those without skills, higher education and / or inherited wealth. This created a need for a new paradigm to take into account the livelihoods of the vulnerable social groups in the face of relentless social and structural reforms. This gave rise to Alternative Development with various strands including Human Development Approach and the Rights Based Approach to Development. The main point of departure between alternative development and other approaches is that there was less emphasis on the state as the dominant development actor (Wanyama, 2012). There was an attempt to democratize the development space by integrating the individual persons, grassroots organizations and civil society organizations in development activities. The human development approach argued that people are the most important resource in a country and any development activity that was genuine must focus on those things that are valued by people; quality education, access to healthcare, affordable transport, security of people and property and being treated with dignity and respect. Integrating the national development plans and policies with international human rights instruments was also adjudged to be an important way of promoting human welfare. In other words, making the development process inclusive and participatory, accountable, transparent and gender sensitive was considered a critical exercise in adoption of international best practices in development. Difficulties with alternative development approaches, particularly the lack of a universal model of development that would accommodate the varieties of unique local conditions in Africa has led to the conclusion by some (Schuurman 1997, Leys 1996) that, development is impossible and post-modernism even denies the very idea of development in the first place.

Kenya, like most developing countries has over the last five decades pursued development programmes premised on the broad theoretical frameworks underpinning development particularly modernization (Achola et al., 2004). According to Achola (2004) in the 1970s, Kenya sought to influence her development through a vigorous pursuit of a transformational agenda based on inculcation of a saving culture, modernization of the economy from agriculture to industrialization, unleashing of entrepreneurship spirit, development of means of transport notably roads and heavy investment in education, science and technology. In the 1980s, it was generally acknowledged (see Mamdani,

1996; Wanyama, 2012) that in the context of market reforms the, ability of the state to effectively drive development programmes had greatly diminished and this heralded the onset of the era of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in order to pluralize the development space (Olukoshi, 2004). This led to massive privatization programmes coupled with liberalization, right sizing of the civil services and deregulation of labour markets, which all had very adverse effects on the livelihoods of ordinary citizens in Kenya (Matanga, 2012). Amid all these significant evolutions of development theories and policy anchored on the dominant theoretical perspectives, the war against poverty, ignorance and disease had not been successful (Makokha, 1986; GoK, 2003; Ngethe et al 1995; Alila et al 1995). This failure is surprising since the development policies pursued at the time seemed to be premised on what were thought to be appropriate theories of development. This realization prompted a shift in thinking and practice of development towards alternative development ideology that focused on human empowerment, inclusion, participation and gave prominence to accountability and transparency, equality and equity in development. This shift institutionalized the view that Development Studies should not stay away from the evaluative role of assessing whether development has indeed led to what the various development ideas had projected (Ngethe, 2002). The changing development theories also imply that development and therefore development policy is in a state of becoming and that development’s desired goal(s) is/are always changing (Peet et al 2009). Doing development studies therefore means being sensitive to, and appreciating the interface between theory and practice, what Odera Oruka (1994), calls Praxis.

How well these models of development have influenced the research and teaching interests of the Kenyan development studies scholars remains unclear. While the subject matter of development has changed drastically, it is important that generation of knowledge in the social sciences, particularly in development studies keeps pace with theoretical and ideological development. Does available evidence in terms of teaching and research in development studies enunciate this noble requirement for any progressive academic discipline? In other words, where is the evidence of this in the teaching and research in development studies in Kenya? Available evidence suggests that, this has been one of the most difficult part of doing development studies in Kenya (Ngethe, 2002; Njeru 2009). Empirical analyses of the efficacy of the development theories in explaining the patterns of development in Kenya are difficult to come by (Njeru, 2009). However, research in development predates teaching in development studies in Kenya.

1. Trends of Research and Teaching Development Studies in Kenyan Universities

The oldest development research institution in Kenya is the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) which was founded in 1965. A perusal of research themes that dominates IDS

documents shows that majority of them focused mainly on sectoral development and policy analysis. In this case, practice of development seems to have gone ahead of theory as all these analyses contained in IDS working papers (WP), staff papers (SP), occasional (OP) and consultancy reports (CR) shows, (Ngethe ,2002). The themes and trends of IDS research activities have been broad and cut across a diverse terrain of academic inquiry which include sectoral growth, trade, industry and investment development planning, food security, migration and labour markets, governance, women issues, social science research methodology, sustainable development, environmental issues and the role of civil society in development (Njeru, 2009). The role of development theory in these studies is implicit rather than explicit. However, research in the contributing social science disciplines such as anthropology, sociology and political science seem to have fared better (Ngethe 2002). All these fed well into policy and informed government action at the grassroots where majority of the people live. Research and policy analyses in other universities is only getting started with a few and scattered publications such as Maseno University's Fredrick Wanyama with his studies of the politics of the cooperative movement in Kenya (2006), and Development from below (2012). There is also the study of the role civil society in Africa by Masinde Muliro University's Professor Matanga (2012) and professor Wanyande's work on the role of the civil society in Kenya (2012). These publications played a big role in Professor Wanyande's appointment as a commissioner of the defunct commission for implementation of the constitution (2010) There are also good returns in terms of research from the Seminars and Symposia organized by Strathmore University on various applied development themes such *The role of ethics in development*, *Law and development* as well *The place of good governance in management of public affairs notably combating corruption*. However, research activities in the new departments of development studies in various Kenyan universities is nascent, uncoordinated and scattered. Development Studies teaching has been an interdisciplinary approach, especially at the University of Nairobi, where lecturers in Development Studies have been drawn from diverse backgrounds such as Sociology Prof Mary Omosa (2006)), Political Science Prof Adams Oloo (2008), Prof. Mitullah, (2007) and Prof. Kanyinga,(2007) Prof. Ng'ethe (2004), Prof. Wanyande (2003), Economics (Prof. Jama Mohamed (2008), Prof. Onjala (2016, Prof. Atieno Rosemary(2006)), and Anthropology Prof. Collete Suda, , to mention but a few. Some Development Studies lecturers have also been drawn from the Legal fields such as Prof. Patricia Kameri-Mbote and Prof. Charles Odidi Okidi (2007)) and in Business and Entrepreneurship Prof. McCormick (2008), agriculture, environment and natural resources management. It is also important to mention that the multifaceted nature of development studies has seen scholars drawn also from Education sector Dr. Njeri Kinyanjui (2015) as well as in Population Studies Dr. Rachel Musyoki (2000). The policy

implications of some of these publications are discussed in section 1.7

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was to examine the nature and relevance of teaching and research in development studies at the post graduate level in Kenyan Universities. Specifically, the objectives of the study are;

1. To determine the extent to which teaching and research in development studies is relevant to National development goals or to development studies as an academic discipline.
2. To evaluate how teaching and research in development studies influences development policy in Kenya.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a cluster analytical analysis to investigate trends in research and teaching of development studies among the Kenyan universities. Cluster analysis classifies units of analysis with similar characteristics together. Thus, for the purpose of the current study, universities with similar trends regarding programmes/courses in development studies are grouped together. In addition, the design is used to group scholarly work such as research projects and publications conducted by scholars from Kenyan universities. A total of 13 universities teaching development studies were investigated between 2000-2018 (see Tables 1 and 2).

The study relied on secondary data obtained through critical review of existing literature, including government statutes and policy documents, published books, articles and journals. In addition, university websites were analyzed in terms of the research work and teaching as well as research in the area of development studies. In particular, their repositories were critically scrutinized to gather information on publications. The basis on which data was collected and upon which analysis and interpretations was based are;

1. Relevance of the teaching and research in development studies and the practice of development.
2. Interdisciplinarity and quality in the teaching of development studies in Kenyan universities.
3. The policy dimension of teaching and research in development studies in Kenya

IV. ANALYSIS

4.1 Relevance of Development Studies

The issue of relevance is central to any training programme and the subsequent research activities. While relevance is not the only reason for teaching and research it is nevertheless very critical in making a training more demand driven. The issue of relevance has many facets. The first question that can be asked on the issue of relevance is relevant to what? The answer may lie in what is being taught. Is what is being taught

in Kenyan universities and colleges reflective of national conceptions of development or a common understanding of what development should be (Ngethe, 2002). The first conception of development seems to suggest a very practical conception of development as dictated by national development objectives. In Kenya, teaching and research in development studies should therefore focus on such issues as the quality of education and its role in national development, access to healthcare, youth unemployment, gender issues in development, environmental impact of economic development, poverty and its dimensions, the role of agriculture in development, development participation and the issue of inequalities in development (Njeru, 2009; Karani 2004). In assessing the quality and relevance of development studies, the question in this case would be, what does the country aspire to achieve in development and how does teaching and research in development studies reflect this. This approach would betray ideological sympathy on the part of the universities and national development at the altar of disciplinary objectivity. In the late 1990s when the teaching of development studies was initiated with the introduction of MA in development studies at IDS University of Nairobi, research in development seemed to have coalesced around four main areas of development discourse. "Institutions of governance and planning; social inclusion / exclusion, globalization and localization and human development, livelihoods and wealth creation" (Njeru, 2009, pg. 27). Evidence from the structure of the IDS MA programme in development shows that it was developed to reflect the issues

of development concern to the country at the time. The course work broadly captures such issues such, rural development and change, urban planning and development, agriculture and development, industrial strategies, development management, entrepreneurship, project management, environmental impact of development policy and security. These courses are delivered by a multidisciplinary group of eminently qualified faculty. However, questions have been asked regarding the extent to which the research conducted by these lecturers inform what they teach (See Ngowi, 2009). According to Njeru (2009) the driving force for engaging in research (mainly consultancy) is personal financial gain and not expanding the frontiers of knowledge or improving the learning experience of students. There has also been questions regarding the commitment of those teaching development studies whose background is in traditional university disciplines to the multidisciplinary character of development studies (Ngethe, 2002). The teaching of MA in development studies at the University of Nairobi's IDS, and in other Universities particularly Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and technology (JKUAT), Moi University and Kenyatta Universities MA in Gender and Development seem to follow the footpaths of practical development. Although the teaching of development studies in these universities is recent and does not have the long history of teaching and research that IDS enjoys, there is clear inclination towards practical application of development models. The table below provides a comparison on the core teaching course units of selected universities.

Table 1: The core units of MA in Development Studies.

University of Nairobi (UoN)	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT)	Management University of Kenya (MUA)
Development Management Theory Development Management Practice Research foundations Energy Policy, Planning and Development Research Methods and Computer Applications Issues in Urban Development Science, Technology and Policy Issues in Urban Development, Entrepreneurship and Development	Development Theory Research Methodology Development Management Development Economics Computer Applications Human Development Agriculture and Natural Resource Management, Poverty and integrity, Politics, Human Security and Development Statistics	Development Management Theory Research Mobilization Social Policy and Gender sustainable Public Policy and Development Governance and Development in Africa Civil Society and Development
Specialization Areas	Areas of Specialization	Specialization
Rural Change and Development Human Resource Development Planning International Development	Project Management Option Human Developing Option	Project Management Option Economic Development Option

Source: Study data

As can be noted from the table, the only similarity in the teaching of MA in development studies is the theory of development. The formulation of the teaching course units does not reflect a direct linkage to national development goals, and development policy as indicated through sessional paper number 10 of 1965 or vision 2030. Part of the problem in explaining the peripheral national development priorities is constrained faculty that is not robustly multidisciplinary which is involved in the design the teaching Curricula. The

curriculum making process tends to be arbitrary and informal (Amutabi, 2017). The task of writing the content of specific course units and the course structure is given informally to the faculty members not on the basis of expertise and/or experience or research output but mostly on the basis of willingness to do it. Specialization on specific issues such as devolution, rural development or poverty studies is lacking, and this will restrict the growth of these teaching departments as centres of excellence in development. Furthermore, any

consultation with the industry/employers is minimal and mostly lacking (Amutabi, 2017). In this case, and purely on account of its long history in development research, IDS is slightly different as they have developed comparative advantage in specific sectors/areas such small scale enterprises, the role of civil society organizations in development and rural development. The teaching of these issues is buttressed by a strong tradition of publications, visiting fellowships, collaborative research and other methods of network establishment (Njeru, 2009). Other universities in Kenya have established departments of development studies as part of their response to demand driven need for expansion. The MA and PhD in development studies has generally been received well by the market (Ngethe, 2002). The ready availability of tuition paying students has meant full teaching load for fairly small faculty and a complete paralysis of research endeavours. This has limited their effectiveness in integrating teaching and research. Community outreach programmes which are critical component of development management and policy are either nonexistent or generally ignored. The review of the IDS teaching curriculum in 2015 was broadly participatory as stakeholders such as former students and industry players and the Government were invited to breakfast meetings to brainstorm on the best fit between the needs of the University, Students and the Employers. However, most Universities tend to be hamstrung by budget constraints and unwillingness to change.

The issue of relevance also involves teaching development studies as it should be. An examination of the curriculum objectives of various universities shows wide variation in their focus for the MA and PhD programmes. For example, at JKUAT the objectives for the MDS are indicated as to develop intellectuals with a deep understanding of basic theoretical issues in development from a multidisciplinary perspective. The MDS also seeks to equip students to participate and handle development projects at community,

national and international levels competently. At the UoN, the objectives of MA in development studies is to provide teaching and research in socio-economic issues in collaboration with social science departments in Kenya, East Africa. It also sets to generate graduates with ability to conduct independent research and take part in development debates and management. At the Management University of Africa (MUA) the objectives are indicated as to produce intellectuals and leaders in economic development, human rights, and project planning and policy analysis. Clearly the teaching and research in development in these universities cannot be said to based on the same pedagogical principles and objectives. The practice is therefore very divergent teaching methodologies and emphasis on completely different issues which are nevertheless significant in the sane country.

Development studies is a multidisciplinary branch of social science which addresses issues of concern to developing countries. Development studies is an interdisciplinary and applied subject which analyzes the processes of social, cultural, economic and political change in developing countries and to interrogate contested theories of these processes. Key themes include political development, industrialization, rural livelihood, the impact of population change, the environmental consequences of development and all aspects of social policy as they apply specifically to developing county contexts (Allan et al., 2002). In this case one may pose the question on how well the curricula that are used by Kenyan universities truly reflect the three elements of relevance in the teaching of development studies. Out of Kenya's 61 public chartered or legally operational universities, 10 of them teach masters in development studies or its various specializations such as community development, project planning and management or public policy and management and gender and development. Table 1 indicates the universities teaching development studies in Kenya at Postgraduate level.

Table 2: Universities teaching development studies in Kenya at Postgraduate level

University	Degree Programme
University of Nairobi (IDS)	MDS, PhD in Development Studies
St Pauls University	Master of Development Studies (MDS)
Management University of Africa (MUA)	MA, PhD in Development Studies (MDS)
Nazarene University	Master of Development Studies (MDS)
Moi University	Master of Philosophy in Development Studies, PhD
Daystar University	Master in Development Studies (MDS)
Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	Master of Development Studies (MDS), PhD
Mount Kenya University	Master of Arts in Development Studies, PhD
Catholic University of Eastern Africa	Master of Arts in Development Studies (MDS)
Baraton University	Master of Arts in Development Studies (MDS)

Source: Commission for higher education in Kenya (2019)

Those universities teaching specialized areas of development studies are listed in the table 3. These specializations include Community Development, Public Policy and

Research/Management, Gender and Development Studies and Project Management.

Table 4: Universities Teaching Related areas in Development

University	Academic Programme
Daystar university	Master of Arts in Community Development
Kenyatta University	Master of Gender and Development studies Master of Gender and Development studies
Egerton University	Public Policy and Management (KSMS)
JKUAT	MA in project Planning and Management
University of Nairobi (School of education)	Public Policy and management
Strathmore University, UoN (Political Science Department)	Public Policy and Research
Egerton University, Maseno University	Public Policy and Research
	Public Policy and Research

Source: Commission for higher education in Kenya (2019)

In Kenya, the objectives of development and the attendant ideological and policy derivatives are contained in three basic documents, i.e sessional paper number 10 of 1965, on African socialism and its application to planning in Kenya, Sessional number 1 of 1986 on the importance of governance and management and vision 2030. In all these policy documents, the government commits itself to use available resources to grow the economy by a high percentage and to distribute the gains of economic growth equitably on the basis of real needs of people and communities. Therefore, the government endeavours to achieve high standards of livelihoods for Kenyans through better performance and management of economic sectors such as agriculture and industry, peaceful coexistent of people and security and access to social services such education and health care. These policy documents encapsulate national development agenda to which teaching of development studies needs to direct its commitment to gain relevance.

From study data, out of the 10 universities teaching Development Studies only two (UoN and MKU) have a specific course study in industrialization yet this is a common theme for policy makers eager to transform the structure of the national economy for improved productivity (McCormick 1995). Only 4 have social policy integrated in their study course units and yet people are the real investment for any progressive country (McNeill, 2007). Based on its long tradition in research, teaching and policy relations with the industry, notably the government and civil society organizations (CSOs), the University of Nairobi's MA in development studies course work appears to be most comprehensive with regard to coverage of the most critical national issues of development. However, the MA curriculum is not very strong on critical economic analysis and quantitative techniques and statistics that are basic to effective working of a graduate of Development Studies (Rodrigo, 2016). An examination of the curricula for Development Studies in Kenyan universities shows they are quite varied (see table 1), reflecting a lack of convergence on what Development Studies is and how it should be taught. While some national development themes such as rural development, agriculture, population and trends in demographic changes, project management and Entrepreneurship are fairly well covered by the curricula, emerging issues such as governance,

science and technology, energy policy are taught in only 12% of the Universities. The interface between development theory and public development policy is weak even though the empirical element is robustly treated in most of the universities constituting as much as 80%.

The teaching of policy related course units accounts only 10% with the University of Nairobi and Strathmore University providing the link between policy and development. The design of most of the curricula is inclined toward qualitative aspects of development. While this is not necessarily a problem, development issues tend to be multi-dimensional as a result of which mastery of various quantitative methods and working with numbers would be a definite advantage. While the different curricula for development studies appear to reflect key issues of concern in developing countries, up to 80% of the course units taught in Kenyan universities are methodologically qualitative. Quantitative aspects such as statistics and quantitative techniques and some elements of problem modelling associated with economics methodology are generally ignored. Even though economics is regarded as one the most important contributing social science to development studies (Allan et al 2002) only 5% of the entire Development Studies curricula reflect any systematic treatment of economics as an important contributing social science. Economic analysis is generally ignored, yet, the trend in most developed countries have up to 40% of the content of development studies curriculum made up of some form economics. The variety and differences in the curriculum design could also be a pointer to arbitrariness in design and a lack of policy direction from Commission for University Education (CUE) on the course content, as it is with the specific disciplines of the social sciences.

4.2 Research in Development Studies

Research is a process in which various systematic and scientific methods are applied to generate new and improved knowledge, to solve problems or simply to challenge existing authority. Research can be basic or applied (Mugenda, 2003). Basic research concerns research for the sake of it to extend the frontiers of knowledge in relation to societal development. Applied research concerns applying the knowledge generated in research to solve development problems or formulate policies. In this section we discuss the nature and type of

research production in development studies by the postgraduate students of Kenyan universities and members of the faculty. From student's research activities for both Masters and PhDs seems to have been dominated by topics on the major development sectors in the country such as education, health, human resource development, small and micro entrepreneurship, land, water, political economy of development. At the University of Nairobi where student dissertations are uploaded on the internet, considerable research appears to have been done on human development aspect of development with education accounting for 25% of all MA thesis, health particularly focusing on the themes of Immuno-deficiency syndrome (HIV), malaria health seeking behavior etc account for 32% of all MA, local government 15%, governance 22%, environmental management 12%, energy 6%. PhD research study choices have reflected the same interest in human related development aspects such as education, health, governance, human rights and capability building, small and micro entrepreneurship. The least attractive themes for research at PhD levels include infrastructural areas such as the economic effects of roads infrastructure, sectoral performance of the county, the role of innovations in social transformation, Energy, political economy of transportation, development planning, financial inclusion and science and technology and mining. Furthermore, while graduation in various universities at Masters Level has been comparatively higher, graduation at PhD level has not been as higher. Since 1999, the University of Nairobi has graduated only 5 students in its PhD programme. An analysis of the research themes of the PhD theses indicates that 2 theses are on entrepreneurship, and one each on the themes of education, financial inclusion and social insurance scheme. In other Universities, the narrative is the same with Jomo Kenyatta graduating only five students whose research was in agriculture and role of civil society, the role agroforestry in natural recourse management Nazarene 2, Daystar 3 in community development, Moi 5, with 2 in environmental management, 1 in education and Saint Paul's 3 with all these on theme of biblical interpretation of development.

On the question of publication by members of the faculty and visiting fellowship, the broad themes run through sectoral growth (education, health and entrepreneurship) trade, industry, to farm productivity, food security etc. However, these themes have been researched from various dimensions (Njeru 2009). The new millennium was ushered in with various publications from researchers in Development Studies. In 2003, Kenya adopted the economic recovery strategy for wealth and employment creation for renewed growth in order to generate employment for the unemployed youths, reduce poverty, provide education, health services and improved infrastructure services (GoK, 2003). This strategy identified four priority policy actions necessary to spur the recovery of the Kenyan economy. This included achieving high economic growth rate in an environment of stable macroeconomic stability, strengthening of institutions of

governance in public sector reforms, the rule of law and access to justice, and creating anti-corruption institution. The third priority policy area was rehabilitation and expansion of physical infrastructure.

While the issue of governance began to capture the attention of researchers from as early as 1960s, it is in the 1990s that many researchers have cast a spotlight on its role in development (Njeru, 2009). The issue of the role of the state in development, public sector reforms, law and order, the effect of corruption on national and local level development, decentralization and devolution, the democratization of the development space and particularly the role of civil society organizations, participatory development management. The notable contributors to this sector include *Decentralization and devolution in Kenya* (Kibua et al., 2008). *Theory and practice of governance in Kenya* (Njeru 2006), *Non-profit sector in Kenya: size, scope and financing* (Mitullah et al., 2007). *Local political system of Nairobi* (2015). *Devolution is good for Kenya, but it might brew violence* (Kanyinga 2017).

Sectoral performance and contribution to national development have also been subject of both basic and applied research by faculties in development studies. This has been fueled by the renewed attempt by the government to achieving rapid economic growth to raise the overall standards of living under the economic growth for wealth creation and later under poverty reduction strategy process. Consequently, establishing and increasing performance of agriculture, industry, information and communication technology (ICT), transport, tourism, urban have become critically important. As a result, topics that have exercised the interest of researchers in development studies have concluded local entrepreneurship and development, domestic investment, incomes, monetary policy and financial inclusion, fiscal policy and allocation of public resources for development and the social dimensions of SAPs and the role of informal sector and micro and small enterprise growth and livelihood diversification. Leading publications in this area include Mc Cormick (2009) with industrializing Africa in the Era of Globalization, the Asian Drivers and Africa: Learning from case studies (2008), Agriculture policy in Kenya (Alila, 2012), Rural Urban Linkages and transformations in Kenya (Mitullah, 2005), Industry and Rural Development in the Anglophone African countries (Njeri, 2015), Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's), Trade and Development in Africa (McCormic, 2015), Road Safety policies in Kenya: In search of explanations for non-compliance (Mitullah, 2012). In these publications, it is evident that there is a dearth of research output on the construction and tourism sectors even though current data (economic survey) shows that their contribution to economic growth is big and rising. The service sector, notably the financial sector particularly the theme of financial inclusion has fared better as evidenced in the studies by Rosemary Atieno (2009), financial access and microfinance in Kenya.

In the new millennium, the social aspect of development also gained prominence. This was prefaced by the United Nations Development programme's Human Development Approach which focused on the transformation of human persons through empowerment process incorporating, access to income, knowledge and longevity of life. The UNDP (2010) argued that people are the real asset of a country and the country was obliged to provide all the things that make life worth living such as affordable transport, access to health care, safe water for drinking, more and better schools, sanitation, markets and security for persons and property. According to the KHDR (K) (2010) if access to these valued social services is difficult then considerable human frustration is bound to follow. Attentions to capabilities and human empowerment was flagged by Amartya Sen seminal publication, "Development and Freedom (2001). Researchers in development studies have contributed to the emerging Human Development approach by conducting studies such as Rosemary Atieno's (2009), and Mariara (2008)

The gender dimension in development has also become an important issue over which researchers in development studies have paid attention. This has involved an interrogation of national development institutions for gender mainstreaming because the status of both men and women in development are different but equally important. In this case, the effect of gender inequality on access to economic and political opportunities is critical in the determination of welfare quality of livelihoods across gender.

The issue of sustainability in development which emerged in the 1990, has now acquired more that life significance and features very visibly in research output by researchers in development studies. In this respect development researchers have considered environmental conservation, management of natural resources, environmental planning, conservation strategies, environmental politics, population and development environmental law. Some of the most prominent research publication include, poverty and policy in Kenya by Kabubo Mariara (2007), environment governance in Kenya (Ogidi, 2008), Natural Resource: East Africa infrastructure (Onjala, 2009). The concepts of security and development (securitization of poverty and the concept of human security as conceived by UNDP (1994) is generally given a wide berth, as well as International development studies.

4.3 Interdisciplinarity in Development Studies

According to Ngethe (2002), Development Studies is either inter-disciplinary or not development Studies at all. This means that lecturers and students of Development Studies must have knowledge and understanding of key social science disciplines that have a bearing on development studies as a multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary subject. Indeed Allan, et al. (2002) defines development studies as an inter-disciplinary and applied subject which analyzes the processes of social, cultural, economic and political change in developing countries. Development studies also interrogates contested theories of the process of social change. Albert

Hirschman (1981) in his book *Essays on Trespassing: From economics to politics and beyond*, clearly notes that development studies is inter-disciplinary and argues that when development issues are confined to disciplinary specifications of the disciplinary social sciences, assumptions are incorrect and conclusions naïve. According to him, new and progressive teaching and research in development studies should "combine normative factual, prospective and propositional approaches in ways that demand truly interdisciplinary in terms of sources of knowledge" (Rodrigo et al 2016 pp. 165). The question that immediately arises is, how has such a conception of development studies inspired teaching and research output in Kenyan Universities? In the same view, does the different development studies curriculum for development studies in Kenya reflect inter-disciplinarity in teaching at the post graduate level of Development Studies? According to Hirschman ability to understand and cope with development problems requires a multi-dimensional approach that incorporates economic, social and political tools of analysis. Inter-disciplinarity seems to have formed part of the philosophy for the establishment of IDS university of Nairobi judging by the diversified qualification of the faculty and the different approaches to solving development challenges (Ng'ethe 2002, Njeru 2012). It is also very clear from the admission criteria of most universities in Kenya that a basic bachelor's degree in any field is sufficient to be admitted for Master of Development Studies. It is assumed that given their diverse background, relationships between knowledge and development from diverse standpoints will sprout. According to Amartya Sen (1999), Development Studies is concerned with reversing the disciplinary "solitariness of human effort to improve their individual lives". Therefore, in teaching of development studies, drawing on ideas, concepts and theories across the natural and social sciences should be the way. This is reinforced by the views of Christopher Freeman (1973) who argued "Neither economists, nor socialists, nor political scientists have satisfactory theories of social change and have no otherwise but to incorporate natural scientists (1973.p.6).

In other words, development problems tend to be multidimensional and uncertain and only inter-disciplinarity can provide workable solutions or a better understanding. Questions such as how modern biotechnology can be useful to productive activities in rural villages cannot be answered adequately from a narrow disciplinary perspective (Rodrigo et al 2016). In science – technology – development dependency developed in Latin America, the significance of science and technology in Development Studies is established (Rodrigo, et al 2016). This therefore justifies employment of natural scientists to teach in development studies. In other words, breaking out of disciplinary "silos" that separate social sciences from technology and natural sciences proved fruitful for teaching and research in development studies in Latin America (Rodrigo et al 2016). Can the same be said of teaching Development Studies in Kenyan universities? Evidence shows that the IDS at the University of Nairobi has 20 lecturers, 4 of whom are economists, 3 are socialists, 6

political scientists, 2 environmental law experts, 1 population and demography and others whose backgrounds are either in philosophy, religion and other social sciences. The publications of IDS clearly demonstrate the “leaving ajar” the door of inter-disciplinarity by allowing scholars from law, land development, urban planning and science to partner with IDS staff to publish and disseminate research findings. Two of the staff at IDS have PhD’s in development studies. However, their publications and teaching show a close affinity with their backgrounds. In other universities, interdisciplinary is not visible and the cross-disciplinary relationship is undeveloped owing to the fact many of them serve merely as teaching centres without any research activities. One curious aspect of teaching MA in Development Studies is that allocation of course units is based on broader qualifications and not specialization so that it is not uncommon to find an expert in social dimension of development teaching legal aspects of development or energy economics or econometrics (Amutabi 2017). This could explain why research publications are very few as ideally, teaching should be informed by research resulting in relevance for both (Ngethe 2002). Evidence reveals that most lecturers teach what is available creating a situation where senior teaching staff are a jack of all trades and a master of none (Amutabi 2017). Evidence of post graduate teaching also reveals that specific curricular is influenced by the qualifications of those writing it. In this case if the majority of the teaching staff are from sociology, the curricula for Development Studies will focus on sociology of development resulting in some very dramatic courses such etymology of witchcraft in development management and morality of development etc (Cf. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Agriculture and Technology). There is therefore no integration of curriculum for teaching MA in Development studies and research output. The commercialization of development research through formation of departmental research firms and consultancies compromises commitment to research for growth of academic knowledge (see for example CUEA). The tendency by universities to treat departments/Institutes of development studies as commercial arms has diverted their focus from enriching what their students learn from various research activities.

4.4 Linkage between Research and Policy

The role of researchers from development studies departments in various Kenyan universities is in influencing public policy remains unclear. The extent to which students and lecturers in development studies are able to impact policy and therefore welfare of the people appears to have dwindled (Ngowi 2009). Development studies scholars are rarely incorporated in decision making advisory roles of various public development agencies, save for a few who owe their positions to connections in government but not as representative of universities or research community or on the basis of relevant research output. This is unlike in the 1960s and 1970 when policy research appears to have been stronger Njeru (2009). However, some policy research works that have had some notable impact on government actions include Jane

Mariara’s, *Poverty and Policy in Kenya* (2006). This book has documented evidence measurements of poverty which has enhanced the targeting of poverty interventions in Kenya. Through this book the government has now developed a national poverty index that facilitates the distribution of devolved funds under equalization fund. Rosemary Atieno’s *Government policy and female labour force participation in Kenya* (2009), has among others has contributed to mainstreaming of gender in public decision-making process and specifically the introduction of the gender table in all government ministries to deal specifically with work related gender issues. Calistus Juma’s *Innovation and Its Enemies: Why People Resist New Technologies* (Juma, 2016) has highlighted the effect of culture and attitude toward growth and development of technology in Africa. This has resulted in enhanced government capacity building on the use of technology in public-sector decision-making process and integration of Information communication and technology for schools at an early age. Mitullah Winnie, Karuti Kanyinga and Njagi Sebastian (2007) *The Non-Profit Sector in Kenya: Size, Scope and Financing* has played a major role in establishment of National Non-Governmental (NGO) directory and played an indirect role in enactment of NGO Coordination Act (2012) and the organization of the NGO Coordination Board. The link between policy research and development however remains generally weak. The works of Dorothy McCormick (1995, 1996, 1997) on the role of the Small and Micro enterprises in national development contributed directly to formulation of Sessional paper no. 2 of 2005 on development of micro and small enterprises for wealth and employment creation for poverty reduction.

There is no clear evidence to show that research publications by various universities teaching development studies directly influence public policy actions. Indeed, according to Ngethe (2002) the major focus of many universities in Kenya is teaching. Even though most research document/publications usually have a section for implications and / or recommendations, the extent to which research findings influence policy actions is compromised by inability of researchers to develop, concise policy briefs to enable policymakers to understand the policy value of research (Ngowi 2009). According to Ngowi (2009) the main cause of this omissions is lack of knowledge on the need and how to do the briefs and lack of resources. Thus, development studies researchers have not utilized the opportunities available to inform policy, thus denying policy makers the opportunity to benefit from innovative research outputs. This scenario is exasperated by poor and or lack of dissemination of research findings. As in the case of Kabubo (2006) during the dissemination seminar, policy makers in the capacity of permanent secretary were invited to officiate but hardly stayed long to listen to technical and policy relevant presentations. As indicated by this example, organizers of the research dissemination seminars do not create a conducive climate and provide incentives for policy makers to engage in debates with development studies researchers, which would improve

development policy making process. Departments and institutes of development studies rarely organize fora for discussing important development issues such as the impact of devolution, pre-or post-budget debates and discussions in order to inform policy through empirical research findings. The lively issue-based discussions during the *IDS at 50 years* (2017) is an example that needs to be emulated.

However individual researchers and lecturers have frequently been invited by *Television talk shows* and *Newspapers columns* to comment on important development issues. Some development studies professors and lecturers have informed public discourse on various development issues, among these are professor Karuti Kanyinga who frequently wrote on *politics of development in the Sunday nation*, Winnie Mitullah who comments on *devolution and the political economy* issues on various TV shows, Professor Njoroge of JKUAT who writes on *education and social policy* in the Sunday nation and professor Wanyande (civil societies and governance). Whether policy makers follow these debates and analyses and pick out salient points remains unclear. It should be noted however, that various development studies researchers and lecturers have been part of various task forces and various standing committees on various issues, in Kenya, thereby impacting and influencing various policies. In this category one can mention Professor Winnie Mitullah who was a member of the taskforce on devolved Government (2010), Professor Wanyande who served as a member of the constitutional implementation commission (2010) Professor Lawrence Njoroge who serves as member of the presidential standing committee on national values and cohesion and Dr Regina Mwatha of the department of sociology and gender studies, (Kenyatta university) who served as a commissioner of ombudsman office 2013-2017.

This shows that when it desires, the government frequently use development Studies researchers and lecturers as consultants and/or resources persons to provide various kinds of counsel and guidance including on critical policy issues.

V. CONCLUSION

This study has provided evidence that clearly show widespread diversity in the curricula for postgraduate studies in development studies across the Kenyan universities. This diversity point to one disturbing conclusion: that in Kenya the discipline of development studies is not based on convergence on the issues to be learnt, but also that it seems to be in a permanent state of emergence as an academic discipline. An academic discipline must unite scholars and researchers behind a particular object, unique theories or principles and concepts of research and learning and a body of accumulated specialists. The lack of widely shared institutional manifestation of core issues/ subjects of study in development studies imply that the research and teaching is based on “anything goes” which is absurd. This is reflected in the background of those teaching the subject who teach and research in a manner that is not immediately relevant to the

development studies. No wonder, there is very low – level of integration between teaching and research, a fact that is not helpful to the development of the discipline (Ng’ethe, 2002). The redemption seems to lie in some conscious effort to evolve a common understanding of what development studies entails as an academic discipline and as a practice in the context of policy.

The way development studies is taught in Kenyan Universities does not demonstrate consistent commitment to National Development goals or even teaching the discipline the way it ought to be taught (an issue where there is still very deep disagreements). Evidence shows that some universities design their curricular to suit the ability of the available staff implying that teaching and research are not anchored on any philosophy and even ideology. Furthermore, according to study findings, teaching is rarely informed by research at both MA and PhD level. Even though lack of funding could account for a fairly big percentage of the situation (Ngethe 2002) low regard for research compared to teaching could equally provide a major explanation. In virtually all Kenyan universities teaching particular course units at post graduate level is not on account of specialization and or research output but willingness to do it. As Amitabh (2015) points out, most universities in Kenya view research not as equal to teaching but secondary to teaching. This is clearly the case with development studies (Ngethe 2002). The situation is particularly dire with regard to use by universities of part time teaching staff. Many development studies departments/Institutes are under established in terms of staff making it necessary to use part-time teaching staff since they tend to be cheaper and with less demands (Altbach, 2000). Current statistics indicate that up to 1/3 of all lecturers at postgraduate level are part-time staff. The situation according to Mwiria and Carey, (2007) is worse in private universities where half of the teaching staff is currently part-timers drawn from the public universities. While the real effect of part-time lecturer on teaching and research in the universities in general is unclear and evolving according to Pankin et al, (2011) part-time lecturers are less likely to know institutional policies and programs, are not committed to the mission of the department and the university and due uncertainty of their status generally avoid any extra effort necessary to become better. This ends up hurting the most important focus of the department, research (Mwiria and Carey, 2007).

With regard to inter-disciplinarity, learning across the disciplines is very critical for the growth of theoretical and policy dimensions of development studies. Development studies is broad and diverse, and ideological driven. In this case no one can claim to be an expert in any area of the discipline or the subject itself. Further there is no one theory of or approach to development that is satisfactory even though some are acknowledged to be dominant. In the words of Ng’ethe, (2002) development studies should not be afraid to “leave its door a jar” for researchers from physical sciences, technology and engineering and earth sciences in order to generate innovative ideas and improve and widen useful

theories. In short development studies cannot and should not be taught as the other more systematized social sciences. Teaching development studies can seek a combination of approaches derived from economics, mathematics, sociology, anthropology, biology, meteorology and physics in order to widen the perspectives of its theories, methods and analytical tools necessary to interpret cultural, political, economic, environmental and social change (Rodrigo et al 2016). Deferred inter-disciplinarity has limited and arrested multi-disciplinary learning that is so basic to development studies.

Countries need social economic and political policies to achieve sustained economic growth and development. The linkage between academic study and policy is very important for innovation and substance of economic growth and development. There is limited active participation of development studies scholars and researchers in national debates that shape the processes of development policy in Kenya. The government no longer engages institutes and departments of development studies to conduct research objective analysis leading to policy advice (Ndungu 2018). For policy focused studies the government frequently turns to its own funded Kenya institute of public policy and research (KIPPRA) or internally organized ministry research departments. Research by development studies faculty and students is not any longer policy focused. There is no longer any practical push to undertake research and analysis of various policy issues and communicate the findings to the government and non-state development actors, as it was the case in the 1960 and 1970's. The government no longer shows interest in research findings of development studies researchers from universities due to their independent nature and fairly higher cost of their engagement. As a consequence, many researchers have resorted to consultancies without any policy value.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

There is need for a national conversation involving all the universities offering post graduate studies in development studies about what exactly is the content of development studies as an academic discipline and how it ought to be taught and practiced. While this may sound undemocratic given that inherent liberty universities have in formulating curricula, but it will help streamline teaching and research and facilitate monitoring and evaluation in furtherance of relevance and quality.

The research topics and areas should promote inter-disciplinarity. Supervision should incorporate scholars from various backgrounds, especially where empirical analysis of issues is required. For example, if one is studying the role of liberalization on agricultural production, then, a case should be made to incorporate supervision from say, political science and/or Economics or Development Economics.

Faculty in the department of development studies should be encouraged to participate in community outreach programmes. This should be made part of the requirements for

career promotion. This calls for reforms so that lecturers are trained in a specific aspect of development studies but with open pathways for broadening of knowledge through cross pollination of ideas.

To benchmark teaching and research in development studies should reflect international best practices. Departments/institutes of development studies should be encouraged to establish, local and international networks, partnerships and collaborations in teaching and research.

Teaching and research in development studies should be demand-driven. This is important in allowing the potential employers of the graduates to play a role in curriculum development and research output, which is relevant, quality and interdisciplinary objective.

To harness the policy import of development research, all researchers should be required to develop clear and concise policy briefs that points to how the research findings can be converted into practical actions for the government and other development actors to use in decision making and management. Incentives in terms of financial rewards and or promotions to higher grades for truly transformational research findings that change the livelihoods of the people and communities should be provided.

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