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Providing Context and Inspiring Hope: Using the Case Method to Teach Public Policy in Developing Countries

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ABSTRACT

This article asks: What makes for good cases when teaching public policy in a developing country? How important is geographic proximity relative to other factors in determining relevance? Building on literature about the unique public policy needs in developing countries and the case method as a pedagogical tool, and using a survey from a program that serves midcareer professionals in Nairobi, Kenya, the authors find the following to be key criteria for case selection: being set in a comparable developing country context; representing a similar array of public problems as the local context; demonstrating alternative public policy approaches to achieve progress; and inspiring optimism and hope by virtue of overcoming barriers. The authors share information on two cases that students identified as best meeting these criteria, one set in Asia (Singapore) and the other in Latin America (Colombia).

KEYWORDS

Case methodology, developing countries, comparative policy studies, Africa, Asia, Latin America

Case studies are a pedagogical tool used in many public policy programs around the world. They help students experience the types of problems they are likely to face as public policy professionals. The goal of using case studies is to consider an interesting situation that requires a creative response. In a typical public policy program, cases include some combination of local, regional, and international cases, depending on the program's priorities. An underlying assumption of using international cases is that

different regions of the world face similar public policy problems and thus there are opportunities to learn from each other. But context matters; there is often concern about whether students will be able to discern the applicable versus unique aspects of a case. The problems in international cases may occur in contexts distinct from where the cases are used, raising the question of whether lessons apply to the local context. Can specific policy actions in response to corruption in Asia or public transit

challenges in Latin America be replicated in the Kenyan context? Is the broad process of addressing the problems in such cases more critical than their detailed handling? In other words, what is the best way to use international cases in public policy programs, particularly in developing countries, so as to enhance the effectiveness of using cases? Do international cases serve a different purpose than more local ones? Do students recognize and value the role of international versus local cases differently?

This article is situated within the existing literature on public policy challenges in developing countries and the separate literature on the case method as a proven pedagogical approach. Our research site is the Master of Public Policy and Management (MPPM) program at Strathmore University in Nairobi, Kenya. We present results of surveys conducted with faculty and students affiliated with the program during its first two years of operation, and then we share our recommendations for how to maximize the benefits of international cases, noting two cases that have been particularly effective and summarizing important case selection criteria.

PUBLIC POLICY CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The simple division of the world into developed and developing countries is a common but imperfect and imprecise categorization. Even states classified as developed aspire to improve quality of life for their citizens and hence have not yet achieved their full potential. In addition, major disparities exist among developing countries; for example, between low-income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia and the upper middle-income countries in East Asia and Latin America (Todaro & Smith, 2015). Common characteristics of developing countries are lower standards of living, productivity, human capital, industrialization and manufactured exports, along with higher levels of inequality and absolute poverty. Developing countries are also characterized by greater social fractionalization, larger rural populations, more rapid migration to cities, underdeveloped financial and other markets,

and low-capacity institutions as a colonial legacy (Todaro & Smith, 2015).

Poverty is the condition of insufficient levels of income to provide basic necessities such as food, water, shelter, education, medical care, and security. Absolute poverty, as measured by a head-count index represented by the proportion of a country's population living below the poverty line, exists to some degree in both developing and developed countries (Todaro & Smith, 2015). The more dramatic distinction is the total poverty gap present in developing countries. The total poverty gap is the sum of the difference between the poverty line and actual income levels of all people living below that line (Perkins, Radelet, & Lindauer, 2013); it is effectively a measure of *how* poor and destitute the poor are within a country.

Income and poverty levels, while important, are not the only measures of development. Sen (1999) argues that the goal of development is to expand the capabilities to people to live the lives they choose to lead. Other factors include measures of quality of life for diverse populations (the young and old, the ill, the disabled) and variations in social climate (e.g., the impact of crime, civil unrest, and violence). Other scholars explain differences in development as arising from whether countries developed extractive or inclusive institutions (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). Extractive institutions exist when the rules of the game benefit a small elite rather than the masses. Inclusive institutions, in contrast, benefit a broad section of society (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). Politically, many developing states have largely extractive institutions and struggle to transition to more inclusive institutions. Challenges exist in making this transition, particularly because elite groups with vested interests in the status quo resist fundamental changes in institutional structures that could adversely affect them.

Public policy in developing countries suffers from several unique challenges relative to their more developed counterparts. Developing

states have much larger numbers of illiterate, poorly educated people and, on average, a much younger population (Cloete & de Coning, 2015). In many developing countries, there is a large gap between the demands for change and the capacities of government institutions to fulfill those demands. With their lower *per capita* incomes, economies often based on subsistence agricultural activities, and mineral extraction and production as the main industrial activities, developing countries are limited in their capacities to respond (Cloete & de Coning, 2015).

In many developing countries, the responsibilities of governments have changed considerably over the past two decades, shifting power and responsibility for service provision from the central government to localities. Decentralization is a key trend in many developing states in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, and scholars usually portray it as an important aspect of participatory democracy and increased accountability to the citizenry (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2006). Decentralization has dramatically increased the number of policy players in regional and local governments (Morse & Struyk, 2006), although there are vast differences in the pace of decentralization reforms across developing states. Decentralization can be a way of achieving more inclusive institutions, but many developing states still have a long way to go in achieving effectively functioning decentralized institutions. The role of public policy education within a developing country in the midst of decentralization is thus, in part, to help students develop the knowledge and skills necessary to increase the capacities of their local governments. The case method offers one mechanism by which to advance that goal by offering potentially valuable lessons from comparative public policy.

THE CASE METHOD

Within professional disciplines, there is widespread recognition that teaching methods and course content must be relevant to the work contexts of practicing professionals and must help such professionals develop the skills

needed to solve complex problems. Interactive and engaged methods of teaching are preferable to the traditional lecture approach. Similarly, course content that incorporates practical, real-world examples is more useful than an entirely theoretical and conceptual focus. As such, the case method pedagogy has experienced growing popularity in many disciplines (Kimball, 1995), including the fields of medicine (Barrows & Tamblyn, 1980), business (Spangler McBride, 1984), education (Merseeth, 1991, 1996), public administration (Feldman & Khademian, 1999), and public policy (Chetkovich & Kirp, 2001).

Cases are “a vehicle by which a chunk of reality is brought into the classroom ... [and a] record of complex situations that must be literally pulled apart and put together again before the situations can be understood” (Lawrence, 1953, p. 215). The case method has proven an effective means of enhancing the application of theory to practice (Christensen & Carlile, 2009; Michel, Carter, & Varela, 2009), critical thinking (Salemi, 2002; Michel et al., 2009), and creativity (Salemi, 2002). In the field of public administration and public policy, the case method has helped students engage in systematic assessment of options and strategic decision making (Feldman & Khademian, 1999), apply ethical principles (Winston, 2000), and practice collaboration (Morse & Stephens, 2012). In public policy classes in particular, professors credit cases with helping illustrate that the real world of policy process cannot be fully understood as an exercise in “rationality, objectivity, and economics” but rather is also greatly influenced by “politics, subjectivity, and democracy” (Foster, McBeth, & Clemons, 2010, p. 517).

Cases differ in scope, purpose, and complexity, and they may be presented in a variety of formats. Conventionally, they are in written form prepared specifically for use in a teaching context, but they can also include videos and other media as well as descriptions or analyses written for other purposes that can be adapted to the classroom. The most well-known and

extensive case banks that serve public affairs educators are based in the United States, including those at the Harvard Business School, the Harvard John F. Kennedy School of Government, the University of Washington Electronic Hallway, and the University of Minnesota Hubert Project. Case banks are starting to develop in other countries and regions, but they are not as well established and many regions lack such resources. The U.S. case banks provide access to fully packaged cases, including clear learning objectives, instructional guides, and supporting materials. Individual instructors can also develop cases, bringing together materials from multiple sources (media reports, current policy debates, published studies, etc.). The scope of a case may be limited to a single individual, decision, policy, or organization, or it may extend to an entire community, region, or nation. Instructors can present students with information about a case all at once or gradually, in phases (Morse & Stephens, 2012).

In selecting a case to use in a class, key considerations include ensuring that it is relevant and comparable to the context in which students live and work, that it is engaging and challenging, and that it is clearly linked to instructional goals (Kim et al., 2006). The best cases are not hypothetical or fictional but rather rely on careful research and study of a real-world situation (Merseth, 1996). Cases should encourage critical thinking by forcing students to weigh facts and opinions, identify normative or ethical issues, and identify alternatives available (Gini, 1985). Cases set in the same city, country, or region as students offer the clear advantage of contextual relevance, but such cases may offer fewer opportunities to learn from experiences elsewhere. Such experiences based on comparative public policy may offer innovative solutions from other jurisdictions that could be adapted to the local context.

Comparative cases have value when teaching in a cross-national context, allowing students to assess the extent to which problems or solutions from one country apply to another, but only if

such cases maintain sufficient contextual relevance. Referring to the unique political and social circumstances facing Colombia after more than 50 years of armed conflict and in the midst of an active peace process, Careaga, Rubaii, & Leyva (2016) suggest that the cases available through existing case banks are of limited relevance. For many developing countries, the multitude of cases set in the United States and western Europe are interesting but offer few transferable lessons, especially because the institutional and social contexts of these cases differ widely from those in developing states.

USING THE CASE METHOD IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY CONTEXT

In light of the unique public policy challenges facing developing countries, and the established literature on the importance of contextual relevance for the effectiveness of the case method, the focus of our research is examining what makes a case relevant and to what extent geographic proximity should be an important consideration. Our research takes place in a master's-level program at a private university in Nairobi, Kenya, that relies heavily on cases in all its required classes. We turn first to the country and program contexts, which are important for understanding the results of the survey data we collected.

The Kenyan Context

On December 12, 1963, Kenyans celebrated independence from British colonial rule, anticipating a prosperous future. The Independence Constitution adopted at that time was subsequently amended 38 times, resulting in such dramatic changes that ultimately the amended constitution's values and orientation differed considerably from its original version, despite technically maintaining legal continuity (Constitution of Kenya Review Commission, 2005). Rulers in Kenya in the several decades following independence adopted constitutional provisions that enabled them to reign without significant obstacles or restraints. In Kenya, like in many other African states, an overriding aim in the early post-independence period was

to create a political order more congenial to the group in power. Ethnicity has proved to be a powerful force in national politics since independence (Branch, 2011), and the centralization of power continued in the 1970s and 1980s.

In the early 1990s, however, strong demands for constitutional reforms began in Kenya. These demands must be understood against the backdrop of broader changes in the global and African context. Pressures for reform were not unique to Kenya but rather part of a global wave of democratization and constitutional reform after the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and its satellite states in the late 1980s and the consequent realignment of geopolitical relations in the post–Cold War era. This led to a spread of liberal ideas about state organization, thus challenging the ideology of the developmental state that was still prevalent among the African elite. A consequence of this trend was the opening up of political space for internal dialogue in most African countries, including in Kenya, which led rapidly to pressure for constitutional reform (Constitution of Kenya Review Commission, 2005).

In August 2010, a referendum approved a new constitution in Kenya, providing for a devolved system of government. This marked the culmination of several decades of struggle in Kenya's evolution from a highly centralized state that had engendered many constitutional conflicts to a more decentralized one (Mudida, 2015). Decentralization efforts in Kenya continue to face major implementation challenges, and strong tensions exist between the national and county governments. As such, the intended benefits of decentralization have yet to be realized in Kenya. The lingering challenges facing the Kenyan government include developing an accountable and effectively functioning decentralized system, reducing poverty, creating employment, improving education and health for long-term human capital development, and enhancing economic growth and competitiveness (World Bank, 2013).

The Program Context

Initiated in 2012, the Master in Public Policy and Management program at Strathmore University was established in direct response to the new needs of government under the Constitution enacted in 2010. The program attracts students from government, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector, who proceed as a full-time cohort, taking classes in the evenings to accommodate work schedules. Housed within the Strathmore Business School, the MPPM program embraces the school's emphasis on the case method as a central pedagogical approach. The MPPM program strives to prepare exceptionally talented individuals from all sectors who will contribute to improved public policy and quality of life in Kenya and throughout Africa. Students need to develop practical problem-solving skills suited for a rapidly changing world, and the case methodology, drawing on both local and international cases, is a deliberate program element intended to support that goal.

In light of increasing globalization and the consequent interconnectedness of public policy problems, the Strathmore program expects students to develop a global outlook in their analyses. The program therefore emphasizes teaching comparative public policy and uses international case studies to enhance students' global level of analysis and comparative skills. To achieve these diverse but interrelated objectives, faculty must be clear about what using international cases can and cannot achieve, explicitly addressing what lessons and policy elements are most likely transferable from international cases to the local context. The MPPM program encourages full-time Kenyan faculty to use international cases where appropriate but also incorporates international guest faculty, who bring outside experiences and perspectives and are expected to utilize cases from outside of Africa.

METHODOLOGY

We developed two survey instruments to gather feedback from faculty and students affiliated with the MPPM program during its first two

years of existence (2012–2013 and 2013–2014). Both surveys combined closed- and open-ended questions about case experiences as well as solicited basic demographic information about respondents. We asked students to consider their experiences in the MPPM program and to evaluate the interest and applicability of cases from a variety of regions of the world, the relative value of international and local cases, and the characteristics of cases most important to their learning. The survey also asked students to identify the cases they found most useful and interesting and to briefly describe what they valued most about each of those cases. We asked faculty to report and reflect on their experiences using local and international cases and to evaluate these cases' relative usefulness. The survey also asked them to identify the criteria they used to select cases for teaching. We asked both groups of respondents to provide basic demographic information and report on the extent of their prior international experiences. The appendix presents a summary of questions asked in the student and faculty surveys.

In designing the surveys, we were attentive to the possibility for misunderstandings and inconsistencies in use of the terms *case* and *international case*. We wanted to ensure that as students and faculty considered their experiences with cases in the MPPM program, they did not only think of formally written cases. For the purposes of our research, we defined a case as follows:

A case is defined as a study of a particular situation, policy decision, or program set in a specific location. Cases are generally written but may also be presented in the form of video, oral presentation by the instructor, or some combination of forms. The key is that they are presented with sufficient detail so as to allow student discussion and analysis of the circumstances, the challenges, and the lessons learned.

Because there are so few cases set explicitly within Kenya, we expanded our notion of local

cases to include the larger geographic region. Thus, for the purposes of the survey, local cases included those from Kenya and sub-Saharan Africa (abbreviated as K/SSA) and international cases included "any case from a country outside of Sub-Saharan Africa." We use these same definitions throughout this article.

We administered the surveys during a two-month period from March 16 through May 15, 2015. We distributed and collected student surveys during one first-year and one second-year class; we distributed faculty surveys to teachers in their offices, and we collected them in person for the Nairobi-based faculty and the one visiting professor in residence during the survey period and via e-mail for the other international faculty. The student and local faculty surveys were anonymous by virtue of being collected in a single envelope without personal identifying information. The surveys received from international faculty initially were associated with the identifying e-mail address but we then entered responses into a database without identifying information. We received a total of 49 surveys from the MPPM students and 11 from faculty, representing response rates of 94% and 92%, respectively.

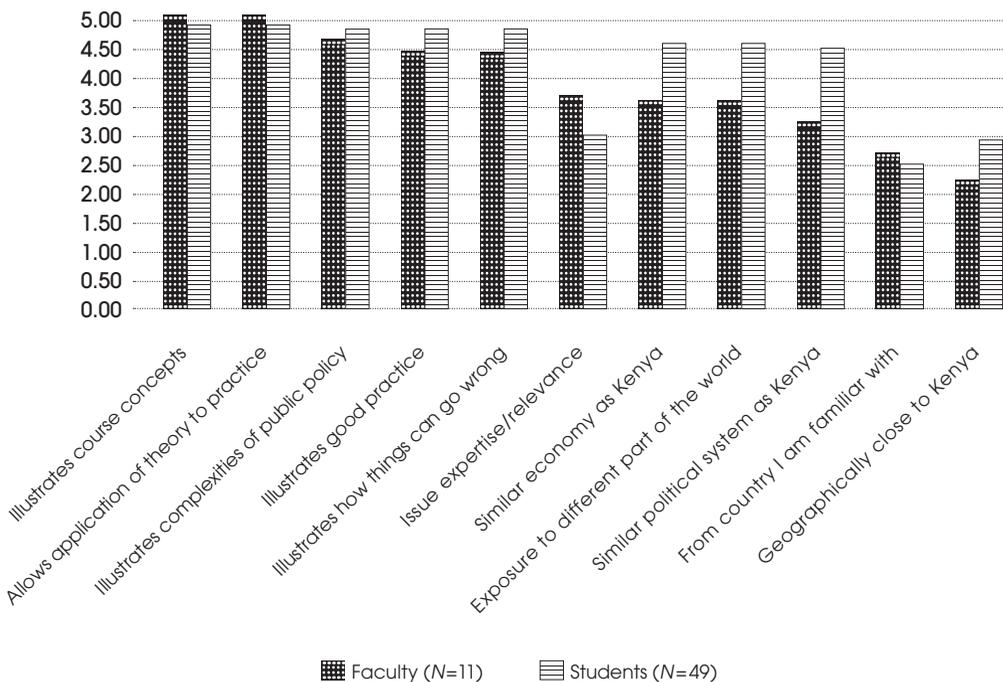
The faculty respondents include individuals relatively new to the profession (four who had fewer than five years of teaching experience) and seasoned instructors (five who had more than 10 years of experience); and six Kenyan nationals who have positions of various ranks at the university and five international faculty from three countries outside of Africa who were guest lecturers in the MPPM program during its first two years. More than 80% of faculty respondents (9 of 11) have extensive international experience, having studied, worked, or lived for extended periods on a continent other than Africa; and all have some experience outside of Kenya. More than 70% have ongoing research and/or teaching collaborations with colleagues on a different continent.

The student respondents include 26 second-year and 23 first-year students, and 53% of

them are male. The MPPM program is limited to in-service practitioners and it intentionally recruits from all sectors; thus the employment sector of the respondents is accordingly diverse. Among respondents, 32% report working in the public sector (13% national, 2% county, 17% other government), 28% in civil society (6% Kenyan, 11% international, 11% supranational), 38% in the private sector (23% Kenyan, 15% multinational), and 2% in a higher-education organization. All have at least three years of work experience, and more than 40% have more than 10 years of work experience. Most students (54%) report having had no experience using the case method prior to entering the MPPM program. The students also represent a wide array of undergraduate

disciplines from the social sciences (political science, international relations, environmental studies, community development, law, sociology, communications), business (finance, economics, accounting, business administration, commerce), and the STEM fields (mathematics, civil engineering, computer science). Only two students (4% of respondents) have never traveled outside Kenya, and most (73%) have traveled to countries outside the African continent. An analysis of student responses to the survey questions in relation to gender, sector of work, years of experience, and first- or second-year status did not generate any statistically significant differences, thus the discussion of findings simply refers to students as one group.

FIGURE 1.
Relative Importance of Case Characteristics



Note. Scores represent weighted averages on a 5-point Likert scale in which respondents could select from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important).

FINDINGS

Since the selection of local or international cases and the approach to incorporating them into the teaching of a class are decisions made by faculty, we start by examining faculty perspectives. Perhaps because it is so explicitly part of the MPPM program's design, all faculty report that international cases contribute to course objectives and 73% consider international cases to be extremely important. In justifying why they use international cases, faculty rate as most important the lessons that can be learned from experiences elsewhere and the need for current and future Kenyan leaders to have a global perspective. Faculty did not identify a lack of good local cases as a driving force for using international cases.

The surveys indicate some interesting similarities and differences in the perspectives of students and faculty. The two groups have relatively similar ideas about what makes for a good case. In selecting cases, faculty rate as most important cases that illustrate course concepts and those that allow students to discuss how theory applies to practice (100% of faculty rate these as "very important"). Also of importance (as measured by the combined ratings of "very important" and "somewhat important") are cases that illustrate the complexities of public policy (91%), good practice (91%), how good ideas can go wrong (91%), and policy issues in which the faculty member has expertise (81%). Criteria that receive more mixed ratings but still garner majority rankings as at least somewhat important are cases from countries with similar economic characteristics as Kenya (72%), ones that expose students to other parts of the world (63%), and those with similar political characteristics as Kenya (54%). Among the least important considerations for case selection are faculty member familiarity with the country (45%) and cases geographically close to Kenya (27%). Student perspectives on the most important criteria parallel the faculty priorities in some areas, as illustrated in Figure 1. Students do, however, place a greater emphasis on cases that expose them to different parts of

the world while reflecting economic and political characteristics similar to Kenya.

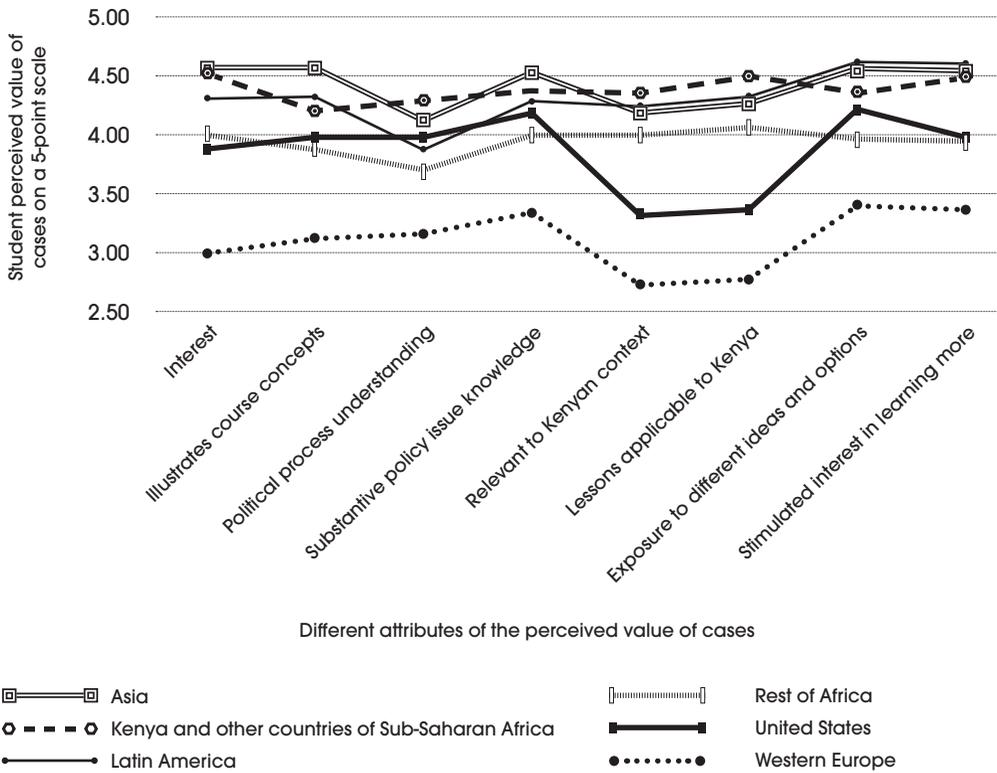
The priorities expressed by students provide context for the feedback they give on cases from various regions of the world. As shown in Figure 2, international cases from the United States and western Europe are consistently rated lower than cases from Asia and Latin America on almost all criteria, particularly with respect to relevance to Kenya and offering lessons applicable to the Kenyan context. Local cases from Kenya and Sub-Saharan Africa are generally rated quite high on all criteria, but cases from other parts of Africa are evaluated as less valuable than those from Asia and Latin America.

An overwhelming majority of both groups (91% of faculty and 85% of students) perceive local and international cases to be equally valuable, but among those who have a preference for one type or the other, the faculty and students lean in opposing directions (see Figure 3). The one faculty member who deviated from the others deemed local cases to be more important. Among the 15% of students not in the modal category, 87% (13% of all respondents) rated international cases as offering more value to their learning. Comments from both students and faculty indicate that they appreciate that the two types of cases offer different advantages and benefits.

The survey also asked students to identify their three favorite cases. They could choose from the full range of local and international cases to which they had been exposed. Two cases stand out as the clear favorites: one case from Singapore and one from Bogotá, Colombia. More than 40 students listed these cases in their top three, whereas the next most frequently referenced cases received fewer than 10 mentions.

The survey further asked students to explain the basis for each of their top three selections. This provided us with 135 comments ranging in length from a single sentence to two paragraphs (49 students each asked to report on three cases; nine of these students only identified

FIGURE 2.
Student Ratings of Cases by Regions of the World

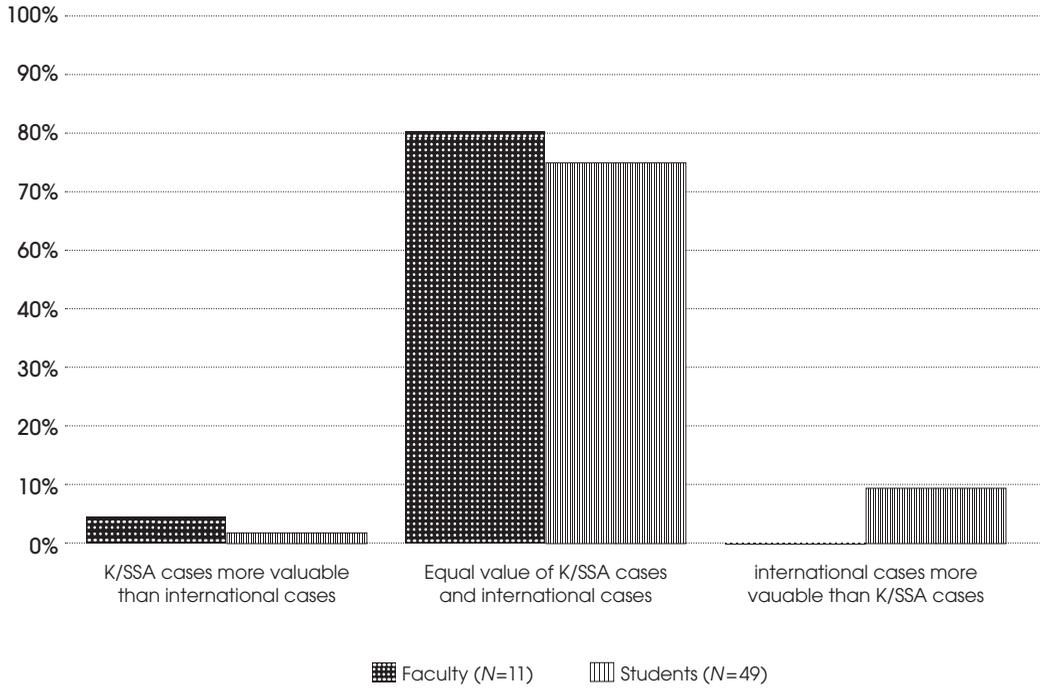


two cases, and one student identified the cases without providing a rationale). These comments enable us to more systematically understand student selection criteria. We were able to identify four interrelated themes, or criteria, each of which were referenced between 93 and 130 times. Students’ key considerations for valuing a case were (1) being set in comparable developing country contexts; (2) representing a similar array of public problems as their local context; (3) demonstrating alternative public policy approaches to achieve economic, social, and political progress; and (4) inspiring optimism and hope by virtue of overcoming barriers. Student comments about the Singapore and Bogotá cases reflect these themes, and in more than 50 instances student comments reference these characteristics’ being absent in the cases they did not find as useful.

Notably, both the Singapore and Bogotá cases dramatically illustrate examples of overcoming even worse conditions than Kenya’s current circumstances and thus offer students a sense of hope for positive change in their own country.

In referencing the Singapore case, students indicated that it offered an example of “how a third world country rose up the ranks to be a power economy” or rose “from obscurity to become an Asian Tiger.” They were impressed with lessons about “how, in the interests of economic development, a benevolent dictator can be an effective institution in his/her own right provided that the public interest is put first.” One student found the case to offer very personal value and referred to the story of Lee Kuan Yew (Singapore’s first prime minister) as “particularly inspiring for a young policy professional.”

FIGURE 3.
Faculty and Student Perspectives on the Relative Value of Local and International Cases



With respect to the Bogotá case, students noted the comparability of problems, including a “chaotic transport system,” “traffic jams and pollution,” and a “congested, dirty city.” They also emphasized the value of seeing Bogotá’s “transformation” as offering a “dynamic solution through good governance” that provided “new ideas for how to tackle Kenya’s transport problems” and that could serve as “a precedent for Kenya.” They further referred to this case’s demonstrating the power of “passion to use a simple method to decongest a city.” They saw the case of “transformation of the transport system” as “very relevant to the current problems facing Kenya” and said that it showed “how the policies can be contextualized in Kenya to improve real life issues.”

SAMPLE CASES FOR A DEVELOPING COUNTRY CONTEXT

Student comments and faculty experiences suggest that the Singapore and Bogotá cases have potential to maintain relevance and value in other developing country contexts outside of Kenya. Accordingly, we shift our focus now to these two specific cases to illustrate how they were taught and what made them so popular and effective. Our goal is to provide sufficient information for other instructors to use these same cases or to identify and use other cases that would be equally appropriate and effective.

Both cases have been used in a required Strathmore MPPM class titled Theory and Practice of Public Policy. The course is designed to intro-

duce students to the main concepts and debates in public policy with particular reference to developing countries. Key topics include the nature and role of public policy, theories and models for analyzing public policy, history and development of policy studies and policy analysis, public policy in developed and developing states, the policy process (agenda setting, policy design, decision making, implementation, evaluation), the dynamics of change, failure and success, and the institutionalization of policy analysis in government. The overarching objectives of the course are as follows:

- Analyze the politics, institutions, norms, and actors involved in the agenda setting, legitimating, and decision making of public policy.
- Study analytical frameworks that explain how the policy-making process works, relates to the substance of policy, and applies to real-world issues.
- Compare public policy processes in developed and developing states.

The two cases are aligned with particular course topics and intended to illustrate particular concepts. The Singapore case is taught as part of the first unit of the semester as a means of introducing students to the application of theory to practice in public policy. The Bogotá case is taught at the very end of the semester amid units devoted to policy implementation, policy evaluation, and factors that influence policy success and failure. As in real-life policy, the cases raise issues that span all stages of the policy process, encompassing problem definition, policy design, selection, implementation, and evaluation, as well as issues of theory and practice, the role of institutions and actors, and technical and financial considerations. In the following section, we highlight the rationale for selecting each case, the learning objectives, what materials are assigned to students in advance, and how the class discussion and activities are structured. We also provide some guidance for using the cases based on our experiences over several years.

Combating Corruption and Advancing Economic Development in Singapore

The Singapore case is a Harvard Business School case (Reinhardt & Prewitt, 1995). It focuses on the economic transformation of Singapore from a poor, developing country into a developed and economically prosperous one. The case is useful because students often find it very inspirational; when Kenya gained independence in 1963, Singapore was even poorer than Kenya according to key development indicators such as income *per capita*, health, and educational outcomes. The case is structured into several parts: The case first provides a brief history of Singapore. Then it examines the challenges at independence, including the difficulties of forging a common Singaporean identity. Finally, an explanation follows of different economic policies that Singapore pursued in its transformation as well as the many challenges faced in the process.

The students first prepare the case themselves. Key issues that the case tries to bring out are threefold: First, students seek to understand what factors contributed to Singapore's success. In the 1950s and 1960s, different developing countries chose different developmental paths distinguished by aspects such as degree of export orientation. Three decades later, one could talk about development lessons and how countries taking different paths had performed. Singapore as one of the most successful East Asian economies has a lot to offer in terms of policy lessons for developing countries in general. Second, students gain an understanding of the challenges that Singapore has faced and how it has overcome them. The main point here is that public policy proceeds in a nonlinear fashion, with many unexpected challenges, but that such challenges can be addressed in a focused way. Third, students are expected to draw lessons for Kenya from the case. Here, it is vital to emphasize that inferring lessons for Kenya does not mean that all policies undertaken in Singapore are exactly applicable to the Kenyan context. Even so, though policy details may not be directly transplanted from one situation to another, sometimes the broad process of policy making is what is critical to understand.

Faculty give students preparation questions for the case specifically based on the issues above. The students prepare for the case discussion both individually and in small groups. Students then discuss the case with the instructor in a plenary session; students provide answers to the preparation questions, and this forms a basis for detailed discussion in which the instructor critically evaluates each student's contribution.

Students who know Singapore as it is today are often surprised by its difficult start at the beginning of the 1960s, having been an extremely poor country, expelled from the Malaysian federation, and extremely small in size. The odds seemed completely stacked against the country, and its prospects appeared very bleak. The challenges faced by Singapore in its economic transformation provide a reality check on the difficulties often faced during broad-based change in developing countries.

When the case was initially taught, focus was on reading of the case itself and subsequent discussion. More recently, the instructor has incorporated video clips about the Singapore story that promote more insightful discussion. The instructor introduces the video clips at appropriate points during student discussion. For example, when students mention the inspirational leadership of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, the instructor plays clips from Lee's key speeches so that students can better understand his vision from hearing him articulate it himself. Other video clips show images of Singapore both at independence and more recently (underscoring the transformation) and feature other top Singaporean public policy officials talking about the country's policies and trajectory. Adding the clips was a major pedagogical improvement, achieved after teaching the case several times and after learning from visiting international faculty who tended to use more videos in their presentations, to good effect.

Buses, Bikes, and More in Bogotá, Colombia

The transformation of Bogotá beginning in the mid-1990s—from a violent, chaotic, congested, and polluted city to a world-class destination

known for its public transportation system, network of bicycle paths, and a multitude of high-quality shared public spaces—is well documented in academic and popular sources. The case provides numerous lessons regarding policy design, funding and implementation, the interconnectedness of public problems, the value of changing minds as well as behaviors, and the role of policy leaders as change agents. The MPPM students at Strathmore find the case particularly relevant because they recognize many of the same circumstances in Nairobi as those that formerly existed in Bogotá.

The case focuses on the Transmilenio Bus Rapid Transit system and the Ciclovía and Cicloruta programs, as well as related programs initiated during the mid- to late-1990s and expanded since then. As of 2015, the Transmilenio system included 115 stations, nine trunk lines in which 1,262 articulated and bi-articulated buses travel 84 kilometers of designated lanes, and 83 feeder lines in which 500 conventional buses travel more than 660 kilometers. Transmilenio moves more than 1.4 million people per day at close to 29 kilometers per hour. It was designed and is operated by a public-private partnership that assigns initial construction, infrastructure maintenance and expansion, and scheduling and real-time monitoring duties to a city agency created for that purpose. Bus purchase, operations and maintenance, and fare collection are assigned to private vendors selected through a competitive bidding process. Transmilenio is augmented by Cicloruta, a 300-kilometer network of bike paths (the most extensive in any Latin America country) linked to the transit stations. Bogotá also developed a vibrant recreational bike program called Ciclovía. Every Sunday and holiday (72 times per year), 121 kilometers of major roads are closed to motorized vehicles to allow pedestrian, bicycle, and other forms of nonmotorized activity to occur safely; the program also provides exercise classes, entertainment, and other social events in the city's parks. Ciclovía serves 600,000–120,000 users per Sunday and is credited with creating a greater sense of community as well as a healthier population.

Teaching the case involves assigned readings in advance of class sessions, videos shown during class, structured discussions, and group activities. Because the MPPM program serves practicing professionals who work full-time while attending class three nights per week, instructors should adjust the volume of reading accordingly. Many good readings exist, and instructors can select assignments based on the issues they want to emphasize. At a minimum, readings should include those that provide basic background information (e.g., Ardila, 2007; Ardila & Menckhoff, 2002; Cervero, Sarmiento, Jacoby, Gomez, & Neiman, 2009; Hidalgo & Graftieaux, n.d.; UN Development Programme, 2012). Additional readings can emphasize technical design decisions (Valderama & Beltran, 2007); the broader sustainability perspective (Teunissen, Sarmiento, Zuidgeest, & Brussel, 2015); evaluations of user satisfaction (Hidaglo, Pereira, Estupinan, & Jimenez, 2013); assessments of various initiatives' economic (Montes et al., 2011), environmental (Turner, Kooshan, & Winkelman, 2012), or health benefits (Torres, Sarmiento, Stauber, & Zarama, 2013); and comparisons of Bogotá's policies with those elsewhere (Montes et al., 2011).

With the readings as a common basis of understanding, we begin by comparing the countries of Colombia and Kenya and the cities of Bogotá and Nairobi, using maps and data to illustrate geographic, economic, political, historical, and demographic similarities and differences. Students then provide their initial impressions of the various policy changes enacted in Bogotá based on the readings. Invariably, students express interest because they recognize the issues of traffic congestion, pollution, excessive commuting times, unsafe streets for pedestrians and cyclists, absence of sidewalks, and heavy reliance on small, privately operated, and poorly maintained minibuses or vans (*matatus*) for public transit. Students also tend to express doubt that the changes in Bogotá are possible in Nairobi because of extensive corruption and the depth of the problem in Kenya. Pessimistic student reactions provide the perfect entrée to the videos, which challenge that perception.

The first video is the one-hour documentary *Cities on Speed: Bogota Change / The Inspiring Story of Antanas Mockus*. The video illustrates the extreme level of violence present in Bogotá and the ways in which the mayoral candidacies and terms of Antanas Mockus and Enrique Peñalosa managed to both overcome and change the culture of violence. The video personalizes these leaders, who served as key change agents. More important, the film illustrates that the starting point for Bogotá's transformation was in many ways much worse than Nairobi's situation, and this provides the students with a sense of possibility.

Three more videos are shown in subsequent classes, interspersed with discussions and exercises. A TED video by Enrique Peñalosa, *Why Buses Represent Democracy in Action*, frames transportation in terms of equity, poverty reduction, and quality of life. This helps illustrate the interconnectedness of public problems, which often cannot be solved through single-pronged approaches. This video also provides a philosophical basis for the Transmilenio design issues described in the readings. A 3¹/₂-minute *New York Times* video, *The Buses of Bogota*, provides more recent (2009) images of the Transmilenio system and testimonials from users, giving a street-level view of how the system is working. The final video, *Streetfilms: Ciclovía, Bogotá, Colombia*, is a 2007 film by Clarence Eckerson Jr. that, in less than 10 minutes, conveys the popularity and creativity of Ciclovía and why it has become the model for the developing world.

Interspersed with the videos are class discussions, presentations of information about related policies in Bogotá (e.g., *Pico y Placa*, literally "Peak and Placard," which limits driving during peak hours according the last digit on a license plate). Class time also includes small group exercises designed to allow for the explicit application of theory to the cases, specifically theories related to factors that contribute to and inhibit policy change, that affect policy success and failure, that establish conditions necessary for sustained policy suc-

cess, and that influence transferability of policy or the effectiveness of policy diffusion efforts.

Throughout the entire process, emphasis is on lessons (regarding policy process and substantive issues) that may be applicable to the Kenyan context. Student participation in classes is active and enthusiastic. Over the course of the multiple sessions, student attitudes notably transition from skepticism to tempered optimism, their attention to policies shifts from a general overview to specific details, and their understanding of the case evolves from a narrow focus on public transit to broad notions of sustainable development. Students end in appreciating how the Bogotá example reflects a culture of citizenship and promotes social, economic, and political equity that extends beyond traditional economic measures of development.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTRUCTORS

We began by asking several questions about the relative value of international cases as a teaching tool within developing countries. As a means of identifying lessons learned through this research, it is useful to revisit those questions. In particular, we asked, Can specific policy actions in response to corruption in Asia or public transit challenges in Latin America be replicated in the Kenyan context? Or is the broad process of addressing the problems in such cases more critical than their detailed handling? In short, what is the best way to use international cases in public policy programs so as to enhance the effectiveness of using cases? Do international cases serve a different purpose than more local ones? Do students recognize and value the role of international versus local cases differently?

Student reactions to the cases from Singapore and Bogotá suggest that both the broad decision processes discussed as well as the policy details were relevant and valuable. Students were able to juxtapose current circumstances in Nairobi with the examples from Asia and Latin America with relative ease. They quickly identified similarities in economic and political circumstances

as well as in policy needs. With guidance from the instructor, they were also able to critically evaluate logistical constraints as well as the potential for policy diffusion. As they learned about the actions of individuals and groups, and the details of specific policy instruments, students were able to select which they could envision being effective in Kenya and to discuss the roles they could play in their respective organizations to advance similar changes.

The findings of our research both reinforce earlier studies and uniquely contribute to discussions about how to use cases in a developing country context. Our survey results reinforce the general value of the case approach. With respect to the case method as pedagogy, one student noted that “the case study method is so interesting and informative. [It] makes learning easier and interesting. I got a glimpse of what I would otherwise not have known. The cases are so well researched and written. Best part is they are REAL.” Another remarked, “Case studies are the best learning method—they are real, relevant, applicable.” In the words of another student, the case method “has been the most effective form of learning as it has connected theory to actual practice. It is easier to remember theory through everyday occurrence.”

Our findings support the importance of both local and international settings. From case studies, policy students learn “what works when, where and how, and what to avoid in their local settings.” As one student aptly summarized, “Cases from Kenya and other Sub-Saharan African countries speak to what we are experiencing on a day-to-day basis, [and] international cases then help in comparison of the two environments and lesson sharing/learning.” In their summary remarks, several students focused on the value of both international and local cases. One student indicated that the international cases “allow me to travel (in my mind)” and another referred to the international cases as “very relevant” and “offering the possibility of replication in the Kenyan context” based on “what worked and did not work.”

Feedback from students also demonstrates that they see a distinct and important role for international cases, which should inform their selection. The practitioner students in Strathmore's MPPM program were not interested in international cases solely as a means of learning about other parts of the world or best practices from incomparable settings. They were interested in examples of both successful and unsuccessful policy change efforts from contexts that shared enough in common with Kenya so as to make them realistic models. In particular, students were interested in cases from other developing countries that illustrated the potential to overcome social, political, and economic obstacles similar to those facing Kenya, in particular those related to decentralization and corruption.

Student comments also suggest opportunities for improvement in case instruction; for example, moving away from text-only case presentations to incorporate multimedia formats and ensuring that case analysis involves discussion beyond individual analyses. Several students indicated a preference for limiting the amount of reading for a case, ensuring that cases are not too technical, including visual aids, and allowing sufficient time for "interrogating" and "contextualizing" the cases. Regarding the format of case instruction, a student said, "The cases are amazing learning tools/instruments. I noticed the guest [international] lecturers adopt the use of visual tools (e.g., videos that break the monotony of text and make class more enjoyable). Strathmore lecturers can borrow a thing or two, those TED videos work wonders!" In response to these comments, several Kenyan faculty have begun to incorporate short video clips as part of their cases.

Finally, our research supports previous findings about the importance of selecting cases that are relevant, are based in real-world situations, and offer timely lessons for the practicing professional. The real contribution of our work is what *relevance* means within a developing country context. For a program based in a developing country, the key is to identify cases that are set

in a comparable developing or recently developed country, that address policy problems that are also being experienced in the local context, that may include some setbacks and failures but that ultimately show progress, and most important, that provide students with a sense of optimism and hope by virtue of demonstrating examples from comparable or even more severe situations. In the language of the literature on development, the best cases illustrate reduction of absolute poverty and the poverty gap (Todaro & Smith, 2015), improvement in quality of life (Sen, 1999), and a transition from extractive to inclusive institutions (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).

Based on our research, we offer four specific recommendations to faculty interested in using the case methodology when teaching public policy in a developing country:

1. Use a balance of local and international cases, drawing the international cases from other developing or recently developed countries.
2. Select cases that document policy change over time so as to illustrate the inevitable mix of policy successes and failures that might not be evident from a snapshot at a single point in time.
3. If multimedia cases do not exist, create them by bringing together a variety of source materials around the same policy example.
4. Recognize the dual role that cases serve in both providing technical policy ideas and inspiring hope about the potential to overcome seemingly insurmountable challenges, and facilitate case discussions accordingly.

The key to effective use of the case methodology in any context is the careful selection of cases to ensure relevance to the course and organizational, sector, or country context. In a developing country context, relevance is easier to achieve through the use of cases from other developing or recently developed countries

because these offer transferable lessons, unlike cases from the United States, which students often perceive as presenting unattainable processes and results. International cases, if selected appropriately, can offer considerable benefits in the teaching of public policy in a developing country. Public policy professionals in developing countries are keen to learn from cases that contribute to a sense of optimism about the potential for change.

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APPENDIX

The Survey Instruments

[Note: In the interest of space, we have removed or modified some survey language and formatting, leaving only essential content.]

The Student Survey

Introduction

As you know, the MPPM at SBS [Strathmore Business School] systematically uses the case method as part of the pedagogical design and deliberately provides students with cases from different parts of the world. An underlying assumption is that this strategy contributes to the quality of your education in that the cases allow the application of theory to practice and that cases from diverse countries contribute to your ability to identify, evaluate, and apply lessons to the Kenyan context. International cases are also intended to help you develop a more global perspective and engage in more sophisticated analyses of the complex public policy problems of the 21st century. This survey is intended to assess the extent to which your experience as a student corresponds to the program intent. We are interested in your experiences with the use of cases in your MPPM classes and the relative value of cases drawn from different parts of the world. In responding to the questions, please consider *all of the courses* you have completed or are currently taking in the MPPM program.

Definitions

For the purposes of this survey, please utilize the following definitions of the terms *case* and *international case*.

case: A case is defined as a study of a particular situation, policy decision, or program set in a specific location. Cases are generally written but may also be presented in the form of video, oral presentation by the instructor, or some combination of forms. The key is that they are presented with sufficient detail so as to allow student discussion and analysis of the circumstances, the challenges, and the lessons learned.

international case: Any case from a country outside of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Questions

1. Please use the five-point scale for each of the following regions on each of the listed criteria (5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Somewhat agree; 3 = No opinion; 2 = Somewhat disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree; 0 = No basis to evaluate because no cases from this region). If you have had exposure to multiple cases from any given region, think about them on average. Regions: (1) Kenya and other countries in Sub-Saharan African; (2) countries in other parts of Africa; (3) countries in Asia; (4) countries in Latin America; (5) the United States; (6) countries in western Europe; (7) countries in all other regions.

Criteria:

- a. The cases have interested me.
 - b. The cases have helped illustrate course concepts.
 - c. The cases have contributed to my understanding of political processes.
 - d. The cases have contributed to my substantive policy issue knowledge.
 - e. The cases have been relevant to the Kenyan context.
 - f. The cases illustrated lessons applicable in Kenya.
 - g. The cases exposed me to different ideas, perspectives, and options from parts of the world I knew little about.
 - h. The cases stimulated my interest in learning more about or visiting those countries.
2. With respect to the relative value of international cases, which of the following statements best describes your experience as an MPPM student?
- Cases from Kenya and other Sub-Saharan African countries are more valuable than international cases.
- Cases from Kenya and other Sub-Saharan African countries are equally as valuable as international cases.
- International cases are more valuable than cases from Kenya and other Sub-Saharan African countries.
- Please explain the basis for your response: _____

3. From your perspective, how important are each of the following case characteristics to your sense of the case's usefulness? (Very important, Somewhat important, No opinion, Somewhat unimportant, Not at all important)
 - a. The case is from a country with similar economic characteristics as Kenya.
 - b. The case is from a country with similar political characteristics as Kenya.
 - c. The case is from a country with similar socio-cultural characteristics as Kenya.
 - d. The case is from a country geographically close to Kenya.
 - e. The case illustrates the course concepts.
 - f. The case allows us to discuss how theory applies to practice.
 - g. The case exposes me to parts of the world I know little about.
 - h. The case illustrates good practices.
 - i. The case illustrates how good ideas can go wrong.
 - j. The case is in a country I am already familiar with.
 - k. The case deals with an issue related to my job.
 - l. The case illustrates the complexities of public policy.
 - m. Other (please specify)

4. Identify the three most interesting and/or useful cases you have used in your classes during your time as a student in the MPPM program. Provide enough information to help us know what case it was (country or region, issue, and course) and explain briefly what made it particularly valuable or memorable. [open-ended]

5. What other information would you like to share about your experience with cases as an MPPM student? [open-ended, space provided]

[Demographic information collected from students included current year of MPPM study, gender, sector of employment, number of years of work experience prior to entering the MPPM program, prior experience with the case method, undergraduate field of study, and international travel experience.]

The Faculty Survey

Introduction

[The introduction is largely the same as in the student survey, using *students* in place of *you* and *your* and a slightly different phrasing of the final three sentences, as follows.] This survey is intended to assess your experience as an instructor in MPPM courses with the case method. In answering the questions below, please think about the classes you have taught or are currently teaching in the MPPM program, and consider both your observations of students in their case discussions and analyses as well as any feedback you have received from students about cases.

Definitions

[Definitions of *case* and *international case* are the same as in the student survey.]

Questions

[The faculty survey includes Question 2 from the student survey, a modified version that survey's question 3 (asking about the importance of criteria for *selecting* cases), two unique questions (listed below), and space to provide general comments about the use of local and international cases.]

1. How important do you consider it to include international cases in your classes?
 - Extremely important; international cases are vital to the course effectiveness.
 - Somewhat important; international cases contribute to the course objectives.
 - Somewhat unimportant; they can be useful but are not necessary.
 - Not at all important; there is no need for international cases in the course(s) I teach.
2. How would you rank the following reasons why you use international cases in your classes? (1 = Most important; 5 = Least important)
 - _____ There are not enough good cases from Kenya or Sub-Saharan Africa.
 - _____ There are interesting lessons to be learned from experiences elsewhere.
 - _____ Students find them interesting.
 - _____ I have international expertise I want to share with the students.
 - _____ Current and future Kenyan leaders need to have a more global perspective.

[Demographic information gathered from faculty included years of teaching experience, faculty rank or affiliation at the university, full- or part-time status at the university, nationality, extent of international experience, and extent of international collaboration experience.]