

**The Arts and the Sciences and the shaping of political orientations in Kenya:
Evidence from university undergraduates.**

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April 2013

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Introduction

One of the perennial questions that have preoccupied thinkers since antiquity is how the education system and the political system inter-relate. Plato and his successors such as Aristotle, Rousseau, Locke and de Tocqueville were basically concerned with what came to be known as studies of “citizenship” and “national character” (Boyd, 1970, p. 56; Wilborg, 2000; Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). In more recent times these studies have been replaced by the study of political socialization. However, the questions that both approaches seek to answer are basically the same: Are there strong links between individual personality and the values of the political system? If such links exist, does political socialization tend towards the development of a particular type or “the right kind” of personality? Most scholars, both of the past and the present, answer these questions in the affirmative (Massialas, 1969, pp. 18-20; Boman, 2006). According to DiRenzo (1990, p. 33), a lack of substantial congruence between personality and socio-political roles and organisations results in a contradiction that may have dysfunctional consequences for both the individual and the social and political order.

The education system is now recognised as a key institution in any political system by virtue of its ability to communicate political orientations and ideals. Whether these orientations and ideals are democratic or authoritarian largely depend on the character of the political system under which it functions.

As an agent of political socialization, the education system is seen as having a special significance in the potential that it has for shaping its incumbents. Indeed, education has always been a major component in democratic theory because it is through education that democratic ideals

can be communicated (Coleman, 1965, p. 6; Clarke, 1981, p. 322; Carleheden, 2006). Obviously, it works just as well for authoritarianism. As Harber (1997) argues, democracy and authoritarianism are both socially learned behaviour.

Formal education has been regarded as one of the key variables in the socialization of political attitudes (Barkan, 1975; Althusser, 1977, p. 146; Achola, 1980, p. 192; Boman, 2006). This is so because from the kindergarten to the university, the system serves a cultural transfer function and transmits some values with the direct purpose of reinforcing the political *status quo* (Coetzee, 1981, p. 1600; Sifuna, 1985, p. 2; Magstadt, 1999, p. 253; Carleheden, 2006).

The formal education system that exists in Kenya today is a legacy of missionary activities and British colonialism. Through its education system the colonial state sought to encourage the development of unquestioning and loyal subjects that would eventually form an elitist client class (Prewitt, 1971, p. 153; Sifuna, 2001, p. 6). As happened elsewhere in Africa (Ake, 1993, p. 70) with Kenya's independence in 1963, the emergent leadership chose to take over rather than transform the colonial system as popular nationalist aspirations demanded. This helped the colonial regime to leave in place a client class with which it "could do business" (Holmquist, Weaver and Ford, 1994, p. 74). In this way many aspects of the colonial status quo could be maintained while making appropriate cosmetic changes.

Accordingly, a new philosophy of education needed to be enunciated by the newly independent Kenya State. Kenya's philosophy of education can be derived from various policy documents (Kenya, 1964; 1965; 1978; 1984; 1988; 1999). This philosophy that is supposed to inform all curricula and programmes within the education system is meant to result in certain desirable political socialization outcomes that include national unity, patriotism, promotion of equality, and democracy. However, as has been observed by various authors (Ombaka, 1994, pp. 27-32; Sifuna, 2001, p. 5; Prewitt and Oculi, 1971), Kenya's education system in reality is still very much characterised by autocratic theories and practices. This situation therefore gives rise to two contradictions. First, whereas official educational policies espouse the values of democracy, the practices in the education system do not support such democratic values. Second, in spite of Kenya being a nominal democracy as stated in her constitution, the practices of the political system have more often than not been undemocratic. As Dawson and Prewitt (1977) aptly observed: "although the political leaders stress equalitarian democracy, the schools are run by an elitist, hierarchical prefectorial system... The values implicitly transmitted by the school as a social system are incongruent with the articulated national aspirations" (p. 155)

Both contradictions arise from the distortion of national values engendered by neopatrimonial rule that was founded by President Kenyatta and perfected by his successor, President Moi. According to Walle (2000, p. 3), the term neopatrimonialism captures the thesis that a regime is a hybrid of modern bureaucratic practices and patrimonial practices.

Moi's popularisation of the "Nyayo Philosophy" was designed to acquire the control of the state, the consolidation of power, the legitimisation of his leadership, the broadening of his political base and popular support (Adar & Munyae, 2002, p. 3). Accordingly, through the enactment of new laws and the use of old ones, President Moi got the right to literally suspend democracy (Ogot, 1995, pp. 187-213; Kimondo, 1996, pp. 54-56).

And yet, Kenya's political system under President Moi, like any other, recognised the central role of the education system as a means of political socialization. Thus, it sought opportunities in which to use the education system towards its own ends. Two programmes that the Kenyan state under President Moi attempted to use in influencing the political attitudes of university undergraduate students are worth noting. They illustrate very clearly in what ways the state contradicted its own professed ideals for both the education system and the political system.

The first one was the Pre-university National Service Scheme that was jointly run by the National Youth Service in the Office of the President, the Ministry of Education and the public universities. Its true intentions were not lost on many as various letters to the editor published in the daily newspapers at the time reveal (*The Standard*, February 22, 1984, p. 4; *The Weekly Review*, May 17, 1985, p. 2). It was largely seen as part of President Moi's schemes to entrench his personal rule by trying to mould undergraduates who would be trained into unconditional obedience.

Far from achieving that which its authors imagined it would do - tame and "discipline" the supposedly unruly undergraduates - on occasion it seemed only to achieve the reverse. On one occasion they even rioted during the course of their training! After five years of often-chaotic operation the programme was abruptly stopped without ceremony or explanation late in 1989.

The second programme that started in 1978 with President Moi's ascendancy to power could be seen mainly as an attempt to co-opt the supposedly hostile intellectual community to support his regime. One of the policies in this programme was the inclusion of selected university student leaders in presidential delegations on state visits (*The Weekly Review*, February 15, 1985, pp. 3-6). Another policy in this programme was that of convivial visits of student leaders to State House for "fatherly advise" and the president's reciprocal visits with the students "for tea".

The president's objective in all these policies was to rid himself of opposition to his regime in the universities and win total support and loyalty. However, these attempts at developing camaraderie with the students also often met with mixed fortunes. This was because the student leadership that was amenable to such manipulation were at best political moderates to begin with. As Prewitt (1971, p. 166) observed in his study of students at Makerere University, this type of student leadership is "more interested about ingratiating themselves with the authorities than challenging them". In the final analysis, their stand was never representative of the activist student population who were more radical in inclination and insistent on claiming their democratic space.

However, even as these schemes were underway, what has been described as “the third wave of democratisation” (Huntington, 1991; Maeir, 1993; Danziger, 1995) had started in Europe in the late 1980s and was to break on Africa’s shores in the early 1990s and Kenya was not spared. As Walle (2000, p. 5) has noted, this wave of democratisation in Africa could be understood to have resulted in part from the contradictions inherent in the post-colonial neopatrimonial order. One of these contradictions is that of values vis-à-vis practices as presented above with regard to the education and political systems in Kenya. It was perhaps thus not coincidental that the political protests that spurred the democratisation movement were typically initiated by university students (Walle, 2000, p. 4) among other disaffected segments of the population. As Mulei (1992, p. 46) has noted, one of the ways in which democracy was trampled in Kenya was through “the calculated emasculation of the academia”. It was therefore not a wonder that university students could have been at the forefront of this movement.

Whether it was advocating Mr. Oginga Odinga's right as the Chairman of the Kenya People's Union (KPU) to address them in 1969 (Lamba, 2001, p. 25), or in protest at the use of assassination as a political tool in the case of J.M.Kariuki in 1975 (*The Weekly Review*, May 5, 1975, pp. 4-7; June 2, 1975, p. 5), or that of Dr. Robert Ouko in 1990, that university students in Kenya have a history of championing the cause of democracy cannot be doubted. And yet the image of university students in Kenya is often contradictory. Just as they often champion the cause of democracy they are not averse on occasion to engaging in activities that portray them as being autocratic and intolerant (Kenya, 1999, p. 177).

As noted earlier, the stability of a political system depends on the compatibility between the personalities of the majority of individuals in society and their political system. In the context of democratisation in Kenya it is therefore important to find out the extent to which this compatibility exists between the attitudes and orientations of a significant group of Kenyans, namely university undergraduate students, and the political system as it exists today. Having clearly played a role in democratisation in the 1990s, it should be of some consequence to know what their attitudes imply for continuing democratisation in Kenya. A study is needed to gauge the democratic ideals, attitudes and orientations of university undergraduate students in Kenya as people who are strategically placed to provide future leadership in the country.

Although political education programmes are uniform, manipulable and deliberate as contrasted to family teaching, they generally fall short of total control and uniform effect. Uniformity of programme and intention rarely means uniformity of application. However, the amount of harmony between values shaped in the school and those applicable to the political world vary.

Statement of the Problem

Given the foregoing background, the problem for this study was conceived as an investigation of whether there were any differences in the socialization of political ideals, attitudes and orientations among the undergraduate students in Kenya's universities based on whether they were pursuing liberal arts-based or science-based courses. Considering the great potential that education has in promoting the democratisation of Kenyan society, the attitudinal and orientational outcomes of the respective academic orientations may be of significant import to the country's prospects of democratisation. To the extent that one or the other may not be socializing democratic attitudes may therefore have important ramifications on the role of the education system in democratization that would need to be addressed.

Purpose of the study

Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to find out the extent to which the two academic orientations viz., liberal arts-based and science-based courses differed in socializing democratic orientations in the students. An important issue of debate with regard to the role of education in political socialization has revolved around the relative merits of a liberal-arts based as opposed to a science-based programme of study on democratisation. As Lang (1999, p 135) notes, issues such as diversity, poverty, freedom of speech, empowerment, affirmative action, gender and equal opportunity permeate the curriculum of the humanities and social sciences and this makes a difference in shaping attitudes of students to these issues and to democracy: in effect it democratises them. He continues to argue for the importance of a liberal arts education at the undergraduate level in America as follows (Lang, 1999, p 137):

..the undergraduate years are the most fruitful and for most students, the last period for nourishing their ideals and expanding their social perspectives. Thus, undergraduate education both in and outside the classroom should be designed to enrich the experience of students by inculcating democratic values, respect for the institution of democracy, ethical perspectives, civic duty and social responsibility.

No doubt there is a similar, if not even a greater, case to be made for the same in developing countries such as Kenya that also aspire to embrace democracy.

According to Rokeach (1968, pp 450, 454), attitudes can be described as a type of subsystem of beliefs that are acquired through the "principles of learning". They are learned as part of the process of growing up and tend to remain fairly stable during a person's life (Sears and Funk, 1999, p 1).

Significance of the study

The study may therefore prove to be significant in the following ways:

1. It may be useful in finding out the extent to which academic orientation affects the socialization of political attitudes and orientations.
2. It may afford the opportunity to assess how the deficiencies in either one or both of these academic orientations in imparting democratic values may be redressed.
3. It may facilitate better policy formulation on how best to shape an education system that is suitable for the successful democratization of Kenyan society.

Hypothesis

The study set out to explore the following hypothesis: The political attitudes of students pursuing liberal arts-based courses are more democratic than the political attitudes of those students pursuing science-based courses. Thus the following null hypothesis was tested.

There is no difference in the political attitudes of those students pursuing liberal arts-based courses and those students pursuing science-based courses.

Research methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design and was quantitative in approach. This study was carried out on the campuses of the six universities comprising three private universities (University of Eastern Africa, Baraton; Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA); and Daystar University) and three public universities (Kenyatta University (KU); Maseno University and Egerton University).

Population

The universities in Kenya comprised the population for the study. The universities were chosen for the original study for several reasons some that remain relevant to the present purpose. The first is that being tertiary institutions, they logically represent the ultimate confluence of the socialization effects of the formal education system with the other primary agents of the same process. The second is what may be described as the country's demographic profile. There is every reason to believe that the main age groups represented in the universities are, or very soon will be, the significant group in active politics in Kenya, especially as voters. In any case, their political attitudes and orientations cannot be taken lightly. Almost certainly and to a great extent, it is this group perhaps more than any other, whose attitudes and orientations will determine the character of democracy as far as its future development in Kenya is concerned.

Sampling

Samples were drawn from the six universities. The target was to have 150 informants from each university to give a total of 900 informants for the whole study. In the 1998/99 academic year when the sampling for the study was done, the three secular universities selected for the study

accounted for some 49.2 per cent of the total enrolment of undergraduates in all the secular universities. The three Christian universities accounted for more than 70 per cent of the total undergraduate enrolment in private universities (Kenya, 1999, p. 182). The total number of undergraduate student population in the six universities numbered 23,845 students in all. Given this population, this sample size was calculated to be more than adequate for testing the hypothesis.

It was assumed that given the similarities among the general population of university undergraduates and the fairly large sample size for the study, a convenience sample of classes across the universities depending on their size and availability would be as good as random samples chose any other way. It was further assumed that such a sample would adequately capture the categories of the independent variables of the study.

The rationale for using this procedure to procure samples that are then treated as random samples is well grounded in research (Dunn, 1964, p. 12; Remington & Schork, 1970, p.93; Armitage, 1971, p. 99; Colton, 1974, pp. 4-7; Daniel, 1978, p. 3). The rationale in this case is that university undergraduate students are a fairly homogenous group in terms of the critical path they follow through the education system to get to the university (in other words, their socialization through the education system). As such, any sample, provided that it is not too small, could be considered to be representative of any random sample of the population of undergraduate students in Kenya.

The study also took into account the continuous nature of the socialization process by stratifying the various samples to reflect the four years of undergraduate education. This aspect gave the study its developmental or cross-comparative perspective.

The study sample consisted of 879 informants. Of these, 47.2 per cent were males while 52.3 per cent were females. Four informants did not indicate their sex. In terms of the distribution across the six universities, CUEA accounted for 17.6 per cent of the sample, Daystar for 18 per cent, Egerton for 18.3 per cent, KU for 17 per cent, Maseno for 14 per cent and Baraton for 15.1 per cent. This information is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Distribution of the sample across the universities

University	Number of Informants	Percentage (%)
CUEA	155	17.6
Daystar	158	18.0
Egerton	161	18.3
Kenyatta	149	17.0

Maseno	123	14.0
Baraton	133	15.1
Total	879	100

With regard to the year of study, 360 students or 41 per cent were in their third year, 239 students or 27.2 per cent in their first year, and 174 students or 19.8 per cent in their second year. Fourth year students comprised 101 students or 11.5 per cent of the informants while three students did not indicate their year of study. Fourth year students were remarkably fewer in the sample because of the increasing specialization as students progress through the university and hence the relatively smaller classes of fourth year students.

The informants were more or less evenly distributed in terms of whether they were pursuing liberal arts-based or science-based programmes (451 informants or 51.3 per cent of the sample against 419 informants or 47.7 per cent of the sample respectively). With regard to this variable, nine informants did not specify their degree programmes.

Selection of data collection instruments

A self-administered questionnaire containing three attitude scales comprised the sole tool of data collection for this study. These attitude scales were of the Likert type. These attitude scales were adapted or borrowed from Shaw and Wright (1967) and Robinson and Shaver (1975). The instruments were duly piloted and their reliability established. The questionnaire yielded a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.85. This was subsequently followed by a factor analysis to isolate the various attitude dimensions of the various scales.

The scales

A total of three scales were used namely, the *Family Ideology Scale*, the *University's Social-Political Environment Scale*, and the *Authoritarianism Scale*. Following is a brief description and discussion of each one.

The Family Ideology Scale

This scale was developed by Levinson and Huffman (Shaw & Wright, 1967, pp. 66-69) and is entitled *The Traditional Family Ideology (TFI) Scale* and was used in its abbreviated form for this study. According to Shaw and Wright, the 12-item abbreviated form of the original 58-item scale

has proved to be just as reliable and valid as the longer version. For this study it was further abbreviated to 11 items.

It is a multi-dimensional scale and the domain strata identified in the original form as it was developed by Levinson and Huffman were: *Parent-child relationships; husband-wife roles and relationships; general male-female relationships; concepts of masculinity and femininity; and general values and aims*. However, the factor analysis carried out for this study identified four strata of attitude domains that were labelled as follows:

- Pre-eminence of male authority
- Behavioural norms for offspring
- Family personality attributes; and
- Parental morality socialization.

The University's Socio-Political Environment Scale

This scale was developed by the Academic Freedom Committee, Illinois Division of the American Civil Rights Union, and published by Psychometric Affiliates in 1954 (Shaw & Wright, 1967, pp. 145-147). Its proper title is the *Academic Freedom Survey*. The original scale had 23 items and covered various aspects of school life and various groups in the school including teachers and other general issues. This was further reduced to 12 items without loss of reliability. For this study, three further items were eliminated either because they seemed redundant or inapplicable in the Kenyan context.

In its original form it was conceived to have three strata of attitude domains namely the *political system environment of the institution; the academic life; and the university administration-students relationships*. From the factor analysis carried out for this study, three attitude domains emerged and were labelled as follows:

- Students' political freedom
- Students' access to university resources and facilities; and
- Students' academic freedom.

The Authoritarianism Scale

This scale is adapted from a Likert-type scale designed by Edwards (1941, pp. 579-582) to measure pro-fascist attitudes. The items were collected from a variety of sources including studies of Stagner and Gundlach and writings of Childs, Mann and Kolnai (Robinson & Shaver, 1975, p. 367). For this study only seven items were selected from the original 22 items due to their

relevance to the Kenyan situation. As originally developed it was conceived to have three strata of attitude domains namely *considerations of strength and weakness; dominance and subservience; and supremacy and inferiority*. From the factor analysis done for this study three attitude domains were once again identified and labelled as follows:

- Restrictions on women's rights
- Limitations on civil rights; and
- Low achievement motivation.

The Findings

The hypothesis stated as follows:

The political attitudes of students pursuing liberal arts--based courses will be more democratic than the political attitudes of those students pursuing science-based courses.

The background to this hypothesis, the results obtained and their interpretation are discussed below.

Description and explanation

This hypothesis has been explored in several previous studies (Prewitt 1971; Barkan, 1975; Lang, 1999) and their findings suggest that significant differences exist between these two groups. These differences range from awareness and interest in political issues to actual attitudes where arts students have even been described as "participatory democrats", and science students as "authoritarian technocrats" and other adjectives to that effect. This hypothesis therefore set out to test whether these observations could be confirmed by the political orientations of the university undergraduate students in this study using the following instruments.

Instruments of the test

Out of the ten attitude dimensions in the three scales only in two of them was there a relationship between the degree programme of the informants and their political orientations. This happened in one instance in *The Family Ideology Scale* and also once in *The Authoritarianism Scale*. As for the attitude components in *The University's Socio-Political Environment Scale*, no significant relationships were found.

(A) *The Family Ideology Scale*

There proved to be a significant association between the type of degree programme and political orientations in this scale. This was with regard to the attitude dimension labelled *Family personality attributes*. The results are presented in Table 2.

Although there was only a weak but negative association ($\gamma = -0.17$) it was significant and therefore lent minimal support for the hypothesis that Arts students had a more democratic orientation than Science students. This meant that Arts students were less likely to feel, for example, that unusual children ought to be encouraged to be like other children or to think that a person's worth could be measured by the amount of love,

Table 2: Degree orientation and students' attitudes towards *family personality attributes*

Degree Programme	<i>Family personality attributes</i>			N
	Autocratic %	Moderate %	Democratic %	
Arts	29.6	62.7	7.8	450
Science	37.9	56.1	6.0	419
N	292	517	60	869

$\gamma = -0.17, p < 0.01$

gratitude and respect that they had for their parents than their science counterparts. This indicated that the liberal arts-based degree programmes, more than the science-based degree programmes, tended to make students less conformist or traditional as far as *Family personality attributes* were concerned. However, it is moot whether it is the curricula that help to shape such attitudes or whether it is the people who are predisposed in a particular way that end up taking either of the two academic orientations. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis since the sample gamma could not have occurred by chance ($p < 0.01$). It appears that the Arts students favoured democratic *Family personality attributes* more than their Science counterparts. As already observed by various authors the results in this regard would seem to reinforce the view that a liberal arts-based curricula is more likely to lead to democratic orientations than a science-based one.

(B) The Authoritarianism Scale

With respect to this scale, the programme of study proved to be associated with political orientations with reference to one of its attitude dimensions. This was the factor labelled *Restrictions on women's rights* for which results are presented in Table 3.

There was a negative but weak association ($\gamma = -0.19$) between the degree programme of study and attitudes towards restrictions on women's rights. While a little over three-fifths of the Arts students had a democratic orientation that supported women's rights, the corresponding proportion for their Science counterparts was just over one-half. Conversely, a greater proportion of Science students (about 13 per cent) than Arts students supported restrictions on women's rights, a trend that was carried over into the proposition of granting women only some rights. Thus, there was support for the hypothesis.

It is apparent that there was some independent effect of the curricula that predisposed the Arts students towards this orientation more than their Science counterparts. It is possible that this may be partly attributed to their exposure to curricula content that makes them more gender sensitive. As various authors have argued, liberal

Table 3: Degree programme by students' attitudes towards *restrictions on women's rights*

Degree Programme	<i>Restrictions on women's rights</i>			N
	Should be restricted %	Should have limited rights %	Should have equal rights %	
Arts	7.5	31.3	61.2	441
Science	12.9	35.1	52.0	410
N	86	282	483	851

Gamma = -0.19, $p < 0.01$

arts education exposes the students to a greater awareness of such issues as equality, freedom and democracy (Kissinger, 1964; Prewitt, 1971; Barkan, 1975; Lang, 1999).

The conclusion is that in the study sample, degree programme had a significant relationship with orientations towards women's rights. Accordingly, Arts students tended to be more tolerant of such rights than Science students. The hypothesis that Science students would be less democratic in their political orientations is therefore supported with respect to women's rights.

Control Variables

When other independent variables of the study were introduced into the analysis, degree programmes proved to be an important factor in modifying some political orientations. The consideration of age and sex of the informant and whether they were attending a private or public university had a mediating influence on the effects of degree programme on political orientations when they were introduced into the analysis. These variables variously modified the influence of the curricula towards certain attitude dimensions to a significant extent and these need to be explored further.

Age

When the ages of the informants were the control variable, the degree programme in certain instances influenced orientations towards *Family personality attributes*, *Access to university resources/facilities* and *Restrictions on women's rights*. The results are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Degree programme(Arts/Science) by attitudes towards family personality attributes, access to resources and facilities, and restrictions on women's rights controlling for age.

Age group in years	N	<i>Family Personality Attributes</i>		N	<i>Access to Resources and Facilities</i>		N	<i>Restrictions on Women's Rights</i>	
		1.0 Gamma	Significance		2.0 Gamma	Significance		Gamma	Significance
20 and below	235	0.06	NS	231	-0.14	NS	232	-0.29	0.05
21-22	327	-0.24	0.05	321	-0.14	NS	318	-0.23	0.05

23-24	188	-0.25	NS	187	0.31	0.05	187	0.04	NS
25 and above	115	-0.25	NS	112	0.08	NS	110	-0.32	0.05

Age and *Family personality attributes*

The first instance in which age had an impact on attitudes occurred in the *Family personality attributes* component in *The Family Ideology Scale*. There was a negative moderate association ($\gamma = -0.24$) between the degree programme and *Family personality attributes* among those informants aged between 21 and 22 years. As anticipated by the hypothesis, Arts students had a more democratic perception of *Family personality attributes* than their Science counterparts. Although the gamma values for the other age groups were not significant it was apparent that apart from those aged 20 years and below among whom science students seemed to have a more democratic orientation towards family personality attributes, in the rest of the age groups, Arts students seemed to have a more democratic orientation.

The null hypothesis was rejected since a relationship such as the one observed could not have occurred by chance ($p < 0.05$). Thus, it is concluded that in the population from which the sample was drawn, among the 21-22 year olds, there existed an association between the programme of study and orientations towards *Family personality attributes* whereby arts students had a more democratic orientation than their science counterparts.

Age and *Access to university resources/facilities*

Another instance where consideration of age of the informants revealed a relationship between degree programme and political orientations was with regard to the *Students' access to university resources/facilities* dimension of *The University's Socio-Political Environment Scale*. In this case, there was a moderate positive association ($\gamma = 0.31$) between degree programme and perceptions of access to university resources and facilities among Arts and Science students aged between 23-24 years (See Table 5).

The reasons why Science students in this age group alone perceived significantly greater access to university resources and facilities than their Arts counterparts are not self-evident. However, there are two related factors that may provide a plausible explanation for this observation. The first one has to do with the effect of age as an independent variable. The second has to do with the response by university authorities to requests for access to various university resources and facilities by Arts and Science students respectively.

Beginning with age, in the study sample, the 23-24 year old age group comprised 76 per cent of the third year and 12 per cent of the fourth year students. By virtue of their duration of stay at the university (and their age as well), they were best able to judge the extent of relative access to various university resources and facilities based on whether one was an Arts or Science student. This may explain why it was the only age group that registered a significant association between degree programme and the dimension *Access to university resources/facilities*. This consistency between year of study and age was lacking for those aged 25 years and above which may explain why they may not have been able to exercise a similar judgement based on whether they were pursuing arts-based or science-based courses.

A second factor is the possible reasons that Arts and Science students, respectively, may want to access various university resources and facilities and the response of university authorities to such requests. As already noted above, various authors have argued that the component of liberalism in the arts curricula may impart certain activist orientations. This means that occasionally the academic interests of Arts students may overlap into territory that may be seen as not being strictly academic by some university administrators. Assuming that most of the informants in this age group were in the final stages of their programmes they may have come to regard university administrators as conservative and inflexible in terms of giving students access to university resources and facilities.

It is instructive to note that at the time of collecting data for this study, the political environment in the country made most university administrators reluctant to allow on campuses any form of activism that could be construed as being anti-establishment. This situation meant that Arts students (and even faculty on occasion) could have found it relatively more difficult to gain access to a hall in which to stage a controversial play or to host a political symposium (Njoya, 1994, Odhiambo, 1998). On the other hand, requests for the same or similar university resources and facilities for a conference or a scientific exhibition by Science students may have met a more positive response by virtue of their requests being considered to be "safe" for university authorities to accede to. In this regard once again, those aged 25 years and above would be unlikely to feature. From impressionistic evidence, those in this age group join university as mature-age entrants and generally (rightly or wrongly) regard most activism as childish or distracting from their main purpose, that of getting a university degree. They would therefore be unlikely to feel or react to any such restrictions of access.

It is therefore unlikely that the observed association could have occurred due to chance. The conclusion is that among the 23-24 year olds in the sample, there was a greater perception of access to university resources and facilities among science than among arts students.

Age and Restrictions on women's rights

Another instance in which age helped to modify the relationship between degree programme and political orientations was with regard to the *Restrictions on women's rights* dimension of *The Authoritarianism Scale*. In this respect, there was a relationship between degree programme and

attitudes towards women's rights among those who were aged 20 years or less, 21-22 years and 25 years and above respectively. However, the gamma value for the 23-24 year old age group was not significant.

Amongst those aged 20 years or less there was a negative but moderate association (gamma = -0.29). There was also a negative moderate association (gamma = -0.23) among those aged 21-22 years and negative moderate association (gamma = -0.32) among those aged 25 years and above. All these significant relationships supported the hypothesis that Arts students were more likely than Science students to have a democratic or supportive orientation towards women's rights.

The null hypothesis was therefore rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis as the observed association could not have occurred by chance. The conclusion is that in the sample, among those students aged 20 years or less, those aged 21-22 years and those aged 25 years and above, degree programme had a significant relationship with political orientations. For that reason, Arts students were more against restrictions on women's rights than their Science counterparts and would be more likely, for example, to support the participation of women in active politics or to believe that women were entitled to as much freedom as men. This indicated very strongly that with the exception of those aged 23-24 years, arts-based curricula were more likely than science-based curricula to impart political orientations that were supportive of women's rights in general.

Comparing the columns for the *Family personality attributes* component and for the *Restrictions on women's rights* component in Table 4 to the original relationships for the same components respectively (Tables 2 and 3), it can be observed that the original relationships were significant at a higher level although their gamma values were relatively low in comparison. This can be explained by the fact that it is possible for a relationship to be highly significant even when the association of variables is very weak. This is especially true for a large sample such as the one for this study where even weak associations may be found to be significant. Since Gamma is a surplus of concordant pairs over discordant pairs as a percentage of all pairs ignoring ties, a high gamma value simply means that there is a high proportion of concordant pairs although the relationship may not be highly significant, if at all (Henkel, 1976; Liebtrau, 1983; Agresti, 1996).

Sex

The sex of the informants also proved to be a mediating factor in the influence of degree programme on political orientations and attitudes. This is not surprising as in every society, men and women undergo different socialization processes pertaining to their prescribed social roles and these are likely to impact differently on their political attitudes and orientations. Added to this is the fact of increasing awareness of gender relations especially in the last two or so decades. This is especially true of the realm of human rights and politics as the following results indicate.

Sex and *Restrictions on women's rights*

The sex of the informants proved to be important in modifying the association between degree programme and political orientations. This occurred in the dimension labelled *Restrictions on women's rights* in *The Authoritarianism Scale*. The results are presented in Table 5. As expected, degree programme did not determine whether female students supported women's rights or not. However, it was a determining factor in the case of male students whereby male students in arts-based programmes were more in support of such rights than their counterparts in science-based programmes.

The results showed that there was a negative although fairly weak association (gamma = -0.16) between degree programme and attitudes towards women's rights among the male students. Once again this would appear to underline the independent effects of the respective curricula.

It is clear that among the male students, the pursuit of an arts-based curriculum was more likely to modify or moderate feelings about women's rights towards a more

Table 5: Students' degree programme by their attitudes towards restrictions on women's rights controlling for sex

Sex	N	Gamma	Significance
Male	403	-0.17	0.05
Female	446	-0.14	NS

NS = not significant

democratic tendency than a science-based curriculum was able to do. Although sex overcame the effects of different curricula among the female students such that the gamma value for female students was not significant, the results nonetheless indicate that even amongst them, those who were taking arts-based degree programmes were also more likely to be supportive of women's rights than their colleagues who were pursuing science-based degree programmes.

There is good cause to believe that among the population from which the sample was drawn, there was an association between degree programme and attitudes towards women's rights whereby male Arts students were more supportive of such rights than male Science students.

Incorporation Status of University: *Private or Public*

As outlined in Chapter Three, the universities sampled included private and public universities. While a public university comes into being through an Act of Parliament and is largely run from public funds, a private university is obliged to meet all or most of its revenue from fees paid by students. This means that the fees are considerably higher in private than in public universities for the regular students. The study sought to find out whether there were any differences in orientations as a result of such differences. With regard to the degree programme, the only significant difference was found to occur in one attitude dimension.

Restrictions of women's rights

The informants' degree programmes influenced political orientations when the types of university they were attending was taken into consideration. This was found to be the case for the informants in public universities for the attitude dimension labelled *Restrictions on women's rights in The Authoritarianism Scale* as shown in Table 6.

There was a negative but weak association ($\gamma = -0.23$) between degree programme and attitudes towards women's rights among those informants who were in public universities. Although science students in both private and public universities tended to be less supportive of women's rights than arts students, it was in the public universities that they differed to a significant degree. The relationship however, was not significant for students in private universities. It was therefore concluded that the relationship found in the sample was more a reflection of an association obtaining in the population where Arts students in public universities were more supportive of women's rights than their Science counterparts.

Table 6: Students' degree programme by their attitudes towards *restrictions on women's rights* controlling for type of university

Type of University	N	Gamma	Significance
Private	430	-0.15	NS
Public	421	-0.23	0.05

NS = not significant

Summary and conclusion

In summary, only moderate support was found for the hypothesis that there was an association between degree programme and political orientations. This showed that by and large, most attitude dimensions were not shaped by the students' choice of degree programmes. However, in two out of the 10 attitude dimensions, evidence, emerged that degree programme and particular political orientations were related. This was with regard to the dimension *Family personality attributes* in *The Family Ideology Scale* and *Restrictions on women's rights* dimension in *The Authoritarianism Scale*. As far as *The University's Socio-Political Environment Scale* was concerned there were no significant relationships between degree programme and political orientations. This showed that the perceptions of the socio-political environment at the university were not a function of the degree programme while attitudes towards *Family personality attributes* and towards *Restrictions on women's rights* were somehow influenced by degree programme of study.

It was highly noticeable that only an odd 10 per cent of the sample was categorically opposed to women's rights. However, for the rest of the sample, two things can be noted. First, Arts students tended to be more in support of such rights than Science students. This is in line with previous studies already reviewed such as Lang's (1999, pp. 135, 137) who observed that academic programmes that are heavy in the sciences tend to dull the edge of social concern and taper motivations for activist diversions. This is in contrast to the curricula of the humanities and social sciences that are permeated by issues such as poverty, gender and so on. Second, whereas the attitudes of the female students towards this domain were not a function of their degree programme choices, it was for the male students. This pointed to the independent effects of the respective curricula. Thus, male Arts students were more supportive of women's rights than their Science counterparts.

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