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Master's Thesis

Youth in Political Parties and Electoral Conflicts

An investigation of the intersection between political institutional structures and youth leadership participation in electoral conflict prevention.

East African Case Study: Uganda and Kenya



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Abstract

East Africa is experiencing an unprecedented youth bulge with Kenya and Uganda encountering its negative effects. A growing youth population is vital for a country's growth and development. However it comes with social, economic, and political challenges that can impact the country's stability. Rampant unemployment, poverty and poor governance demonstrated through corruption continue to affect the well-being and aspirations of youth in both countries. Elections in both countries are seen as the anchor of transformative change. However, a lack of transparency and credibility during elections has seen youth engage in electoral conflicts in both countries. This thesis investigated the role of youth political leaders in preventing electoral conflicts. I used content and historical analysis, supported by open-ended questionnaires targeting 80 youth political leaders from Kenya's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and Uganda's National Unity Platform (NUP). This method enabled me to collect empirical data on their role as leaders knowledgeable about issues affecting their peers. My analysis indicated that from a policy and theoretical perspective, youth political leaders are capable influencing their peers through effective conflict management strategies. However from an institutional perspective, political party formal structures, informal norms and practices impede their influential capacity when it comes to emotive elections. I concluded that influential youth political leadership is possible through a panacea of institutional reforms and strategic association with influential party leaders.

Keywords: Youth, Kenya, Uganda, Political Parties, ODM, NUP, Elections, Conflict

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Chapter One

Introduction

Africa's demographic youth population ranks amongst the highest in the world. The UN defines youth as young people between 15 to 24 years of age (UN, 2013). In contrast, the AU definition of youth as persons between 18 to 35 years of age (AU Youth Charter, 2006). This definition is relative, depending on each country's specific definition of youth. Kenya and Uganda are experiencing an unprecedented youth bulge, with most of their population falling below 35 years of age. Whereas a high youth population has its advantages and could prove beneficial for a country's growth and development, it is also deemed a threat if the needs of the youth populace are not met. From a leadership perspective, young people tend to "participate in demonstrations as they try to change political systems" to get a better leadership alternative (Maganga, 2020. Para 1). This threat has been observed within the East African context during electoral processes where youth form the electorates. For this reason, youth quotas were instilled to enable "substantive youth engagement in decision-making" in political parties (CEEPS, 2019). A look within East Africa shows the socio-political history of its member states, where electoral processes are marred by poor governance, lack of transparency and a deficit in accountability, leading to youth engagement in political conflicts before, during and after elections.

This research paper investigated the role of youth leaders in political institutions, in this case political parties and electoral conflict prevention interventions in two East African states. I examined the role of youth political leaders and the influence of political institutions on electoral conflict prevention. In this study my tentative hypothesis was that 'effective youth political leadership supported by institutional structures and strategic political partnerships is a prerequisite for electoral conflict prevention in Kenya and Uganda. Clemens & Cook (1999, p.442) supports this ideology by emphasizing that "the pattern of social life is not produced solely by the aggregation of individual and organizational behavior but also by institutions that structure action". This research captured institutional parameters under the theory of institutionalism and feminist institutionalism to understand their influence on youth political leadership among their peers. This study is also relevant in today's existing body of research on youth, peace, and security as it explored an area within youth leadership and its interplay within party politics and electoral violence.

Additionally, I assessed youth inclusion in institutional structures and their participation in decision-making positions at the political party level as a prerequisite for preventing politically motivated conflicts. Finally, my thesis considered the impact of affirmative action on youth at an institutional level and how it had shaped youth political participation in facilitating conflict prevention interventions. 'Affirmative Action' is a policy directive aimed at increasing opportunities for under-represented facets of society. As a researcher my intention was to contribute new knowledge in the growing youth phenomenon at the apex of political institutions within the East African Region.

The methodological framework in my research design adopted the qualitative approach. I used the case study research method to formulate hypotheses in answering the research question. For this research, I chose to collect data using open-ended questionnaires in the form of an online survey. This is because it was “a source of subtle and often valuable information about reality from the point of view of the respondent” (Montgomery & Crittenden, 1977, p.235). Youth leaders in political parties from the national to the local level and youth members of parliament were my target audience in the data collection process. I explored two political parties: Uganda's National Unity Platform (NUP) and Kenya's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) Party. My analysis entailed empirical data such as the percentage of youth leadership in the political parties, their role in the political party, their participation in decision-making processes, their role during elections, and their impact and influence on peers as youth political leaders.

1.1 Background: Kenya and Uganda

Africa's colonial history dating back from the 1950s until the 1980s, saw neo-colonialism take shape with most new African heads of state. At the time, heads of states such as Jomo Kenyatta, Kwame Nkrumah, Robert Mugabe, and Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, gave hope to their country's future generations. Although their transition to power came highly respected and endorsed by citizens, their leader's duplicity marred by corruption, nepotism and tribalism saw an outburst of youth protests in the streets. Most of these youth, mainly university student leaders, would later join politics by standing for elective positions such as members of parliament. However, there were no policy directives and institutional structures that endorsed youth participation in politics or governance.

Located in the Eastern part of Africa, Kenya and Uganda are some of the fastest developing countries in Africa. They share similar political, social, economic, and geographical demographics and experiences. This is seen through their systems of governance which is a presidential democracy upheld by quinquennial elections, legal structures, and universal suffrage in their elections. This is in addition to being members of the East African Community (EAC) regional economic block where they share a common goal of forming a "Political Confederation" interested in the peace and security of partner states (EAC, para 1). They also share similar ethnicities and cultures, common languages, and a stake in the region's dispute resolution processes in Somalia, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. My focus on these countries as case studies was strengthened by their shared commonalities above, factors influencing social cohesion and their conflict-ridden elections in the last decade. With Kenya having 44 tribes, the issue of ethnicity marred with land disputes, and unequal distribution of development resources, has contributed significantly to its electoral conflicts. This indicates how "ethnic identities can be manipulated and accentuated from above to serve particular political interests" (Haugerud, 1997, p.42). *Figure 1* indicates how Uganda also experiences the scourge of ethnic violence. It faces political violence during elections where "the use of the military is intended for the intimidation and harassment of opposition activists" (Political and Electoral Violence in East Africa, 2000).

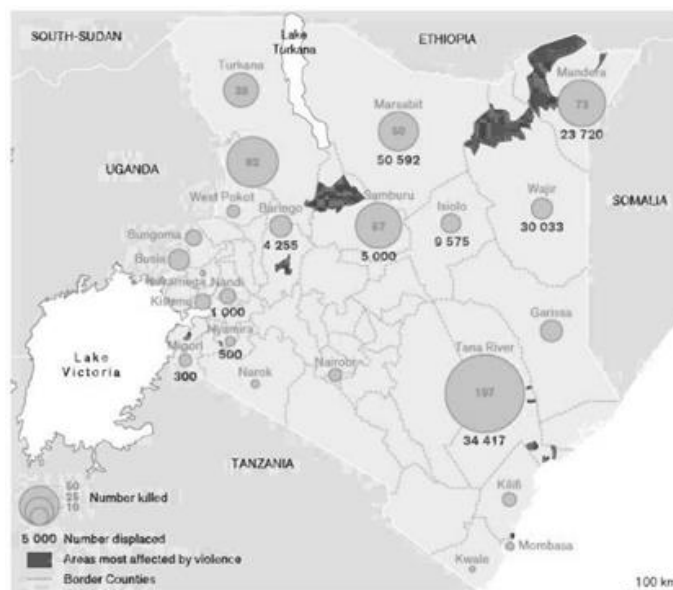
In both countries, a positive yet negative aspect they shared was an explosion of their youth population whose demographic dividend is not met. Other societal issues such as corruption, poor governance and unmet human security needs increase the likelihood of conflicts. This exposes them to violent outbursts through protests and demonstrations in any given situation including elections. *Figure 2* shows this aspect in relation to Kenya's 2013 general elections. In this respect, their experiences put them at risk of electoral instability and intrastate conflict due to high unemployment rates and lurking poverty. These significant societal issues affect the youth who are targeted by political leaders during elections because they form the majority of the populace but not necessarily electorates. My focus on both countries based on my research question was motivated by their significantly large youth population, the impact of political institutions on youth and violent conflicts during elections. Fast forward to the 21st century, Kenya and Uganda have put in place policies that allow youth participation in different segments of society. These are included in both countries constitutions and political parties acts. In this study, youth were denoted as male and female persons under 35 years of age.

Figure 1



Map of ethnocultural and political conflicts in Uganda
Copyright: Handbook of Ethnic Conflict

Figure 2



2013 General elections hotspots in Kenya.
Copyright: OCHA maps (2013)

1.2 Youth, Politics and Elections in East African

East African countries have a presidential system of governance supported by a representative democracy. However, researchers, political scientists, and governance experts argue that both countries are yet to evolve to mature democracies compared to their democratic counterparts such as Botswana, where "traditional Tswana of public discussion, community consensus and non-violence are critical elements of a democratic political culture" (Holm, 1987. p.24). According to Gellar (2005, p.85), Senegal's democratic growth is seen whereby the rise of multipartyism has

had "a steady expansion in the size of its political class and greater pluralism in its composition". A significant factor inhibiting Uganda's and Kenya's democratic growth is bad leadership and unequal representation at different levels of government. This is exacerbated by poor governance from the local to the national level. These inequalities entail factors that have borne consequences for their vast population composed of youth who are largely on the receiving end of corrupt, despotic, and harsh regimes. As much as these countries have continued to experience a bulge in their youth population in the last couple of years, they have staggering youth representation in parliament and political parties. Thus making their impact inadequate in political institutions. In order for the youth to be influential, there is need to have strategic partnerships with top party leadership and influential politicians. Although youth leaders are least likely to influence top party leadership, many leaders have influenced youth wings to engage in violence against their opponents. For instance, in Burundi's 2015 electoral violence between civilians and security forces, the incumbent was "supported by the ruling party youth wing, the Imbonerakure" (Nindorera & Bjarnesen, 2018, p. 87). These sets of informally recruited young groups and others within the region are known to perpetrate violence on behalf of their leaders or the ruling party.

It is worth noting that although age and inadequate representation were factors in youth electoral violence within the two East African countries, more political leaders of a younger age group were adapting the youth tag to resonate with youth during their campaigns. Their intention was to resonate with the youth over their concerns and frustrations. An example is Uganda's 'Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu' of the National Unity Platform (NUP), who joined politics as a youth and is currently seen as a formidable political leader because of his ability to connect with young people. Another scenario is seen among Kenya's 2013 presidential election candidates, presently President Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta and his deputy president 'William Samoei Ruto' of the National Alliance Party (TNA), who used their youthful personas to conjure youth support. However, even with this façade, the youth's voice is not heard in institutions where their influence could play a role in quelling politically instigated conflicts by their counterparts. This results in consequences observed every 5 years during electioneering periods when most of these countries hold their elections. Looking outside the region, Sierra Leone's 2015 by-election parliamentary in Kono district, synonymous with elections in Kenya and Uganda, "youth supporters are deliberately imported from outside the local district to orchestrate the violence" (Bangura & Kovacs, 2018, p.123). An indication that finding strategies to disengage the youth from engaging in electoral violence was an uphill task and a matter of urgency.

1.2.1 Youth political participation and electoral conflicts in Uganda

The Ugandan Parliament, unlike other countries in East Africa has allocated a fixed number of seats (5 out of 319) to youth (Kanyadudi, 2010, p.18). Uganda's 1995 constitution has a provision for youth participation in politics captured under chapter six, article 78 on the composition of parliament. As indicated in Appendix I of "the parliamentary elections (special interest groups) regulations, 2001", this provision was put in place irrespective of their independent participation in elective posts. The youth quota in Uganda's constitution was instilled from a political and policy lens to facilitate youth political participation. It was meant to serve as an inclusive component of different facets of society in the country's governance structures. Thus, allowing youth and other special interest groups to participate in the country's growth and development. According to Kassman & Vamstad (2019, p.485), this consideration was also meant to serve as "obstacles thwarting the youth from achieving a reasonable portion in political spaces. However, intense campaigns backed by the constitution and international instruments that promote youth inclusion and participation in political spheres continue to champion inclusivity instead tokenism in youth political leadership.

Uganda's intergenerational age gap between the youth and older members of the populace has been a thorn in the flesh of its elite and older powerful leaders. Before the country's 2021 general elections, violence has been witnessed since 2019 when the youthful member of parliament Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, aka 'Bobi Wine', declared his interest in the presidential seat. He was supported by the larger youth population that wanted younger leaders in power. However, the leader's unprecedented arrest by security forces saw violent clashes between the police and civilians leading up to the elections. According to the African Report (2021), "contingents of heavily armed police and the army responded with tear gas and live ammunition, where at least 45 people lost their lives." This is an ongoing threat of violence and use of force by the older ruling elite to maintain their position against a large youth electorate. The scenario highlighted the importance of youth leadership in political parties when quelling violent conflicts between them and security forces. This indicates that youth political leaders are tasked with seeking non-violent solutions to address challenges facing youth, who are already drained by the current system. Presently, Uganda has 127 members of parliament under 40 years of age. From a conflict prevention perspective, this study will illustrate their role in electoral campaigns, pre and post-elections.

1.2.2 Youth political participation and conflicts in Kenya's elections

In recent years, Kenya's growing youth population has formed the country's vibrant electorate. As a result, Kenya's political parties act was instilled to facilitate youth political participation and give them a voice to contribute to its governance. Youth are mentioned as 'special interest groups' under section 2 of Kenya's 2015 revised political parties act from a policy lens, as demonstrated in *Appendix II*. Preceding the 2010 constitutional dispensation, Kenyan youth played a vital role in democracy before the "1992 general elections that saw the re-introduction of multiparty politics" (Kanyadudi, 2010, p.17). Youth and former university student leaders such as James Orengo, Koigi wa Wamwere and Paul Muite have served as senators and members of parliament respectively from the 2000s to date. Historically, the introduction of multiparty politics dating back from the 1990s to the 2000s saw the emergence of elections marred with tribal and intercommunal violent conflicts perpetrated by youth. These conflicts have seen political parties and leaders manipulate and facilitate political youth-led protests and organised violence against opposing sides. The height of the violence was witnessed in 2007, when "the general elections reflected decades of inter-ethnic competition" (Hickman, 2011, p.32). As a result, more than 1000 people lost their lives, and several sustained insurmountable injuries. A situation of negative peace and spurs of violence was also observed during the 2013 and 2017 general elections. The electoral campaigns of the leading political parties, such as the; National Alliance (TNA), later transformed into the Jubilee Alliance Party (JPA) of Kenya, and the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), focused their campaigns overwhelmingly on targeting the youth vote.

1.3 Youth, Politics and Conflict Prevention

At the backdrop of the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations System, through the UN Security Council, adopted resolution 2250. This resolution on youth, peace and security emphasized the role of young people worldwide in conflict prevention, management and resolution while playing a significant role in peacebuilding processes. International bodies, civil society entities, the private sector and governments were tasked with the responsibility of ensuring effective youth participation and inclusion in sustainable peacebuilding initiatives. This included providing "political support that considers the needs and participation of youth in peace efforts, in conflict and post-conflict situations" (UNSCR 2250, 2015). Although the resolution highlighted the importance of young inclusion in social, economic, cultural, and political spheres of society that can breed peace, the latter requires greater institutional support. Vyonne Akoth echoes these words in a global online consultation on youth and peacebuilding. She stated the need for youth to "start having conversations with their leaders on succession planning to better

their societies" (Peace Direct, 2019, p. 34). At the top of these conversations should be inclusive decision-making processes meant to avert acts of violence during elections. Both United Nations member states, Kenya and Uganda, were bound by these instruments and commitments from a policy and polity perspective. However, regarding conflict prevention during electoral campaigns, youth participation in political institutions and conflict prevention remained an ambitious goal that is yet to be achieved.

1.4 Research Problem

Political parties tasked with the responsibility of accountable processes supported by the rule of law continued to fail in providing good leadership. As a result, states that continue to experience dilapidating human security needs, a breakdown in political structures and disregard for the rule of law have continued to witness electoral violence, with youth at the forefront of sporadic violent attacks and uprisings. One scenario is seen in other parts of Africa where politically aligned youth, such as President Gbagbo's young patriots of Cote d'Ivoire, used violent antics against political opponents and civilians due to ethnic disenfranchisement regarding land tenure (Marshall-Fratani, 2006, p.11). Owusu Kyei & Berckmoes (2020, p.333) also highlight the impact of political vigilante groups in the Ghanaian political arena during elections. They acknowledged the use of violence to achieve the objectives of the parties they represented. This was synonymous with political parties that had longevity. Looking at this from a broader view, the impact of globalisation as seen in the Arab spring, and the rate of transnationalism within the East African region among politically aligned youth, continues to threaten the solidarity of a progressive regional conglomerate, i.e., the East Africa Community (EAC).

Contrarily, whereas youth form most of the population, research indicates they are also "least likely to vote" but are still at the heart of electoral violence (Owusu, 2019, p.118). Depilating human security needs and influence from top political leaders increased youth participation in electoral violence over the years. It is also worth noting that these youth were "exploited by the older political elites" for selfish gains suppressing their potential to ensure that elections are peaceful and objective irrespective of their outcome (Ojok & Acol, 2017, p. 95). According to Kovacs & Bjarnesen (2018, p.2), both perspectives highlighted above give us the opportunity to dissect the 'bottom-up' and 'top down' approaches that inform this study regarding youth involvement in electoral conflicts.

Kenyan electorate, mainly the youth, have in the last decade sympathised with the Uganda electorate noting with discernment the dilapidating freedom of expression when it comes to

expressing their political rights. I delved into Uganda's 2021 pre-election violence, where "violence and killings [...] targeted attacks against opposition leader Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu" drew support from the youth (CRD, 2021). Synonymous with this concern before the elections was the support other young members of parliament in Kenya gave their Ugandan counterparts. They "threatened to stage demonstrations in Kampala" if their fellow youthful leader across the border was not released (The EastAfrican, 2018). The escalation of these events also drew digital protests from Kenyan youth and civil rights activists.

1.5 Research Question and Objectives

This paper captured the role of institutions and youth political leaders in electoral conflict prevention. As part of exploring the role of youth political leadership shaped by institutional parameters, my study sought to answer the following research question: What impact has youth leaders in political parties had in electoral conflict prevention? To delve deeper into the question, I broke down the question into the following sub-questions: What strategies can youth leaders employ to influence political parties? And What is the role of political parties during elections? This questions sought to analyse the general effect of youth political leadership and its impact on electoral conflict prevention. I discussed Uganda's recent electoral strife and Kenya's electoral processes in relation to influential political leaders and electoral conflict. Finally, I explored other regional and international instruments that promoted youth participation in political parties and conflict prevention.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework

Political parties are institutions whose intention is the achievement of political goals. The term ‘institution’ has various meanings which was used in this study. According to Wilton Hamilton who introduced the word ‘institutionalism’ in 1918, institutions are "a sparse way of thinking or acting, embodied in group habits and customs of the people” (Salamova, 2021,p.1). The oxford dictionary defines institutions as ‘organizations founded for a religious, educational, professional, or social purpose’. To understand the role of political institutions in facilitating the impact of youth in politics, I delved into two distinct theories: institutionalism and feminist institutionalism. These theories explored the structure, norms and practices in political institutions, their operations and their overall outcomes.

According to Clemens & Cook (1999, p.446) ‘Institutionalism is apolitical’. However from a political angle, political parties are institutions whose driving force is the implementation a policy and political agenda supported by the acquisition of state resources. As institutions, they are bound by a set of structures that are put in place to enable them achieve political objectives. Gender perspectives also play a significant role in present day political dispensation. The needs and expectations of men and women differ from a social, cultural, environmental and political perspective. I analyzed the social construction of gender from a political institutional standpoint by looking at representation and inclusivity at different facets of the institution.

Through the data collected, I analyzed how political parties structures and practises influenced key actors in shaping strategies and processes meant to avert violent conflicts during elections. To support my argument, I also looked at youth political representation from a gender lens as indicated in *Tables 1* and *2* below.

Table 1

Percentage of youth members of parliament in Uganda

Age as last election or renewal	Overall	Male	Female
Percentage of MPs 30 years of age or younger	3.83%	1.53%	2.3%
Percentage of MPs 40 years of age or younger	24.33%	14.56%	9.77%

Source: Global data on national parliaments

Table 2**Percentage of youth members of parliament in Kenya**

Age as last election or renewal	Overall	Male	Female
Percentage of MPs 30 years of age or younger	0.57%	0.57%	0%
Percentage of MPs 40s years of age or younger	12.89%	9.46%	3.44%

Source: Global data on national parliaments

2.1 Institutionalism

Political parties are institutions that operate under a coordinated set of formal and informal structures, systems and norms. Their formal structures are portrayed through set systems of operations implemented through vertical and horizontal casual mechanisms. However, in the case of political institutions, they “should be treated as intervening variables in contrast to basic causal forces” (Young, 2002, p.174). That way, they will serve the society where peace and stability will be their main goal in the case of electoral outcomes. From an informal standpoint, their practices are demonstrated through party norms, individual networks and historical experiences.

The formal structures by which they are constituted are meant to facilitate a cordial relationship and communicate a common vision between them and the electorates they strive to represent. This is made also possible through the interplay between political actors and the institutional system set in place. Bell (2011, p.883) argues that “institutions matter because they shape the choices, behavior and even the interests and identities of agents”. Within the ODM and NUP, party leaders Raila Odinga, Robert Kyagulanyi and their close allies uphold the politics of influence ingrained by party structures and their individual interests as leaders. Hence, the need for youth political leaders to assert themselves through the formation of strategic relationships with the party top leadership.

The theory of institutionalism debunks the structure of institutions as the only important component of attaining success. Whereas operational structures and systems are meant to facilitate coordinated efforts to attain set objects, they leave a gap in understanding the impact of their overall goal of promoting effective leadership, accountable governance and eradicating human suffering, a core mandate in many of their manifestos. Tolbert & Zucker (1999, p.174) adds to this narrative by stressing that "structure can maintain its symbolic value in the face of widespread knowledge although its effect on individuals' behaviour is negligible". In many political parties, individual behaviours are shaped by networks and informal ties between party

members. Whereas youth quotas in political parties and youth parliamentarians are responsible for influencing youth by taking action in issues such as quelling violent conflicts perpetrated by their counterparts during elections, their input is not felt adequately if at all on the ground. Their inadequacies from a structural, normative and institutional background do not allow them to voice their concerns based on their position within the party's formal structure.

2.2 Feminist Institutionalism

The feminist movement grew exponentially in the 1960's feminist wave era due to an awareness of intersectionality that contributed to feminist concepts, discussions and theories. One of the theories that has emerged overtime is feminist institutionalism which seeks to understand the "role of gender in political institutions" (Thomson, 2018, p.179). Do political institutions such as political parties hinder or promote gendered policies and practices? (Matthijs, 2022 as cited by Mackay et al., 2010) identified four themes that affect the participation and role of women in political institutions. These themes are: formal and informal institutions, institutional change and continuity, structure and agency, gender and institutional power". In political parties the participation of women, especially young women at the formal and informal nature of institutions is at a bare minimal looking at their numbers as indicated in tables 1 and 2 above. Masculine culture upheld by political institutions also hinders gender parity in political spaces. Whereas the nature of institutional structure has not impacted on gender, individual behaviours and norms serve as an obstacle for the participation of women. All these factors impede women's impact when it comes to accessing institutional power.

In Ugandan and Kenyan societies, women form more than 50% of the country's population. They are key contributors to social, economic, cultural, and political institutional processes albeit being part of a patriarchal society that endorses masculine notions of power. According to Kenny (2014, p.683) "old" gender norms and legacies are carried forward in both the design and operation of "new" political institutions, limiting possibilities for reform and innovation. Although ODM and NUP were formed after UN Resolution 1325 and other gender friendly international instruments, political parties have yet to endorse gender parity and equity in their practices and operations.

Feminist institutionalists argue that a "gendered logic of appropriateness" (Chappell, 2006) exists within institutions (Thomson 2018 as cited by Chappell, 2006). In a political party setting, democracy and political representation should not be tokenistic and symbolic to women, especially young women. The structures set in place and institutional practices should entrust

young women with power that can be executed for the benefit of the institution internally and externally in the case of political institutions. Thus, giving young women a platform to address issues such as electoral conflicts and violence during electioneering periods with key party leaders. In retrospect, this will challenge the culture of patriarchy that has played a fundamental role in alienating their voices and contributed to discriminatory political norms with the institution.

Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

This chapter describes and emphasizes the research methodology applied in the research study. I highlight reasons that pertain to the choice of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The chosen method was used to uphold the reliability and validity of the data collected. From a research perspective, I analyzed the role of critical actors in political parties such as party top leadership and young wings, and policy directives such as affirmative action measures within political parties and their effects on electoral conflict prevention. I also sought to understand how youth representatives in political parties engaged in decision making processes from an institutional perspective.

3.1 Qualitative Approach Research Method

As a researcher, I found the qualitative approach of research methodology 'case study', to be the most appropriate for this study. A 'case study is an in-depth study of persons, groups, or organisations—a process intended to obtain an objective assessment once the study is completed. Yin (2014, p.5) emphasises that "the need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena". Politics and electoral conflicts are complex social phenomena that have impacted stability, threatened, and derailed peaceful processes in at-risk developing countries. The case study method in this process was exploratory, seeking to explore the nature of ambiguity in political institutions and socio-political processes. It focused on answering my research question where content and historical analysis, and open-ended questionnaires were used as data collection tools. I opted to use both analysis and open-ended questions to complement each other and compare results collected through various techniques.

3.2 Methodology Selection

This methodology was selected because of its suitability for analyzing qualitative data in the form of text and words. It entailed an intensive empirical review of my cases and their contexts. Participants in the case studies were NUP and ODM youth political leaders at the local and national level. My data collection method was conducted over a period over two months. Data collected was coded and categorised into overarching themes of: youth political leaders' role in political parties, their role during elections, challenges faced when executing their and strategies used to engage fellow youth.

3.2.1 Content and Historical Analysis

Content and historical analysis is a process seeking to capture keywords, themes, or concepts, aligned with qualitative data. Southerton (2011) described it as a "methodologically explicit way of analysing texts, involving quantitative and qualitative procedures". In this case, content analysis unveiled and exposed what other researchers and political scientists had contributed over the years based on the research question and problem. On the other hand, "historical analysis is a method of examining evidence to understand the past" (Bricknell, 2008, p. 108). This contributed significantly to examining the history of NUP and ODM political parties.

3.2.2 Open-ended Questionnaires

My primary mode of data collection was done through open-ended questionnaires where I utilised online surveys. Open-ended questionnaires are questions a researcher poses to their target audience whereby their responses are not restricted. Open questions also "force respondents into a different and possibly more intensive form of cognitive processing" (Wijngaards, Burger, & van Exel, 2019, p.2). Thus acquiring more accurate data.

As part of designing the open-ended questionnaire, I was guided by Saris & Gallhofer (2014, p.6) on key areas of designing a survey, including "subject and dimension, formulation of the question, response category, and additional text." In the coming chapters, the data collected gave an in-depth analysis and understanding of youth in political leadership positions and electoral conflicts. However, I was aware that "the generalizability and claimed objectivity of the results could end up being in opposition to the interest" of this study based on this chosen data collection method (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017, p.26).

3.3 Cases

Two cases were studied in this research. They are Kenya's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) political party and Uganda's National Unity Platform (NUP). I chose ODM for its longevity in Kenya's political scene dating back to 2005, its massive youth following and participation in elections that saw Kenya in the blink of a civil war in 2007. Similarly, I chose the National Unity Platform (NUP), founded in 2020, formally known as the National Unity Reconciliation and Development Party (NURP), founded in 2004. Its new dawn and revitalisation demonstrated by a youth party leader from 2020 allowed me to understand the role of youth leaders wielding institutional political power in Uganda's political dispensation..

3.4 Empirical sources of data

Empirical sources of data were determined from past research on youth, political parties, and electoral conflicts by renewed political scientists in the field. Other materials reviewed included journals, books, UN resolutions on youth and politics, and country reports on the state of youth participation in politics. In addition to these resources, I used open-ended questionnaires to obtain new insights on youth, politics, and electoral conflicts where obtain individual feedback from youth political leaders. The respondents included members of parliament, locally elected youth political leaders and elected members of political party youth leagues in both countries. Ugandan members of parliament, *Hon. Stephen Sserubula, MP for Lugazi constituency* and *Hon. Nagudi Asiya Councilor of LC3 Busega Kigwanya Zone* are among those who gave consent for their names to be mentioned and quotes used in this study. On the Kenyan front, elected ODM youth league members *Arnold Baya* and *Vincent Ouma* are also among those who responded to the open-ended questionnaires and gave consent for their names and responses to be included in the study. Both data sources allowed me to corroborate authentic and intentional responses on the subject matter.

3.5 Open-ended Questionnaires - Respondents' Contact Procedures

Youth political leaders placed at different levels of the institution were contacted using different preferred methods depending on their political positions. The members of parliament were contacted through an email sent to their official parliamentary email address using my student email. Details of the letter are indicated in *Appendices III* and *IV*. Locally elected youth leaders and youth league members were contacted by emailing the political party's official email address.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

Reliability of the data was demonstrated through official published resources in the case of content and historical analyses. The open-ended questionnaires targeted political youth leaders who were the primary source of the data. In terms of validity, the method used to collect data was the most appropriate for this study as it allowed respondents to give independent views based on their experiences. I concur with Heyink and Tymstra (1993, p.298) who emphasizes from a validity perspective that “new information collected is compatible with the information found before”. This is also in addition to the fact that data collected from both methods can be

corroborated by the theories used in this study. For example, the theory of institutionalism can be corroborated through political party structures and institutional norms. In regards to feminist institutionalism, it can be corroborated through gender and power dynamics within the political institution.

3.7 Limitation and delimitation

Limitation experienced with this case study methodology was time constrain. This was due to the nature of the case studies and the targeted respondents. Hence, making the response rate slow. However, the delimitation of this method provided an opportunity for me as a researcher to gain new insights into an area of research that is has not been exhausted by researchers.i.e youth, political institutions, and electoral conflicts.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were observed during the data collection process, as indicated in *Appendices V* and *Appendix VI*. Research participants “gave consent and were provided with full information on the nature of the intervention” (Byrne, 2016, p. 15). A few respondents permitted their names and quotes to be highlighted in the study. However, respondents were also informed that participation was voluntary and they could withdraw their participation at any given time. This is in accordance with Linnaeus University's Ethical Review Mandate guided by 'Vetenskapsrådet, 2017' of the Swedish Research Council.

Chapter Four

Findings

This chapter presents the findings from my content, historical analysis, and open-ended questionnaire responses from youth political leaders from ODM and NUP. However, before presenting these findings, I summarise the main research question that has guided this thesis once again. Electoral conflicts are a genuine threat to Kenya and Uganda's democratic dispensation. Synonymous with elections in both countries are broken insitutional structures demonstrated through lack of transparency, voter bribery, and threats by political goons. Dissatisfied youth affected by these issues also bear the brunt of poverty, unemployment, corruption, and societal divisions along ethnic, religious, and political lines. These are also the main perpetrators of electoral violent conflicts, perhaps in response to their frustrations. Ideally, when it comes to representative politics, youth political leaders within political parties are tasked with the responsibility of representing their counterparts and voicing their concerns progressively. Unfortunately, this is not the case, noting volatile youth's role in electoral conflicts. Overall, the result of this study sought to answer my research question. i.e., what impact have youth leaders in political parties had in electoral conflict prevention? Data obtained highlighted the responsibility of youth political leaders within parties and effects of institutional structures. It also revealed recruitment strategies, civic and political education targeted at fellow youth.

The results obtained include common themes from content and historical analyses obtained from several historical backgrounds of politicians and political parties. I also presented data from opened end questionnaires obtained from 80 youth political leaders: 40 out of a total of 80 youth political leaders from NUP and another 40 out of 120 youth political leaders from ODM. Data from the questionnaires reached the threshold of 50% and 40% respectively. These participants included members of parliament, youth leaders at the district level and youth leagues (under the youth structure) in both political parties. Data obtained from the content and historical analysis and open-ended questionnaires were presented through thematic areas obtained from the research question and objectives. In the content analysis, the data was broken down into major categories from various literature. From the open-ended questionnaire, I narrowed down the responses through coding to identify key phrases and words that will inform my discussion. According to Rouder et al. (2021, p.2 as cited in Suter 2012), coding "allows researchers to draw reasonable and meaningful conclusions from the data, which is a widespread method for qualitative analysis". Furthermore, I adopted 'inductive coding' to get empirical data that responds to my

research question and objectives.

4.1 Content and Historical Analysis

In this section, I identified three thematic areas that have been derived from the research question. The themes are youth and politics, political parties, and youth and electoral conflicts.

Theme 1: Youth and Politics

In 1992 Kenya's political dispensation, "politically eligible youths widely taunted as 'Young Turks' – were rendered powerless and kept in the service of their respective elders" under the Kenya African National Union (KANU) administration (Kagwanja, 2005, p.82). On the other hand, patronage and ethnicity is also a “tendency in Kenyan party politics for politically active young people to be co-opted into complex networks of political patronage by a wealthy political figure” (Ranta, 2017, p.236). In the case of Uganda, "youth strive to climb the party hierarchy so that they too will have individuals who depend on their guidance and connections since part of demonstrating one's status in adulthood is access to such patronage resources and networks" according to a statement issued by a member of parliament (Asante, 2020 as cited in Burgess 1999).

Other issues that have risen in relation to youth and political institutions are issues of gender, environment, and religion. Many "young women in Uganda are excluded from participating in democratic and political" processes (University Forum on Governance, 2016, p. 65). Albeit the UN advocating for the "promotion of young women's participation and presence in political office and decision-making at all levels" (UN Youth, 2013, p.7). On the environment, Jørgensen (2017, p.141) argues that "young people's environmental agency and political participation is often phrased in negative terms" in northern Kenya's politics. In terms of religion in Northern Uganda, "youth who primarily engage in religious activities rather than party politics or NGO-type civil society activism might be classified as 'apolitical' (Alava, 2017, p.160). *Table 3* below gives a breakdown of issues affecting youth and politics in both countries. It is worth noting that besides having the law, "its enforcement must be effective to realise the desired outcomes, especially regarding the participation of the youth at all levels of party politics" (CDM Kenya, 2015,p.9).

Table 3

Youth and Politics			
Category	Kenya	Category	Uganda
1.	Youth mobilisation e.g., rallies	1.	Political aspirations
2.	Political power	2.	Political discrimination based on gender
3.	Political networks and connections	3.	Assumptions
4.	Inadequate implementation of the law.		

Theme 2: Political Parties

Figure 3

Members of the National Unity Platform at the launch of the People Power Movement's political wing led by Robert Kyagulanyi, known as Bobi Wine, Kampala, July 22, 2020.
 Copyright: Halima Athumani/VOA

In Kenya and Uganda, "youth and knowledge of the political system are significant factors that increase the likelihood of supporting the political opposition (Uddhammar, 2011, p.1186). This is seen in Uganda, where President Yoweri Museveni "having outlawed political parties through the 1995 constitution, extended his control over the political space by adopting personal rule (Wayama, 2013, p.30). Although Uganda is a democratic country, "youth violence continues to haunt the road to democracy in the future" (Kagwanja, 2005. p.106). Ranta (2017 as cited in Sundet and Moen 2009, 10) argues that "organised violence, such as the use of youth militia to intimidate opposing candidates, and sexual violence against women candidates and voters, has been part of all elections in Kenya. In terms of influence to address these issues, "local politicians who could join the "inner circle," and mobilise a local support based could enhanced their political stature. (Wanyama, 2013, p.33). *Table 4* below highlights common themes that stood out in the content and historical analysis.

Further more, Kenya's Political Parties Act of 2008 transferred the responsibility for political parties to the registrar of political parties[...]. It ruled that no party shall be registered if founded on a particularistic basis. Therefore, it uses divisive slogans and symbols or carries on its activities in only part of Kenya (Moroff, 2010, p.756). However, in Uganda, "the long-term ban on all party activities seems to have significantly weakened the traditional opposition parties" (Moroff, 2010, p.762). This has seen President Museveni "block opposition parties from consolidating, building national networks, and gaining sustained political experience" (Abrahamsen & Bareebe, 2021, p.99). However, this did not stop the People's Power Movement from being launched under the NUP, as shown in *Figure 3* above.

Table 4

Political Parties			
Category	Kenya	Category	Uganda
1	Politically informed youth	1.	Politically informed youth
2	Political intimidation, violence, and threats of violence, e.g., sexual violence	2.	Authoritarian tactics, e.g., control of political spaces
3	Political connections	3.	Infringement of democratic rights
		4.	Party recognition

Theme 3: Youth and Electoral Conflicts

Figure 4



Opposition supporters protest on the main road in the Bamburi area of the coastal city of Mombasa, December 31, 2007.

Copyright: REUTERS/Joseph Okanga

Youth and electoral conflicts have become synonymous in Kenya, as illustrated in *Figure 4* above where opposition supporters conducted violent protests after Kenya's 2007 elections. Parallel to the violence in the early 1990s, "Kalenjin youth attacked members of non-indigenous groups across Rift Valley" (Hassan & O'Mealia, 2018, p. 166). The ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) "organised youth wings to work as militias both in the 1992 and 1999 elections, and violent clashes became an element in the run-up to the elections" (Hoglund, 2009, p. 417). This was also the case in Northern Kenya, where 'councils of elders,' an institution with the "air of traditional authority proliferates alongside more youthful militia to protect the interests of a group", during elections (Carrier & Kochore, 2014, p.138). Another example is the Mungiki movement which "claimed to represent the masses of poor youth, and where its political mobilisation has come to evoke immediate public fears of violence" (Rasmussen, 2018, p.179).

Uganda's political history indicated that Obote's government's "poor political management led to a descent into bouts of political violence and instability from which Uganda struggled to recover" (Cheeseman, Collord, & Reyntjens, 2018, p.58). Fjelde (2020, p. 142 as cited in Staniland, 2014) emphasizes that "electoral violence sees different manifestations, spanning from regime-perpetrated coercion at the hands of the security forces or armed thugs operating at the hands of politicians to threaten voters or intimidating electoral observers, to local turf wars between party youth-wings". In recent years "youth engagement tends to increase during election periods to attract political rents while post-electoral periods receive the lowest level of youth participation as many get sidelined (Oroma, 2017, para. 9).

Table 5

Youth and Electoral Conflicts

Category	Kenya	Category	Uganda
1.	Violent protests, clashes	1.	Political violence, e.g., beatings, killings
2.	Youth groups, e.g., wings, militia	2.	Political threats, e.g., coercion, intimidation
3.		3.	Youth as hired thugs

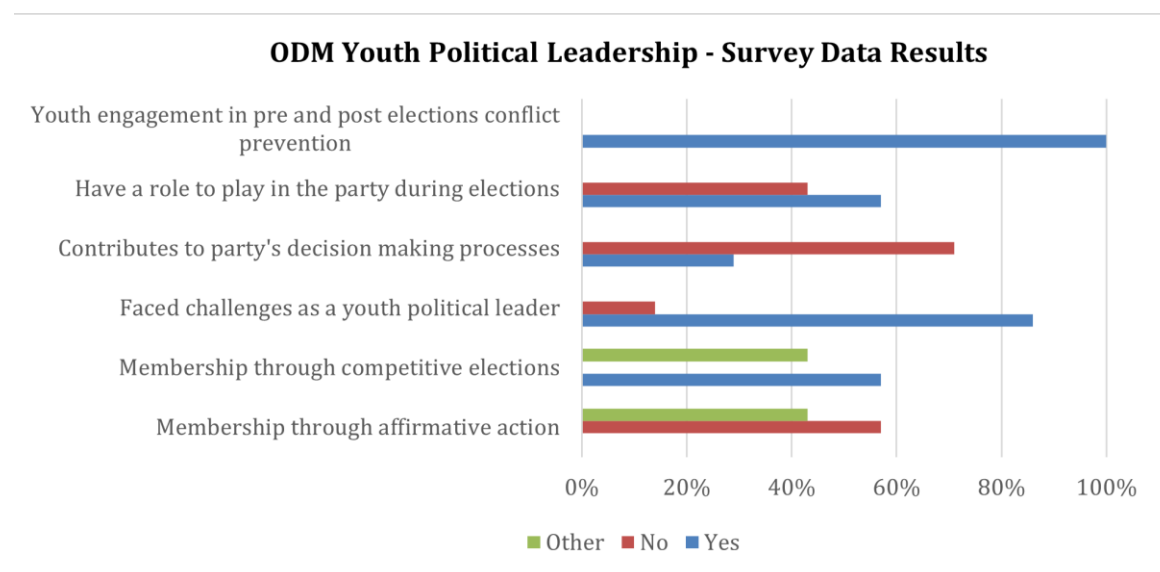
4.1 Open-ended questionnaires

The Orange Democratic Movement (ODM)

Data collected from male and female youth political leaders in ODM highlighted 6 themes designed to answer my research question. This is in addition to other perspectives that were shared in the survey. *For example, Figure 5* below indicates a higher percentage of respondents involvement in electoral conflict prevention. Contrary to a lower percentage of participation in

party's decision-making processes.

Figure 5



Survey data results from ODM Youth Political Leaders

Table 6 below indicates thematic areas captured in the survey were and how they were coded. The same data was also used "to enhance, confirm, or refine the story told through quantitative data" as captured in *Figure 5* (Rouder et al., 2021,p.3). The data was collated to identify information nuances and extract new data that would inform the research analysis. I categorised the themes into 10 codes that capture different dimensions of the young political leader's roles and experiences. Responses such as "engaging my fellow young people in making sure we make informed decisions or choices for a better future" to "using social media tools such as Facebook to speak out against tribal and intercommunal violence during elections" were vital for determining if they answer the research question.

Table 6

Responses from ODM Youth Political Leaders		
Thematic Areas	Codes	Responses
Role of youth leader in the political party	1. Youth engagement and representation	Engaging my fellow young people in making sure we make informed decisions or choices for a better future.
	2. Supportive role	Representing fellow youth in party forums and summits held at the national level and sharing the aspirations of youth people with the party-political leader.
		Advisory committee member at the sub-county level. Representing the youth at the local level county assembly forums on policy reviews, recommendations etc.
		Representing youth at the parliament level by ensuring public policies address youth development needs.
		Voicing the concerns of youth in the political party. Advocating for increased representation at the local level.

			Championing support and investment will attract more young women to join the political party. Addressing issues affecting women and girls at the party level.
Involvement in party decision making processes	3.	Youth inclusion	As advisory committee members, we survey the ground and give feedback to the party's leadership on what people's feelings are towards the party, especially among young people and women.
	4.	Non-Inclusion	As a member of parliament, I am involved in the party's decision making processes.
			I am involved in the party's decision-making level within my county, where I am a member of the county assembly.
			I might contribute to the party's decision-making processes by sharing my perspective with the party leader and other officials.
			I am not included in the parties in the decision-making processes as a youth leader
			I am not involved or included in the party's decision-making processes.
			Not involved in party decision-making processes
Role of youth leader in the party during elections	5.	Campaigning	Lobbying for the youth vote in the local and general elections, campaigning for the party through various platforms, e.g., public gatherings, television talk shows etc
			I campaign for the party during elections. I also campaign for fellow party officials and myself who are standing for elective posts.
			Campaigning for the party.
			Using social media to campaign for the party during elections.
			I have no specific role to play during elections
			No role to play in the party during elections
			I don't have a role to play.
Engagement with fellow youth	6.	Participation	What normally happens is making sure we as leaders act as a bridge between sources and our peers in passing information which is important when it comes to issues of leadership.
	7.	Youth mobilisation	I participate in social events where I share the needs of young women. In this events I interact with both young men and women and gain their perspectives.
			I organise meetups at the local level to get different youth perspectives, their urgent and future needs, and aspirations.
			I am part of a youth leadership network that brings young people together to discuss challenges facing Kenyan youth.
			I run an independent organisation that provides youth in my community with various resources and opportunities.
			I meet youth during my campaigns. I am also invited to talks and events where I can inspire the young people
			Though not a member of any political party, but as an affiliate of the ODM party in most cases during our youth barazas, we talk about youth involvement in politics and the reason why young people should take up political spaces.
Role of youth leader in elections conflict prevention	8.	Engagement	Peace and security are as a result of the precautions taken before, now we always engage youths in different forums and platforms where peace and security are prioritised during and after election because we believe in making sober decision and also allow our country to grow by maintaining the same.
	9.	Advocating against violence	I encourage young women to play an active role in conflict resolution during elections by organising forums where they are taught to play an active role in preventing violence within their familial and community circles.
			Through civic education in youth barazas organised by us.
			I advocate against violence during campaigns.
			Using social media tools such as face book to speak out against tribal and intercommunal violence during elections.

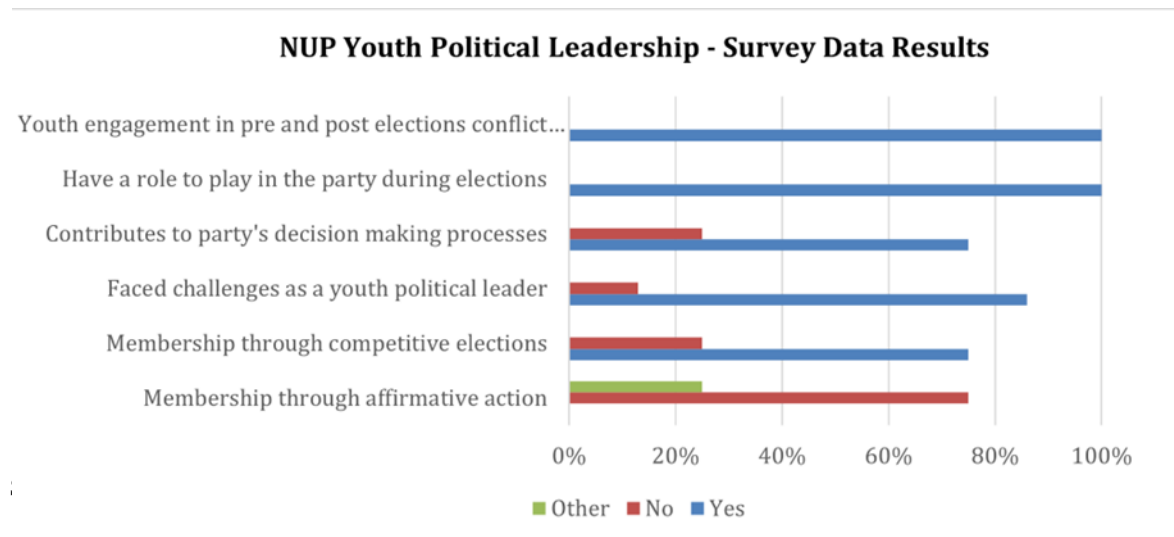
I am part of the peace committee in my county that works on ensuring youth are part of anti-violence campaigns

I preach peace during elections by informing the youth not to take the law into their own hands.

The National Unity Platform (NUP)

Data acquired from NUP youth political leaders through the online survey according to *Figure 6* below indicated that youth political leaders engaged in pre and post-conflict prevention. They also played a role in the political party. This is demonstrated by their likelihood of having a larger percentage contributing to the party's decision-making processes while facing challenges when executing their mandate.

Figure 6



Survey data results from NUP Youth Political Leaders

Responses from *table 7* that had 6 thematic areas were broken down into 6 codes to capture responses from the 5 major themes. For example, NUP youth political leader's roles such as "mobilising and motivating youth to love themselves while involving themselves in politics," were supported by the same respondent who stated that, "I am the chief coordinator for our district and I identifying candidates for different elective posts" . From an objective lens, the responses obtained opened a window of opportunity to explore whether they respond to the research question or provided new perspectives for the study.

Table 7

Responses from NUP Youth Political Leaders		
Thematic Areas	Codes	Responses
Role of youth leader in the	1. Youth mobilisation	Mobilise and motivate youths to love and involve themselves in politics.

political party	2. Youth participation and representation	<p>Fundraiser for welfare and treatment of those families of the dead and those still incarcerated in jails owned by Dictator, tyrant Museveni, his son tyrant Muhoozi and his ruthless mother Janet Museveni. Museveni should free all political and freedom fighters and retire. Before he retires Ugandans need to know where all the mass graves are, e.g., like in Kalangala Island, and to know the number of those who were fed to Museveni and Muhoozi crocodiles. Ugandans have the right to know why they are killed for the Museveni and in-laws to benefit from. The body organs black market. Enough is enough. The dictator should hand over the position peacefully to the legally elected president who won by a landslide of 54%</p> <p>My role is a trainer of social change, mobiliser, and organiser</p> <p>Facilitating youth participation in party related activities that promote development.</p> <p>Speaking out on the issues affecting youth and working to address them through policy implementation</p> <p>Previous flag bearer for member of parliament Jinja city southern Division East</p> <p>Representing youth issues at the local level.</p> <p>Participating in the review of the party's policy implementation in my district</p>
Involvement in party decision making processes	3. Participation	<p>In formulating policies that establish grassroots committees.</p> <p>No, I am not involved in the party's decision-making process.</p> <p>NUP as a new party we have a lot to do that's ART Action, Recruitment, and Training I do more on training members on how to mobilise and organise</p> <p>I participate in the party decision making processes by bringing to the forefront issues affecting society and giving recommending solutions sourced from the young people.</p> <p>Yes, by participating in the party's strategic planning process to implement our party objectives.</p> <p>I'm invited together with my other colleagues that are on the position of flag bearers and we are consulted on as certain party policies are drafted. Then also assigning us roles in the different party activities.</p> <p>Perhaps not directly. But through town hall meetings in diaspora, I felt the impact of my contributions come alive to benefit the election and YES, the Umbrella campaign was a success.</p> <p>I participate indirectly by giving suggestions to party officials in my district.</p>
Role of youth leader in the party during elections	1. Coordination 2. Fundraising 3. Campaigning 4. Supervision	<p>I am the district's chief coordinator and identify candidates for different elective posts.</p> <p>Fundraiser. Contributed more than 3,000 campaign posters for rural areas.</p> <p>Coordinator of all trainers.</p> <p>Encourage the public to vote for change. A change in leadership that can address issues affecting our society today</p> <p>I organise and plan campaign activities with fellow leaders at the district level to the national level</p> <p>Supervisor at sub county level to oversee polling exercise and safeguard our vote.</p> <p>Campaign for the party at the district level by encouraging youth especially women to vote.</p> <p>I have no specific role in the party during elections</p>
Engagement with fellow youth	4. Meetings and events with youth	<p>In meetings for community projects. Assistance in challenges like meeting their fees dues where possible.</p> <p>I engage through political platforms for change.</p> <p>As a youth political leader, I work upon my principles that discipline, integrity, fidelity and inclusiveness I fully engage with them.</p>

Role of youth leader in elections conflict prevention	5. Training 6. Campaign messaging	I do engage with fellow youth as their leader in the party through online platforms at party activities. On retreats and also when I mobilise them for political trainings and get togethers
		Meet youth in various community events where I inform them of issues such as: their rights as citizens and as Uganda's future leaders.
		I normally engage with youth through sporting activities where I get to share our party vision
		Attend functions and events organised by youth.
		Engage with youth through local project activities.
		I engage with fellow youth by participating in party summits and discussing issues affecting us and finding possible solutions
		Ensuring transparency in primaries when choosing candidates.
		We have discussion programs and platforms in the diaspora and the chairwoman or chairmen will relay necessary messages to the president of the party.
		I carried out workshops on conflict prevention and peacebuilding.
		Organise workshops for my fellow youth where we conduct forums promoting one Uganda and avoiding confrontation with voters from the opposing side
		In pre- election I together with my team from NUP did mobilise the youth especially those subscribing to our cause for a training on how to avoid but also be assertive in the election process and how to go about a conflict when it arises in the election process. Many where victims of the police conflict caused to give state chance to rig the election. Post-election conflict was the worst because many of us were thrown in prisons and our only crime was supporting NUP and contesting on the NUP ticket.
		Participate in nationwide events through various platforms by encouraging free and fair elections.
		Speak to youth vote peacefully and avoid running's with the security forces
		Sharing messages of anti-violence during elections via social media tools such as face book and Twitter.

Chapter Five

Analysis and Discussion

The results obtained from the research methodology guided by the theories of institutionalism and feminist institutionalism sought to unpack the functionalist of political institutional structures and youth political leadership in electoral conflict prevention. The motivation behind the study was the youth bulge and increasing political conflicts in two developing East African countries i.e., Kenya and Uganda. These countries share political, economic, and cultural aspirations as members of the EAC where “state preferences are the result of domestic interests” (Mwita, 2009, p.29). A spillover of electoral conflicts could affect the regional integration that both countries benefit from. I sought to understand the relationship between those engaged in the conflict and those upholding formal and informal institutional power in order to espouse issues contributing to electoral conflicts.

“President Museveni should free all political and freedom fighters and retire. The dictator should hand over the position peacefully to the legally elected president who won by a land slide of 54%”.

K. Evelyn, a local youth political leader

This example demonstrates the effect of institutional power wielded by party leaders that threaten and impede the participation of youth political leaders in playing an active role in electoral conflict prevention. It also shows how political institutions can be manipulated by individuals with self interests. I also found a major correlation between youth and politics, political parties, youth, and electoral conflicts thematic areas from my historical analysis. These thematic areas were broken down further to provided nuances such as youth political mobilization and recruitment as informal components in political parties. According to Kamau (2017, p. 37) “every young person using social media in Kenya exposed to political information whenever they log in at the rate of 91%”. Thus showing the advantage of youth political leadership in political institutions.

Data obtained from the open-end questionnaires highlighted the role of youth political leaders when it came to key issues such as representation, participation, and support etc. It is worth noting that female youth political leaders faced challenges that stood out more compared to their male counterparts. The challenges faced contributed to how well they engaged and influenced

youth as party members.

“As a women leaders I face a lot of challenges. I love my community but sometimes I fail to contribute effectively due to limited resources.”

Hon. Nagudi Asiya, Councilor LC3 Busega Kigwanya Zone

In the context of feminist institutionalism, imbalanced gender power dynamics facilitated by masculine norms in political institutions curtail women's voices in situations where their interventions are needed. Although affirmative action ensures women inclusion in political institutions, their male colleagues see them as “perpetual outsiders” (Kenny, 2014, p.680). Perhaps structural reforms are needed in political institutions to improve gender power dynamics.

5.1 Youth, Political Parties and Elections

Table 3 in the result section referencing the Kenyan perspective brings out the impact of having political influence when it comes to youth mobilization in large numbers. In this discourse, I noted that massive youth numbers could be a cause or consequence of peaceful elections. The informal nature of institutions observed through patronage in political parties also contributed to youth leaders having political influence. This is because they are seen as “the ‘spearhead’ of development, closely associated with hierarchy and rank” (Weingrod, 1968, p. 384). From an analytical perspective, youth political leaders not having patronage from senior party officials are less likely to have an influence on their fellow youth when it comes to electoral conflict prevention.

On the contrary, Ugandan youth leaders are more focused on their aspirations in the party where they are likely to benefit more hierarchically from resources and networks. This affects their capacity of connecting with the despondent youth whom they represent. The issue of inclusivity and gender equity in politics and as youth political leaders is also a derailing factor in progressive politics. In as much as women and girls bear the brunt of violence during electoral conflicts, their exclusion as leaders negates political parties' abilities as effective leaders culpable of good leadership during elections. Goetz (2002, p. 573) argues that when it comes to politics, women or their younger counterparts have not “institutionalised a presence for themselves as legitimate competitors for the popular vote”.

Political institutions are the driving force for effective youth participation in a country's

governance and development. However, due to institutional structures that limit innovation, youth political leaders who are part and parcel of the country's larger population rarely have the opportunity and responsibility of quelling all types of antagonism. However, according to *Table 4*, youth leaders participation in politics can be enhanced by having politically informed youth contribute to the party's influence at the grassroots. Lack of strategic partnerships with influential leaders in the party top leadership by being part and parcel of the 'inner circle' remains a challenge for youth political leaders. Thus, giving them impeding their influential prowess. Other circumstance that derail effective youth engagement is culture. For instance, It is a “taboo to talk in front of the elders” (Ranta, 2018, p.233).

In Uganda's case, authoritarian tactics supported by amended institutional laws and informal power dynamics such as distribution of resources along “lines of ethnicity and region” and the infringement of democratic rights parties encourage repression and exclusion of opposing political viewpoints (Tripp, 2004. p.5). This leads to democratic derailment, prompting the youth to take violent action during elections.

Violence perpetrated by youth during elections indicates that, that is how they deal with electoral disparities, as illustrated in *Figure 4* where they engage in violent protests and clashes against security forces. In other instances according to *Table 5* in the results section, political forces push them to carry out atrocities against civilians and destroy private and public property. In Kenya, these atrocities are conducted by hired youth gangs, youth wings, militia, and ethnically affiliated youth their political or ethnic leaders instruct. This leaves little room for youth political leaders to influence their peers, let alone stop the culture of politically motivated violence. From the Ugandan perspective, historical political nuances continue to influence politics today, where political violence is perpetrated by the ruling party.

“Post election conflict was the worst because many of us were thrown in prisons and our only crime was supporting NUP and contesting on the NUP ticket”

*Mugaya Paul Geraldson, NUP flag bearer for member of
parliament, Jinja city southern Division East*

As a result, youth political leaders like their counterparts are at risk of being threatened, coerced, intimidated, and violently targeted by hired youth gangs.

5.2 Youth Leaders in Political Parties

As illustrated in *Table 6*, youth leaders in Kenya have specific roles in political parties. This entails engaging fellow youth in various forums to get information that can benefit the party. The information obtained could help in meeting and building the party's manifesto, to win their votes during elections. The leaders also play a representative role at the local and national levels in events organised at the party level. In contrast to their mandate, a lot remains to be effected when it comes to reaching their potential in the party level. This would be possible if political party politics do not “appeal to ascriptive loyalties rather than broader interests” as it with the case of party patronage (Goetz, 2002, p.552). Whereas Ugandan youth leaders are seen to have similar roles, they have also adopted a more educative role to empowering fellow youth with political education and development-related knowledge. This is in addition to mobilising youth to participate in politics where their input is needed thus, preventing them from being exploited by unscrupulous political leaders and party officials.

Effective youth participatory processes in political parties are informed by their input in the party. Data gathered from Kenyan open-questionnaires respondents showcased their contribution at the county and national levels as members of parliament. However, their responses failed to inquire if their participation led to tangible changes. In addition to the question posed, youth leaders were not involved in the party's decision-making processes. On the contrary, youth leaders in Uganda played an active role in party's decision-making processes. The most effective one is being consulted on pertinent issues within the party. It is worth noting that youth political leaders' participation in decision-making processes had the opportunity to implement the party's anti-violence strategies, during electioneering periods.

5.3 Youth Political Leaders and Electoral Conflicts

Kenyan youth political leaders' role in the party is to ensure the party wins elections. They do this by engaging in campaign activities, as illustrated in *Table 6* which shows the relationship between political actors and political parties. Although their focus is on winning national and local elections, the impact of a negative electoral outcome is overlooked. On the contrary, as indicated in *Table 7*, some Ugandan youth political leaders had a different approach of training youth on peacebuilding and conflict prevention. This activities were vital as they could assist youth to recognize “electoral violence early warning signs,” and work towards a different approach to conflict resolution (ALIHODŽIĆ, 2012,p. 56).

“I carried out workshops on conflict prevention and peacebuilding”

Hon. Nagudi Asiya, Councilor LC3 Busega Kigwanya Zone

Youth to youth conversations and collaborations have a higher chance of producing positive results. In Kenya, youth political leaders are seen to organise and participate in platforms with fellow youth where they engage them in dialogue and support community initiatives. They serve as the bridge between them and the party. One question remains in relation to issues facing youth at the local level. What impact has this had on youth when dealing with social and political challenges? In most cases, the same youth will go out in the streets to demonstrate peacefully or violently if their needs are not met. This is also the case in Uganda, according to *Table 7*, where meetings with fellow youth are a good start but leave a lot of room for effective political influence that can prevent incidences of politically motivated conflict.

In the ODM and NUP parties, youth political leaders are ensuring that the youth don't engage in acts of violence during elections. They are using different tactics such as encouraging the safeguarding of their votes during elections and spreading messages of peace during campaigns. However, chances of them reaching the masses remain a challenge looking at the magnitude of violence in recently held elections. Whereas these activities are vital for conflict prevention during elections, more resources, education, strategic political networks and relationships are needed to reach and influence youth masses positively.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

This research aimed to explore the interplay between political institutions and youth political leadership with politics taking centre stage in electoral violence. The very term politics, has become synonymous with conflict, gridlock, entrenched and outdated institutions” (Warren, 2019). From a polity perspective, the two cases investigated in this study, Kenya and Uganda, are synonymous with electoral conflicts that threaten neighbouring countries as a result of compromised electoral systems.

As members of the EAC regional economic block, the spillover effects of conflict could threaten the consolidated political goal of being a political federation where “ideological affinity” remains to be a key element (Mugomba, 1978, p. 267). My study sought to answer the research question: What impact has youth leaders in political parties had in electoral conflict prevention? To answer this question, I used the qualitative research approach as my methodology to collect empirical data from youth political leaders in the ODM and NUP. I also utilised content and historical analysis complimented by open-ended questionnaire responses by youth political leaders from both parties. I discovered their limitations, challenges, strengths, and opportunities by analysing the youths' political leaders' roles, participation, and involvement in political parties. These issues are affected by party structures from an institutional perspective. The information obtained demonstrated that institutions have power to shape effective political processs through individuals. Thus emphasizing the notion that ‘institutions are subject to conscious design or manipulation on the part of human actors endeavoring to solve collective-action problems or, for that matter, seeking to promote any number of individualistic goals” (Brecher et. Al, 2002, p.179).

The study results met my expectations whereby youth political leaders are capable of engaging and influencing their peers. This is possible albeit the culture of ‘respect your elder’, limitation in resources, and constraining institutional systems. On the other hand, the “relatively low threshold’ of critical actors is needed to enact change” (Thomson, 2018, p.181 as cited by Childs and Krook, 2009). Youth political leaders without the influence and support of the party leadership are likely to be ineffective when it comes to shaping electoral political process.

In the case of gender power dynamics, institutional structures have been put in place to give

young women an equal opportunity in political party processes. Unfortunately, the ethos of violence in a patriarchal society where “vigilantism or the private threat of violence” is still a factor in political spaces preventing the full participation of women (Nieburg, 1968, p.868).

From a paronomic perspective, youth political leaders have a bigger role to play in quelling electoral conflicts unlike the previous generation of older elite. Technological advancement puts them at an advantage. They are also part of a modern society that is capable of taking advantage of globalization in respect to addressing emerging political and electoral conflicts. As leaders of vulnerable populations, they are capable of influencing their counterparts to take a more progressive path.

In conclusion, only sustained engagement leads to change (Warren, 2019). Youth political leaders can begin by assisting to address the root cause of violence. These are longstanding social-economic issues affecting youth such as healthcare, education etc once they assume office. Secondly, noting the successes and failures of senior party and government officials in the country's governance systems, altruistic leaders can develop their vision by learning from past leaders by refining their strategies. From an analytical lens, further research is needed to understand the intergenerational relationship between youth political leaders and senior party officials for effective leadership. Thirdly, there is an urgent need for youth political leaders to incorporate political and civic education as a strategy in their youth-led forums, meetings, and events with fellow youth. Fourthly, getting informed on peacebuilding and conflict resolutions strategies could be lacking albeit their position as leaders. Lastly, the interaction of society and political institutions are vital for a positive electoral dispensation. Youth political leaders should also understand institutional norms in order to have a positive impact. In many socio-political situations, conflicts are unavoidable. However, political institutional reforms are vital in addressing societal issues including violent conflicts during elections.

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Appendix 1

Constitution of the Republic of Uganda – Amended (section)

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

SUPPLEMENT No. 31

14th May, 2001

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS SUPPLEMENT

to The Uganda Gazette No. 17 Volume XCVI dated 14th May, 2001.

Printed by UPPC, Entebbe, by Order of the Government.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS.

2001 No. 31.

THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS) REGULATIONS, 2001.

PART III—REPRESENTATIVES OF THE YOUTH.

4. Regions.

(1) For the purposes of the election of representatives of the youth in Parliament, Uganda shall be divided into four regions namely—

- (i) the Northern Region;
- (ii) the Eastern Region;
- (iii) the Central Region; and
- (iv) the Western Region.

(2) The regions shall each comprise the areas of the districts specified in relation to them in the First Schedule to these Regulations.

5. Qualification for election.

(1) A person seeking to be elected as a representative of the youth in Parliament shall be a youth as defined in regulation 2 of these Regulations and also be qualified to be a member of Parliament in terms of article 80 of the Constitution and section 5 of the Act.

(2) Subject to article 80 of the Constitution, and section 5 of the Act, election under these Rules shall be open to all youth.

6. Electoral college within region of representation

All the members of District Youth Councils within each region shall constitute an electoral college for the election of the representative of the youth in Parliament for that region.

7. Election of representative of youth for each region.

(1) The Commission shall appoint by notice published in the Gazette three days within which the electoral college of each region shall meet in their region to elect the representative of the youth for that region.

(2) The nomination of a candidate for election under this regulation shall be made on a day appointed by the Commission on a form and in a manner approved by the Commission

Commission supported by two registered voters who are members of the electoral college and shall be accompanied by the nomination fee referred to in regulation 15 of these Regulations.

8. Electoral college for election of woman youth representative.

(1) The National Youth Conference for the election of the woman representative of the youth in Parliament shall comprise the following—

(a) the members of the National Youth Delegates Conference as specified in subsection (2) of section 8 of the Youth Statute, namely—

- (i) the Chairperson of every County Youth Council;
- (ii) the Chairperson of every District Youth Council;
- (iii) the Secretary for Women Youth at the District level; and
- (iv) eighteen students elected by the Uganda National Students Association;

(b) one representative from each district elected by the members of the District Youth Council; and

(c) two student representatives elected for the purposes of this regulation, by the Uganda National Students Association, one of whom shall be female.

9. Election of woman youth representative.

(1) The Commission shall appoint, by notice published in the Gazette, three days within which the electoral college referred to in regulation 8 shall meet to elect the woman representative of the youth in Parliament.

(2) The nomination of candidates for election under this regulation shall be made on a day appointed by the Commission and on a form and in a manner approved by the Commission supported by two registered voters who are members of the electoral college and shall be accompanied by the nomination fee referred to in regulation 15 of these Regulations.

Appendix II

Kenyan Political Parties Act of 2011 (section)



LAWS OF KENYA

POLITICAL PARTIES ACT

NO. 11 OF 2011

Revised Edition 2015 [2014]

Published by the National Council for Law Reporting with the Authority of the Attorney-General

www.kenyalaw.org

“office holder” in relation to a political party means any person who is elected by the members of the political party to hold office and is registered with the Registrar of Political Parties;

“part primary” means the process through which a political party elects or selects its candidates for a forthcoming general election or for a forthcoming by-election;

“political party” has the meaning assigned to it in Article 260 of the Constitution;

“public officer” has the meaning assigned to it under Article 260 of the Constitution;

“Registrar” means the Registrar of political parties appointed under section

33;

“special interest groups” includes —

- (a) women;
- (b) persons with disabilities;
- (c) youth;
- (d) ethnic minorities; and
- (e) marginalized communities.

“State” when used as a noun, means the collectivity of offices, organs and other entities comprising the government of the Republic under the Constitution; and

“Tribunal” means the Political Parties Disputes Tribunal established under section 39;

“youth” has the meaning assigned to it under Article 260 of the Constitution.

[Act No. 21 of 2016, s. 2.]

Appendix III

Letter sent to NUP youth political leaders

Dear,

Greetings.

My name is Vyonne Akoth. I am a graduate student pursuing an M.Sc. in International Affairs, main field of study: Political Science, at Linnaeus University in Sweden.

I am writing to you as a youth political leader in the National Unity Platform (NUP) serving at the national level as a member of parliament.

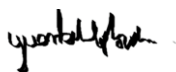
Presently, I am in the process of conducting research as part of my thesis on youth, politics, and peaceful elections. I have chosen to focus on (NUP) because of its progressive growth, longevity in politics for the last 16 years, and its vision for the youth. This research is an open-ended questionnaire survey that focuses on understanding the role of youth political leaders in conflict prevention during elections.

I will be delighted and grateful if you can answer for me a few questions using the survey link below. The survey should take around 10 to 15 minutes.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FVDNB6N>

I look forward to your favorable response

Yours sincerely,



Vyonne Akoth – Westling
M.Sc. Candidate International Affairs
Linnaeus University
Student No: 19820714-T188
+46704783323
Växjö, Sweden

Appendix IV

Letter sent to ODM youth political leaders

Dear,

Greetings.

My name is Vyonne Akoth. I am a graduate student pursuing an M.Sc. in International Affairs, main field of study: Political Science, at Linnaeus University in Sweden.

Presently, I am in the process of conducting research as part of my thesis on youth, politics, and peaceful elections. I have chosen to focus on the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) because of its progressive growth, and longevity in politics for the last 15 years. This research is an open-ended questionnaire survey that focuses on understanding the role of youth political leaders in conflict prevention during elections.

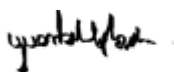
For this research, I am targeting young political leaders of the ODM Youth League and will be grateful to get responses from the party's members.

I will be delighted if they can answer for me a few questions using the survey link below. The survey should take around 10 to 15 minutes.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3TRRFHV>

In case of any query, do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Vyonne Akoth – Westling
M.Sc. Candidate International Affairs
Linnaeus University
Student No: 19820714-T188
+46704783323
Växjö, Sweden

Appendix V

Open-ended questionnaire NUP

Master's Thesis in International Affairs

This open-ended questionnaire is conducted as part of a Master's Thesis in an International Affairs program in the Political Science Department at Linnaeus University in Sweden. Your participation is highly valued and respected.

In the last decade Uganda has witnessed a surge in violence prior to its 2016 and 2021 elections. As a youth populous country, youth political leaders have a role to play in promoting peaceful elections since they are better placed to reach and influence their counterparts during electioneering periods. The aim of this research is to gain a better understanding of the role youth political leaders in Uganda play, in preventing violent conflicts during elections.

As a youth political leader, I would like to interview you to gain a better understanding of your experience and expertise in conflict prevention under the framework of your political party and the constitution, and the future of peaceful elections in Uganda.

Participation in this research is on voluntary basis. Please feel free to answer all the questions honestly and at your discretion. I am bound by confidentiality guided by regulations of the 'Swedish Research Council, Vetenskapsrådet, the Swedish Personal Data Act and Linnaeus University's Ethical Review Board'. At the end of the interview, I seek your permission if I can quote you based on your answers and if it is in order for your name to be attributed to the responses.

Questions

Full Names:

1. How long have you been a member of the National Unity Platform (NUP)?
2. Are you a member of the party as a result of affirmative action?
Yes/No
3. In reference to question number 2, if No are you a member of the party as a result of competitive elections?
Yes/No Other:
4. What is your role in the political party?
5. Do you face any challenges when executing your role?
Yes/No
If yes, how do you address those challenges?
6. Do you contribute in the party's decision making processes?
Yes/No
If yes, how:
7. Do you have a role to play in the party during elections?
Yes/No
If yes, what is your role?
8. As a youth political leader, how do you engage with fellow youth as their representative in the political party?
9. Have you engaged youth in pre and post elections conflict prevention?
Yes/No
If yes, how do you engage them?
10. Are there any addition strategies you can empoly to reach youth effectively?
Yes/No
If yes, what are they?
11. Do you have any other information you would like to share?

Thank you for your participation

Please confirm if you give consent for your full names to be metioned in the study report.

Yes/No

Please confirm if you give consent for a quote from you to be hightlight in the study report.

Yes/No

Appendix VI

Open-ended questionnaire ODM

Master's Thesis in International Affairs

This open-ended questionnaire is conducted as part of a Master's Thesis in an International Affairs program in the Political Science Department at Linnaeus University in Sweden. Your participation is highly valued and respected.

15 years ago, Kenya witnessed sporadic violence during and after its 2007 general elections. Whereas its 2013 and 2017 elections were portrayed to be peaceful compared to its 2007 elections, a culture of peace was seen to be devoid. As a country with 75% of its population being youth, youth political leaders have an opportunity of promoting peaceful elections as they are better placed to reach and influence their counterparts during electioneering periods. This research aims to gain a better understanding of the role youth political leaders in Kenya play, in preventing violent conflicts during elections.

As a youth political leader, I would like to interview through this questionnaire to gain a better understanding of your experience and expertise in conflict prevention under the framework of your political party and the constitution, and the future of peaceful elections in Kenya. Participation in this research is on a voluntary basis. Please feel free to answer all the questions honestly and at your discretion. I am bound by confidentiality guided by regulations of the 'Swedish Research Council, Vetenskapsrådet, the Swedish Personal Data Act, and Linnaeus University's Ethical Review Board'. At the end of the interview, I seek your permission if I can quote you based on your answers and if it is in order for your name to be attributed to the responses.

Questions

Full Names:

1. How long have you been a member of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM)?
2. Are you a member of the party as a result of affirmative action?
Yes/No
3. In reference to question number 2, if No are you a member of the party as a result of competitive elections?
Yes/No Other:
4. What is your role in the political party?
5. Do you face any challenges when executing your role?
Yes/No
If yes, how do you address those challenges?
6. Do you contribute in the party's decision making processes?
Yes/No If yes, how:
7. Do you have a role to play in the party during elections?
Yes/No If yes, what is your role?
8. As a youth political leader, how do you engage with fellow youth as their representative in the political party?
9. Have you engaged youth in pre and post elections conflict prevention?
Yes/No
If yes, how do you engage them?
10. Are there any addition strategies you can empoly to reach youth effectively?
Yes/No
If yes, what are they?
11. Do you have any other information you would like to share?

Thank you for your participation

Please confirm if you give consent for your full names to be metioned in the study report.

Yes/No

Please confirm if you give consent for a quote from you to be hightlight in the study report.

Yes/No