Schools as Change Agents?

Education and Individual Political Agency in Uganda.

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Abstract

By drawing on the case study of Uganda, we challenge common assumptions about education, gender, regional differences and political agency. Comparing findings from four different regions, we scrutinize whether and how educational institutions empower Ugandan youth to participate in society as active, informed, critical and responsible citizens. Theoretically, we focus on four different aspects of individual political agency that education can foster, namely: understanding of political structures; independent critical thinking; levels of political interest; and political participation. Throughout our analysis, we make use of a survey (n=497), conducted in 2017 with respondents from secondary schools and universities; and data obtained from 37 qualitative interviews across four regions in Uganda. The aim behind the survey was to move beyond a priori models on how education affects the political agency of individuals. Instead, we offer insights on how Ugandans *themselves* perceive the politically empowering elements of the education they receive, connecting this to the wider cultural political economy context of Uganda. We find that Ugandan schools make only a very modest contribution towards nurturing an individual's political agency. While the majority of respondents felt they critically reflected on societal issues in school, their knowledge of national political institutions, and on how they would claim and advocate their rights as citizens was remarkably low.

Keywords: political agency, education, gender, regional differences, Uganda

1.Introduction

> *"It's quite unfortunate that here in Uganda we learn about politics but not politics of our country."*[1]

Twenty years ago, the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) stated "the lack of education stops a great majority of Africans from being citizens in their own right." (OECD, 1998, p. 117) In the two decades to follow, research on the role of education in enhancing citizenship and the political agency of people in the Sub-Saharan African (SSA) region found strong quantifiable evidence that the level of education significantly predicts mass endorsement of democratic procedures in SSA states (Evans & Rose, 2007, 2012, Mattes & Bratton, 2007, 2016). In making use of *Afrobarometer* data, Mattes and Bratton (2007) further showed that in 12 SSA countries, the majority of respondents (n=21.531) who were disengaged from politics, tended to have also low levels of political information. Hence, they conclude, the introduction of civic education content into the formal school curricula and mass media could both inform people about the players and rules of the democratic game, and reduce unrealistic expectations of what democracy can deliver. Such a recommendation however, presumes that schools, teachers and the media are neutral, apolitical and objective agents. Considering the ways in which education is socially, politically and economically constructed, such an objectivity cannot be assumed and a more nuanced, contextualized analysis is needed (as also argued by Quaynor, 2015). Moreover, the contemporary nature of education in SSA is not only deeply rooted in a colonial past, but also continues to be shaped by western values and modes of knowledge production in post-

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[1] Interview with CSO staff member in Kampala, held 23.02.2017.

colonial settings where educational strategies are influenced by western ideas of modernization and development (c.f. Tabulawa, 2003). At the same time recent quantitative studies also presented results on the limited contribution of education to political participation (e.g.: Bleck, 2015; Croke, et.al. 2016). For instance, Bleck's (2015) book uncovered that in the case of Mali, higher levels of education did not increase people's propensity to pursue "easy" forms of political participation, such as voting. Similarly, Croke et. al. (2016) found strong statistical evidence that education decreases political participation in the case of Zimbabwe, substantially reducing the likelihood that better-educated citizens vote, contact politicians, or attend community meetings. Whereas educated citizens experience better economic outcomes, are more interested in politics, and are more supportive of democracy, they are also more likely to criticize the government, thereby deliberately refraining to participate politically as this would legitimate a repressive regime (Croke et al., 2016).

While the afore mentioned studies focused on education at large, there is also a fast growing body of literature on the potential of civic education programmes (also referred to as citizenship education) to nurture democratization processes. For instance, Finkel et.al. (2015); and Finkel & Smith (2011), highlight the positive effects of civic education programmes on political participation and engagement in the case of Kenya. One of their studies arrived at the conclusion that the impact of civic education and post-civic education discussion was greater among Kenyans with less education and with lower levels of social integration (Finkel & Smith, 2011). In the case of Liberia, Mvukiyehe and Samii (2017) point to a significant impact of civic education and election curriculum on enthusiasm for participation, voting preferences (parochial versus national candidates), and the exercise of voting rights in the 2011 national elections when the country was still deeply affected by the legacies of civil war and clientelism. Then again, critics allege that positive assessments of

civic education in restrictive political environments overlook the ways in which individuals may have already been expressing their capabilities using their indigenous resources and ways of expression. For instance, Kabeer, (1999) critiques the prevailing tendency in social sciences to operationalize agency as "decision-making" to the neglect of a broader range of expressions including bargaining and negotiation, deception and manipulation, and subversion and resistance. It is thus necessary to also critically examine the nature and politics of formal and informal citizenship education initiatives, which has been convincingly done by (Quaynor, 2015) or Westheimer & Kahne (2004).

By drawing on the case study of Uganda, we aim to contribute to the above literature, while generating new knowledge, alternative insights and a more contextualized (Quaynor, 2015), gender-sensitive and spatial analysis of the interplay of education and an individual's political agency through education. In other words, we want to approach the issue from a different angle by shedding light on how citizens *themselves* feel education - in a broad sense - has shaped their political agency. In this attempt, our aim is neither to "test" respondent's knowledge on politics, nor establish a causal relationship between their level of education and demand for democracy as this has been already done in other studies (see for instance: Conroy-Krutz, 2016; Evans & Rose, 2012; Kibirige, 2018; Mattes & Bratton, 2016). We also do not engage in a critical examination of the political nature and effectiveness of citizenship education programmes in Uganda. Instead, we want to move beyond a priori models on how education affects the political agency of individuals by giving voice to young Ugandans *themselves* on how they perceive the politically empowering elements of the education they receive. Hence we make use of a survey capturing the voices of 497 Ugandan secondary and university students on their secondary school experience as well as data obtained from 37 qualitative interviews (see Annex 1).

Notably, Uganda, is a so-called hybrid regime (Almond & Coleman, 1960; Hammett & Jackson, 2017) combining democratic attributes (e.g.: frequent and direct elections, multiparty system), with autocratic rule (e.g.: restricted freedom of speech, no right to association, or fraud elections) (International Crisis Group, 2017; Rukare, 2017). At the time we wrote this paper, Uganda has experienced several setbacks on freedom of speech and assembly. In July 2018, the Government of Uganda (GoU) introduced a social media tax to boost government revenue and to end 'gossip' on 60 social media outlets including WhatsApp, Facebook or Twitter.[2] The new law led to widespread protests among many Ugandans on social media who tirelessly advocate under the hashtag *#ThisTaxMustGo* for abolishing the law. These events were soon followed by the arrest of opposition leader and MP Robert Kyagulanyi (better known under his artist name Bobi Wine), whose increasing popularity among the 77 % of the population who is under 30 years old could make him President Museveni's biggest challenger in the 2021 elections. In the course of our analysis we pay attention to Uganda's present political climate and how this has affected both, the country's education sector as well as individuals' perceptions of their political agency.

2.Conceptualizing Individual Political Agency

As pointed out by O'Brien, (2015) the concept of political agency has been traditionally related to formalized or officially recognized agents such as political parties, unions, governments, international actors or individual leaders who are entrusted with power to act on behalf of others (see for instance: Maiguashca & Marchetti, 2013). However, such a narrow conceptualisation of political agency sidelines how change at the very individual level (within a given society) and consequently within and through the public sphere, could lead to

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[2] Ugandans have to pay 200 Ugandan shillings ($ 0.05) a day to access social media or transfer money via their phones – affecting especially the 34.6 % of the population who are living below $ 1.90 a day, see also: http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/UGA, accessed 20 September 2018.

collective action or transformation (O'Brien, 2015). The aim of our study is thus to get a better understanding of how individuals perceive their educational experience as empowering them "to participate in society effectively as active, informed, critical and responsible citizens" (Crick, 2007 p. 245). To use the words of Kabeer (1999), in our view political agency needs to go beyond "decision-making" and should also encompass "the meaning, motivation, and purpose which individuals bring to their activity, their sense of agency, or 'the power within' " (p. 438). In several respects, we understand such a power from within as closely related to Paulo Freire's (1970) accounts on critical consciousness, also known as conscientization.

In this attempt, we approach political agency as the space of manoeuvre at the individual level that is affected by both the education sector in which individuals are embedded, and the surrounding structure, i.e. cultural, political and economic context and the socio-historical evolution thereof (Sum & Jessop, 2013). Such a perspective is of importance as we understand political agency as closely intertwined with an individual's degree of reflexivity on situation and context (and its historical evolution), choice, and consequently political literacy. As for the latter, political literacy, one encounters two common challenges in scholarship: First, political literacy is difficult to measure. Second, like political agency, it is an abstract concept that is not that well defined especially in the context of education. Some scholars refer to the Crick Report 1998 which understands political literacy as a process of learning on how to make oneself effective in public life through knowledge, skills and values (Crick Report, 1998). Hence, political literacy goes far beyond the knowledge of basic concepts and facts but also extends to the ability to respond to economic, environmental or social problems – all of which are related to aspects of agency. This includes to take part in discussions or decision-making processes that occur at any level of society from formal political institutions to informal groups, at the local, national or international level but also

within social media. Political literacy is thus seen as a skill and potential for "informed political participation" (Cassel & Lo, 1997, p. 321).

Against this backdrop, we understand an individual's political agency as closely intertwined with accounts on political literacy, in being a product of individual motivations, abilities, reflexivity and knowledge as well as being influenced by external structures, agents and roles (Cassel & Lo, 1997; Mattes & Bratton, 2007). Concretely, we focus on four distinct aspects:

- *Understanding of Ugandan politics* (e.g.: perceived knowledge conveyed in schools);

- *Critical reflection undertaken in schools* (e.g.: perceived role of educational institutions in shaping individuals' viewpoints and reflexivity),

- *Interest in Ugandan politics* (e.g.: individual motivations influenced by education and informal networks);

- *Participation in political and communal life* (e.g.: patterns of inclusion or exclusion due to cultural, political and economic factors, possibly influenced by education).

This conceptual framework should not be misinterpreted as an all-encompassing theoretical approach on grasping whether and how education plays a role in increasing the political agency of Ugandan society. We acknowledge, for instance, that life experience can be also a substitute for formal education (Teizeria 187, p. 22 cited in Cassel & Lo, 1997), meaning that the role of informal (family, social environment) and non-formal (e.g.: civil society organizations) networks play an essential role in shaping an individual's political literacy and agency. As such, the framework aims to shed light on specific components that shape an individual's political agency through education while paying attention to cultural, political and economic structures, agents and context. The four components of individual political agency are in this framework seen as interlinked, though, no initial interpretation is given to causality because of the above mentioned influencing structures and the two-way relations

the components may have. For instance, interest in politics may increase participation in political life, and vice versa. Hence, this framework is not intended as a predictor of political participation, but rather an attempt to better conceptualize, explain and illuminate core components of individual political agency.

3.Methods and Modes of Data Collection

Uganda was chosen as a case study for two main reasons. First, it exemplifies a striking paradox occurring in the majority of sub-Saharan African states. Despite a steady increase of funds, the commitment to support development through the grassroots level (OECD, 2011, 2013) and a growing local civil society landscape, experts witness weak democratization processes on the ground (International Crisis Group, 2017; Rukare, 2017). Second, previous research found that the predominant focus on economic empowerment through education in Uganda sidelines the role of education in enhancing the political agency of young people to make necessary changes to transform their lives in difficult circumstances (omitted ref).

Qualitative and descriptive quantitative data was collected by the first author during extensive fieldwork in Uganda in 2017.[3] Research methods were designed by the first author and data was analysed and interpreted by both authors. *Qualitative* methods of data collection involved in total 37 interviews with a variety of actors from the government, civil society organizations (CSOs), community based organizations (CBOs), school officials, education planners, teaching professionals and local academics (see Annex 1). Given the political sensitivity of this research we will not reveal the identity of all interviewees and only refer to their professional background or institutional affiliation when permission was granted. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded in *Atlas.ti*, we synthesize general findings

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[3] Omitted ref to research project

from all interviews and selectively cite respondents. This paper is one, out of several research outputs, emerging from one larger research project[4]; interview questions revolved therefore around a wide range of themes. In this paper we only draw on and refer to data from interviews that were relevant for our study. In addition, a thorough school textbook analysis of secondary history class books informs our study.

Quantitative data was obtained from 497 questionnaires conducted with upper-secondary school students (n=336), university students (n=130), and youth not enrolled in university or secondary school (n=31). In total 98 % of our participants were between 15-29 years old[5] (2 % were aged 30-40 years), which was the responding category in the questionnaire. In this paper, we only report on differences in findings between gender and region (see sections 3.2 and 4.1 – 4.4) However, differences may intersect with gender and region based on SES (Social Economic Status) or education level. In our sample, all respondents reported to fall within similar income brackets but future research should explore the dimensions of those differences. In addition, while for most response categories, university and high school student responses did not differ significantly, an independent samples t-test revealed that university students scored significantly higher for five items when compared to high school students. These items were: understanding of Ugandan political system ($t(463)=-2.37$, $p=.018$); access to internet ($t(459)=-9.09$, $p<.001$); uses social media to voice concerns ($t(432)=-4.21$, $p<.001$); listens to, read or watches news ($t(460)=-3.15$, $p=.002$) and have regular contact with local political leaders ($t(447)=-1.98$, $p=0,049$). University students also reported to have fewer critical discussions regarding the world in school compared to high school students ($t(463)=3.16$, $p=.002$). Future research should therefore also pay attention to differences in individual political agency based on education level. .

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[4] Omitted ref to research project

[5] During data collection it was ensured as much as possible, that all respondents were 18 or older, however, the category in the questionnaire was 15-29

In most cases respondents were selected by school- and university officials based on availability and interest of students. This method of selecting participants in close collaboration with headteachers seemed to be the least invasive and culturally most appropriate and sensitive way of selecting participants. It was also clearly established in the research ethics of this study to not select participants autonomously without close consultation with, and approval of, school authorities. The survey has an unequal number of female and male respondents (see Table 1), with 40.4% are female and 59.6% are male. At first this may seem as a gender imbalance, but it is in fact reflective of actual and nationwide enrolment rates in upper-secondary S6-S7 (Senior 6 and Senior 7) based on sex, which are currently 60,2 % male and 39,8 % female in S6 (MoES, 2016 p. 57) and therefore also challenged an equal gender balance during data collection. We predominantly make use of this data in a descriptive manner and where relevant, refer to statistical tests to understand the differences between genders and regions.

Table 1. Overview of number of respondents per region and respondent characteristics

Respondent Characteristics	
Female	201 (40.4%)
Male	296 (59.6%)
Age range	98% were between 15-29 years old
Income	79.8% had no income; 6.7% earned less than 7.000 UGX a day
Region (Districts)	
Central (Kampala)	139 (28%)
North (Gulu)	128 (25.8%)
North-East (Moroto, Kotido)	189 (38%)
South-West (Mbarara)	41 (8,2%)

3.1. Voice of Participants

In addition to descriptive quantitative data, we make use of an extensive amount of qualitative data we obtained in 'additional comments' sections from the survey. These sections were made available underneath quantitative 5-point Likert scale questions. This mode of data collection was intended to engage voices on the ground, learn from participants experiences and treat them as autonomous actors who contribute with their own analysis of their learning (Lehtomäki et al., 2014). Data obtained from this section was deliberately not analysed based on pre-set codes to allow key themes to emerge from the data, based on participants' responses. Key themes were identified by systematically summarizing and categorizing responses to each question.

3.2. Regional Differences

Data collection took place in a variety of sites in the country comprising urban, peri-urban and rural environments and diverse geographical regions, namely: Kampala (central), Gulu (north), Karamoja (north-east), and Mbarara (south-west). The intention behind this choice was to leverage regional variation and to generate insights into how context might mediate the influence of education on political agency. Section 4 will explain in more detail regional characteristics and differences.

4.Uganda's Education Sector: Cultural Political Economy Context and Regional Differences

There is widespread consensus in the literature, that the policies of the British Protectorate (formally established in 1894) fuelled ethnic, religious and regional divisions that contributed to regional instability and political violence in later years (Branch, 2010; Byrnes, 1990; Otunnu, 2002). The situation yet significantly changed when President Museveni assumed office in 1986. After independence (1964), education sector reforms in Uganda continued to

instil western values and attitudes to transform Ugandans into a 'modern' society (Mwesigire, 2014). Following a guerrilla war, Yoweri Museveni has been Uganda's president since 1986. Under his leadership, education came to be seen as an essential ingredient for economic growth, national and human capital development (omitted ref). However, investments and reforms in the education sector led to very uneven regional results and learning outcomes (Uwezo, 2016) as a consequence of decades of conflict and political neglect of the northern and north-eastern parts of the country.

From 1986 onward, Uganda experienced at least seven civil wars, mostly in the northern regions (Lindemann, 2011). Until recently, the country resembled a "war with peace" model, suggesting that President Museveni's regime embraced the antagonisms of conflict in the northern regions alongside peaceful coexistence and development in the central and southern regions, in one country at the same time (Fisher, 2014; Shaw & Mbabazi, 2007). Following peacebuilding efforts and increasing donor support in the North, the GoU (Government of Uganda) enacted some political and economic changes aiming to overcome divisions between the North and the South and foster greater equity across the whole country. At the same time, political and structural constraints continue to be manifested in shrinking space for freedom of speech and civil society. This was reconfirmed in the scope of several interviews with CSOs in 2015 and 2017, who referred to office raids (allegedly by the government) as well as violations of freedom of association, assembly and expression in the country. Lately, civil society activism is further dampened by a controversial *Non-Governmental Organisations Act*, passed by parliament in 2015, that severely limits advocacy activities of CSOs.

Economically, the country has made significant progress during the 1990s and early 2000s with an average annual growth of 7 %. Though, in recent years Uganda's economy has grown

at a much slower pace, reducing its impact on poverty alleviation (Beegle et.al., 2016). Besides, Uganda continues to be highly dependent on development assistance (MoFPED Uganda, 2018, pp 6-7), 5.29 % of all ODA (Official Development Assistance) is allocated for education.[6] Interviews with senior officials at the MoES (Ministry of Education and Sports) and NCDC (National Curriculum Development Centre) noted that the line between externally driven funding allocations for specific areas and policy formulation can be very close.

Uganda's introduction of UPE (Universal Primary Education) in 1997 or USE (Universal Secondary Education) in 2007 did so far not translate into the expected results with regards to poverty reduction through human capital investment in the form of education (omitted ref). In fact, the country displays one of the highest school dropout rates worldwide at primary (P) level. Estimates range from 75.2 %[7] to 67.9 % of pupils that drop out between P1 – P7 (Uwezo, 2015 p. 18). Overall, 90.2 % of all pupils (91.5 % male and 88.9 % female) do not complete primary education (UBOS, 2017a, p. 41). Besides, learning outcomes in Uganda differ significantly per region and between urban and rural areas. Student's performance and competencies are significantly higher in the central and south-western regions if compared to student performances in northern and north-eastern regions (Uwezo, 2016, p.26-29). In our analysis of survey data (section 5) we therefore pay close attention to this regional divide by comparing data that was collected in the central, northern, north-eastern and south-western regions.

4.1 Central Region

The central region is home to Uganda's capital Kampala (where data collection took place), and one of the wealthiest, most developed and urbanized regions in the country. Kampala,

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[6] OECD-DAC: http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/aid-at-a-glance.htm, accessed September 20, 2018

which is roughly 5 per cent of Uganda's population, generates 22.5 % of Uganda's GDP (Rafa, Moyer, Wang, & Sutton, 2017). This trend is also reflected in the education sector. Kampala registered the nationwide highest P7 net enrolment rate with 25 % (UBOS, 2017a, p. 25). The quality of education also seems better in the central region, especially in Kampala where 67 % of P3-P7 pupils were able to read a story in English, compared to the nationwide reading competence of 39 % (Uwezo, 2016).

4.2 Northern Region

Six of the ten poorest districts per capita are located in northern Uganda. The war against the LRA – Lord Resistance Army (1987-2006) left not only deep scars in the local economy but also education system with a disproportionate number of children who could not attend school during the conflict. School facilities were either destroyed or parents could no longer afford to pay the costs associated with schooling (Government of Uganda, 2007, p. 56). The northern region also suffers from very poor quality education due to inadequate staffing, high rates of teacher absenteeism and weak supervision systems (Government of Uganda, 2007, p. 65). Pupil teacher ratio in the north is 58:1, whereas the average national ratio only amounts to 46:1 (Uwezo, 2016, p. 11). In stark contrast to the central region, English reading competency of P3-P7 pupils in the North is only 25.9 % (Uwezo, 2016, p. 27). In Gulu (where data collection took place), only 25.2 % of P3-P7 pupils displayed P2-level English reading and numeracy skills (Uwezo, 2016).

4.3 North-East

The north-eastern region of Uganda, also known as Karamoja, displays the highest poverty rates in the country with 42 % of people affected (UBOS, 2017b, p.85-86). The region is historically the most marginalized part of the country with least developed infrastructures

such as roads, electricity or access to public services especially in the areas of health and education. Karamoja's collective GDP (Gross Domestic Product) accounts for less than 1 % of Uganda's total GDP (Rafa et al., 2017). The region is yet rich in two assets: cultural diversity (consisting of ethnic groups from Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan) and mineral resources. Rising resource exploitation and land acquisition by mining companies increase human rights violations, fortifying several forms of structural violence, horizontal inequalities and unequal opportunities for the population (Human Rights Watch, 2014). The sub-region has the highest percentage of Ugandan's with the lowest primary school gross enrolment rate, totalling 39 %) (42.4 % males and 35.2 % females) (Uwezo, 2016, p.20). In the districts where data collection took place only 27,8 % (Moroto) and in 29,5 % (Kotido) of P3-P7 pupils where competent in P2 level English reading and numeracy (Uwezo, p. 48) – compared to 31.2 % of national average.

4.4 South-West

The south-western region of Uganda is a fast developing area with emerging economies and significant investments in infrastructure and tourism. The district and city Mbarara (where data collection took place), displays the 8th highest GDP per capita in Uganda (Rafa et al., 2017, p.15) . The southern region comprises 11.4 % of Uganda's population and produces 27.5 % of the country's GDP (Rafa et al., 2017). As far as educational attainment is concerned, in Mbarara pupils from P3-P7 showed the highest P2 level reading and numeracy competency, with a total of 56.5 %, compared to the national average of 32.1 % (Uwezo, 2016, p.47). According to the MoES the region also has the highest number of new entrance in secondary education (MoES, 2016).

5.Education and Individual Political Agency in Uganda

In the mid-1980s, the GoU launched a program of political and civic education, with the intention to create a civilian population engaged in the nation-building process. This form of citizenship education has been recently suspended from the formal curriculum in public schools to shorten an already subject-overburdened secondary school curriculum (Watchdog Uganda, 2017). Interviewees gave mixed responses as to whether or not political or citizenship education should be re-introduced into the formal curriculum. The NCDC referred to the subject's incorporation in the revised social studies curriculum in lower secondary education, though its implementation continues to be postponed (due to lack of funding) and is now expected to be launched in 2020 – if funding is available.[8] Respondents from local CSOs felt that political education is of significant importance, yet can be (and used to be) misused as a political propaganda mechanism and has to be approached very carefully in the Ugandan context.[9] Visits of secondary schools, further revealed that paintings stating "be a patriot" are common on school compounds. In view that several interviewees mentioned that components of citizenship education are still integrated in history education at secondary level, we carried out a textbook analysis of Uganda's present O-Level history student books (Level 1, 2 and 3). Uganda's political history is most addressed in student book three describing political actors and events at length. The composition of the GoU is mentioned in terms of number and breakdown of representatives, however no detail is given on the structure and function of local and national political systems. Notably, in all school textbooks under our review, we encountered many typos and spelling mistakes. Sometimes sentences are badly constructed and unclear. The content of chapters is repetitive, often not providing much new information between one section and the next, with negative implications for the quality of citizenship education.

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[8] Interviews held with NCDC in Kampala on 04.05.2017 and 26.04.2017
[9] Interviewed during February and May 2017

Against this backdrop, we revert to our conceptual framework and start our analysis of individual political agency with a discussion of data on respondent's perceived understanding of Uganda's political structures.

5.1.Understanding Of Politics

"The education in Uganda may be a little monotonous. The teachers do not really go on to tell us what we ought to do as citizens, and the responsibilities, I guess we pick them as we go along."[10]

According to Afrobarometer data from 2014/15, out of 2.400 Ugandan respondents, only 50.7 % understood the word "democracy" whereas 30.6 % did not understand the term, and 18 % required local language translation.[11] Notably, the higher the education level the higher also the percentage of people who could define the concept. Table 2 reveals that in total only 51.1% of people surveyed in our data set felt that they have a clear understanding of how Uganda's government and political system works (answers ranged from good to very good). Yet young people's responses vary between districts and genders. For instance, depending on the region, young people report significant differences in understanding the role of the chief as determined by Kruskal-Wallis H Test $X^2(3) = 18.851$, $p < .000$. Knowledge on chieftaincies was particularly high among males in the northern and north-eastern regions, suggesting that local and traditional political structures are much stronger in less developed, rural, and more marginalized regions. In part this could be explained by the fact that these respondents still live in more traditional, rural and less developed settings with much stronger emphasis and dependence on community life (*omitted ref*).

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[10] Written statement from survey participant, male, aged 15-29, secondary school, central region (Kampala)

[11] Afrobarometer 2014/15, see: http://afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis/analyse-online, accessed may 25, 2018

While the regional differences in several aspects of understandings of politics are small for aggregated data, it is evident that young women report strikingly lower levels of understanding of politics compared to young men all across. Moreover, scores for understanding national and local politics differ significantly between young women and young men across all regions, determined by T-tests: (t(470)=3.67, $p < .001$; t(471)=4.04, $p < .001$ respectively for national and local politics).[12]

This gender difference is particularly strong in the Central region (Kampala) where young women report less understanding of national politics compared to young men (young women: 32.6%; young men: 61.6%), as well as less understanding of the local government (young women: 31.4%; young men: 54.8%). While our qualitative data did not give a uniform contextual explanation for this finding, existing literature points to the high levels of social exclusion for young women in urban cities, especially poor young women to which our sample belongs (Chant, 2013; McIlwaine, 2013; UN-HABITAT, 2013). This also suggests that the quality of education, which appears to be better in urban centres in Uganda (see: 4.1 and 4.4), does not necessarily translate into better understandings of politics or positively influence political knowledge among girls.

Table 2. Self-reported general understanding of politics

		Good to Very Good (in %)		
	Region	Female	Male	Total
I have a clear understanding of how Uganda's political system/government works	Central	32.6	61.6	51.1
	North	44.7	49.4	47.7
	North-East	47.3	59	53.8

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[12] Understanding of national politics for young women (M=3.00, SD=1.29) and young men across all regions (M=2.55, SD=1.31), assessed with an independent t-test (t(470)=3.67, p < .001); and local politics for young women (M=2.99, SD=1.34) and young men (M=2.50, SD=1.26), also assessed with an independent t-test (t(471)=4.04, p < .001).

	South-West	40	60	50
	Total	*42.2*	*57.1*	*51.1*
I have a clear understanding of how my local government works	Central	31.4	54.8	45.9
	North	46.8	56.3	52.8
	North-East	52	67	60.2
	South-West	35	40	37.5
	Total	*43.6*	*58.2*	*52.2*
I have a clear understanding of the role and function of my local chief / traditional leader	Central	35.3	54.7	47.4
	North	40.4	51.3	47.3
	North-East	61.5	70.2	66.3
	South-West	31.6	45	38.4
	Total	*46.7*	*58.2*	*53.5*
		Agree to Strongly Agree (in %)		
I am aware of political, social and economic issues affecting Ugandan society	Central	68	85.7	79.1
	North	68.9	79.5	75.6
	North-East	78.8	82.6	81
	South-West	75	85	80
	Total	*73*	*82.9*	*78.9*
N=497; Missing responses: 27, 26, 24, 44 respectively for questions from top to bottom.				

This also gives rise to questions about how social structures, context, urban and rural settings outside a school environment influence male and females understanding of politics differently. To cite a male respondent from Kampala[13]:

I learn more about the society and world we live in from my parents at home.

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[13] Written statement from survey participant, male, aged 15-29, secondary school, central region (Kampala)

Overall, the high numbers of respondents (almost half) who felt they have no clear understanding of how Uganda's political system and local government works is alerting. According to an expert from a local human rights CSO, one of the many consequences of lacking basic knowledge of the political system (local and national) is to abstain from voting[14]:

"(...) when we were doing election monitoring, I realized that when I was interacting with most of the people especially when it came to the councillors, most of them did not know the value of having a councillor and that was one of the reason[s] they were giving for not getting involved in voting because they do not know their role. "

Other interviewees working for local CSOs mentioned that funding for informal citizenship education programmes usually increases shortly before an upcoming election but is cut off soon after an election is over. A recent study (Conroy-Krutz, 2016) confirms their observations, concluding that during the 2010-11 elections, political knowledge increased significantly among Ugandans (from various social and economic backgrounds) through campaign-related (informal) learning. However, knowledge decayed quickly after the election, and a large number of respondents were not able to answer basic questions about political institutions (Conroy-Krutz, 2016), supporting our findings on how Ugandans perceive their own political knowledge.

At the same time, however, our respondents seemed to be well aware of their rights as Ugandan citizens (see Table 3). The vast majority (92.3% overall) felt that their education helped them to become aware of their rights and responsibilities. These percentages differed

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[14] Interview held in Kampala, 05.04.2017

significantly per region (as assessed by a Kruskal-Wallis H test $X^2(3)=17.147$, $p = .001$), and

were lowest in Central region (84.7%) compared to the rest of the country.

Table 3. Participants agreeing to education helping them to be aware of their rights and responsibilities as a Ugandan citizen

	Agree to Strongly Agree (in %)		
Region	Female	Male	Total
Central	84.4	85	84.7
North	100	93.4	95.8
North-East	94.4	96	95.3
South-West	100	90	95
Total	*93.5*	*91.5*	*92.3*
N=497, Missing responses: 29			

In the additional comments section (beneath the Likert scale question) of the survey, the

majority of participants also listed what they considered to be their main rights. Here mostly

reference was made to: right to education, healthcare, child rights, freedom of speech or

equality. Remarkably, only very few respondents made mentions of the limited freedom of

speech in Uganda. Those few (7.7 %) who disagreed that education helped them to be aware

of their rights and responsibilities critiqued that rights are not taught in school or that are

rights not implemented and abused in the country. To give one example[15]:

> *It [education] has done less because my rights are abused not only at school*
>
> *but mainly at home where schools never reach to know.*

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[15] Written statement from survey participant, female, aged 15-29, secondary school, central region (Kampala)

Apart from the lack of reflection on Uganda's restrictive political environment, no one indicated *how* they would or could claim their rights in a comments section related to questions of agency - which could be due to the limited knowledge of political structures.

5.2 Critical Reflection

Recalling our understanding of political agency as closely intertwined with an individual's degree of reflexivity on situation and context (e.g. Freire, 1970; Kabeer, 1999) we showcase in Table 4 the frequency young people reported they critically discuss in school global and societal issues. These two survey questions were kept broad on purpose to seek a wide range of answers on student's perceptions and avoid response bias. On average, 63.7% of young people felt they critically discuss in school the world they live in, and 68.5% report to always or very often critically discuss in school the society they live in. In line with previous findings, young people in Kampala are least positive about the frequency of critical discussions in school, as exemplified by one respondent[16]:

> *It is only on a few days when a teacher puts a few things happening in the world so I barely know what is happening outside my society but word goes around about my society and I get to know what is going on.*

By contrast, responses in the South-West were most positive. Survey participants who were generally satisfied with the frequency of critical reflection and discussion taking place in schools, made specific mention of the following subjects in the additional comments

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[16] Written statement from survey participant, male, aged 15-29, secondary school, central region (Kampala)

section[17]: geography, biology, chemistry and literature. We found it quite striking that hardly anyone referred to critical reflection taking place in the scope of history education, especially in view of Uganda's history of state formation and current state of affairs. In the words of one participant[18]:

> *Some things we learnt in class are not really close for example we barely know*
>
> *the history of Uganda and we learn about other countries and their history.*

This confirms earlier findings (*omitted ref.*), that a critical engagement with Uganda's past, the country's conflicts and especially the root causes of social and political grievances, is absent from the curriculum and teaching in most schools. Interviewees form a previous study pointed to a general fear (in particular among Ugandan elites) that, the way in which the root causes of past and/or present grievances and conflicts are subject to public debate (including education) could possibly generate new tensions if not revive former divisions (*omitted ref.*). One survey respondent, who was among the very few who captured the country's present political environment, described the current political environment as follows[19]:

> *It is hard to discuss the above issues that of society and the world because even*
>
> *teachers fear attacking the evils of the world and society so even as students, we*
>
> *develop the fear because we are afraid of being singled out as less patriotic.*

Statements like this, were rather the exception than the rule. A thorough analysis of the written (qualitative) statements, suggests that respondents generally feel critical discussion is

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[17] Thereby we refer to qualitative date we obtained from the survey. In total n=201 made use of this section, n=296 left it blank.
[18] Written statement from survey participant, female, aged 15-29, secondary school, central region (Kampala)
[19] Written statement from survey participant, female, aged 15-29, university, northern region (Gulu)

taking place in schools but themes related to the world or society tend not to revolve around "politics". Instead these discussions revolve around apolitical issues such as health or village life (e.g.: how to behave in the community), To give one specific example[20]:

The discussions about the world were mostly about how the world is diverse, composed of plants, animals, buildings, water, bodies, that societies are made of families.

Other topics that are discussed in schools according to respondents revolved around: gender-based violence, early marriage, problems because of poverty (e.g. alcoholism, unemployment) or the environment. It is important to note that, hardly any of the respondents who made use of the additional comments section (n=201) indicated or reflected on *why* societal problems occur or that schools are (or should be) spaces in which the causes of global and social injustices can be discussed. Some participants even noted that they never thought about or were confronted in school with the questions they were asked in the survey. Respondents who were dissatisfied with the critical engagement of world- or society-related issues in schools, found fault, among others, firstly in a curriculum too heavily focused on uncritical reproduction of knowledge and secondly, in an overemphasis on academic, theoretical, and Eurocentric knowledge dismissing practical and vocational skills and disconnected from Uganda's current societal context. [21] To cite one of these respondents:[22]

Most teachers concentrate so much on class work other than helping us with other aspects of life. They always leave upon us to find out which is not good for

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[20] Written statement from survey participant, male, aged 15-29, university, south-west region (Mbarara)
[21] Summary of 28 responses from the 'additional comments' section
[22] Written statement from survey participant, female, aged 15-29, secondary school, northern region (Gulu)

a student growing up in the society, the government should also introduce [a]

subject that can help teach students to be aware of their community and society

The lack of critical reflection in schools was also highlighted by a number of civil society organizations interviewed for the purpose of this study. One staff member of a think tank specialised in education noted[23]:

[…] you find that most schools they do not have a holistic approach to education. The majority of the schools are more about the grades and few of them take into account the benefits of a debate. It's more of reading and cramming for exams because you need to come with fantastic grades […].

Similarly, a director of a grassroots movement stated[24]:

I would first of all want to change the curriculum on what is learned. Sometimes you have a problem with something for example you go to a place let me say economics and I used to do economics and they would give you a scenario that does not work in Uganda and they will tell you to attempt to it but in a funny way. I would attempt the question in a way that I felt and they would cross out the answers and I would stand up and defend my answer but because we follow a curriculum that was not designed by us but of people long ago and the teacher would not mark you because that is not what is written in the books.

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[23] Interview held in Kampala, 01.03.2017
[24] Interview held in Kampala, 03.03.2017

In addition it is worth highlighting one comment from a university student, which stood out in particular[25]:

> *Our education system is poorly structured: […] it promotes dictatorship right from infant education (teachers are harsh and rules are so many); it is one-way system without better options, for instance, vocational education is considered for failures academically; it is so time wasting […]; you are not taught to modify a theory, but only to reproduce it the way it was formulated, as if the world is static; it does not nurture talents like music, art, etc. only focuses on academia; emphasis is on academics, not the reality.*

That education can actually also disempower young Ugandans as opposed to giving them political, economic and social agency was also frequently mentioned by Ugandan students during a round table event at Gulu University organized by the first author[26] and in the scope of 7 Focus Group Discussions conducted with youth in Gulu, Adjumani, Kampala and Moroto as part of a previous study (*omitted ref.*).

Lastly, gender disaggregated data do not reveal large differences between young women and young men in terms of their perceived critical reflection taking place in schools. The largest gender differences are seen in the South West where more women (84.2%) than men (63.2%) reported to critically discuss the world they live in. Overall, university students felt they less often critically discussed the world they live in (58%) compared to secondary school students (67%).

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[25] Written statement from survey participant, male, aged 15-29, university, northern region (Gulu)

[26] The roundtable event that was organized by (*name of author*) together with a senior lecturer from Gulu University on 19.04.2017. The event brought together university students, Ugandan scholars, practitioners and government officials.

Table 4. Frequency of critical discussions in schools of world and society

		Always to Very Often (in %)		
	Region	Female	Male	Total
In school, we critically discuss the world we live in	Central	49.1	55.1	52.9
	North	65.2	60.3	62.1
	North-East	68.5	73.7	71.5
	South-West	84.2	63.2	73.7
	Total	64.1	63.6	63.7
In school, we critically discuss the society we live in	Central	56	63.5	60.8
	North	75.5	68.9	71.3
	North-East	69.5	70.9	70.4
	South-West	73.7	84.2	79
	Total	67.8	69	68.5
N=497; Missing responses: 25				

5.3 Interest In Politics

Building on the previous section, Table 5 summarizes to what extent respondents indicated that they have an interest in Ugandan politics.

Table 5. Self-reported interest in Ugandan politics

Region	Agree to Strongly Agree (in %)		
	Female	Male	Total
Central	34.6	57	48.8
North	55.5	60	58.4
North-East	69.7	55.1	61.5
South-West	47.3	75	61.6

Total	55	58.4	57.1
N=497, Central: 135, North: 125, North-East: 174, South-West: 39			
Missing responses: 24			

The majority of our respondents (57.1 %) appear to be interested in politics, out of which 28.3% report a strong and 28.8% a modest interest. Overall, interest in politics is the lowest in Kampala with 48.8% and much higher in the northern, north-eastern and south-western region. Notably, interviews with local CSOs (see Annex1) from the North and North-East pointed to more traditional and stronger community structures in these regions. This raises the question whether more traditional and cohesive community structures increase people's interest (and participation, see section 5.4) in politics? While our data does not provide us with sufficient insights, we feel the relationship between community structures and political interest and agency more broadly, is worth exploring in future research.

Only 34.6% of young females in Kampala reported to be interested in politics. A similar gender difference is noticed in the South-West where young women are much less interested in politics (47.3%) compared to young men (75%). Then again, young women in the North-East (the most impoverished region in Uganda) indicated to be most interested in politics (69.7%), more than young men in the same region (55.1%). We do not have an explanation for this phenomenon based on our qualitative data. One explanation of the high interest in politics among Karamojong females could stem from the fact that they are more exposed to severe forms of direct and indirect violence (c.f. Hopwood, Porter, & Saum, 2018) due to poverty and lack of infrastructure, if compared to wealthier regions and therefore, they may seek more political support. Besides, women in the Northern and North-Eastern region may come from a narrower social base by which they voice different concerns if compared to women in the Central region who represent wider social classes. Thus, also the difference in

responses certainly remains a knowledge gap and more research is required in this regard.

5.4. Political Participation

Table 6 below reveals, an average of 64.6% listens to, reads, or watches news. Young people in the North-East report lowest engagement with news (50.3% on average), and in the South-West highest (82% on average). In part this is because of unequal access to internet: only 35.7% of the respondents in the North-East have regular access to the internet due to lack of basic infrastructure, compared to 75% in the Central region of the country, mirroring the earlier mentioned north-south divide (see section 4). Interestingly though, these disparities did not seem to affect respondent's use of social media to voice concerns about the world or society. Even though only 35.7% of the youth in the North-East say to have regular access to the internet, 38% of the respondents of that region report to make use of social media to express their concerns. Comparing this to Central and North-West region where internet access is higher, the percentages of social media usage for voicing concerns are not strikingly different (36.1% in Central region; 36.9% in the South-West)[27]. This is in line with the interest in politics expressed by youth, which is highest in North-East and lowest in Central region (see section 5.3).

Table 6. Political participation

		Very often to Frequently (in %)		
	Region	Female	Male	Total
I have access to internet	Central	72.6	76.4	75
	North	39.2	50.6	46.4
	North-East	36.5	35.2	35.7
	South-West	65	80	72.5

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[27] Please note data collection was done before the introduction of the social media tax law. It is likely social media usage has changed because of that law.

	Total	49.8	55.3	53.1
I make use of social media to voice my concerns about the world and/or society	Central	32	38.6	36.1
	North	40	30.3	33.6
	North-East	36.8	39	38
	South-West	25	50	36.9
	Total	34.8	37.1	36.2
I listen to, read or watch news	Central	66.7	78.3	73.9
	North	75.5	65.4	69
	North-East	54.6	46.9	50.3
	South-West	85	78.9	82
	Total	65.8	63.9	64.6
N=497; Missing responses: 28,55, 27, respectively for questions from top to bottom.				

However, despite an average interest in politics of 57.1% and the fact that the majority of the youth participate in politics through reading, watching or listening to news and at least a third of the respondents voice their concerns through social media, they seem to have few opportunities to have contact with local political and traditional leaders (see Table 7 below). Qualitative analysis reveals that when young people do consider themselves active members of the community, this is reduced to being a role model showing the importance of education to the community. Some respondents noted that deeper political participation in the community is restricted due to age discrimination and the limited relevance of (English taught) education[28]:

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[28] First quote: Written statement from survey participant, female, aged 15-29, secondary school, central region (Kampala); Second quote: Written statement from survey participant, male, aged 15-29, university, south-west region (Mbarara)

It may be because of person of my age is strongly undermined however learned one may be.

Much of my education is foreign so it does not suit in community and local setting, for example, English is less used.

Reported contact with local political leaders is fairly low across all regions, with 20.1% in the North-East, 20 % in Central, only 15.4 in South-West and 13.7 in the North. Gender disparities in frequency of contact with local political leaders is highest in the North (6.6% female, 17.7% male) and South-West (10% female, 21.1% male). Those who reported contact with local leaders mainly referred to LCs (Local Councillors) across all regions. Only in the northern and north-eastern regions chiefs and clan leaders were also mentioned.

Similar findings apply to the frequency of contact with local traditional leaders, except for the South-West region where particularly female youth seem to have more frequent contact with local traditional leaders (30%) compared to males (12,5%). Finally, even though contact with local political and local traditional leaders was infrequent, almost half (46.3%) of the youth often participate in community meetings. Consistent with previous findings, this frequency was lowest in Central region with 35.4%, especially for female youth (24%).

Table 7. Political participation

		Very often to Frequently (in %)		
	Region	Female	Male	Total
I participate in community meetings	Central	24	42.2	35.4
	North	40.9	44.9	43.3
	North-East	60.3	48.9	53.9

	South-West	65	55	60
	Total	46.5	46.2	46.3
I have regular contact with local political leaders	Central	17.6	21.4	20
	North	6.6	17.7	13.7
	North-East	25.4	15.9	20.1
	South-West	10	21.1	15.4
	Total	17.2	18.5	17.9
I have regular contact with local traditional leaders	Central	14.6	18	16.8
	North	6.5	17.7	13.6
	North-East	31.4	31	31.2
	South-West	30	12.5	22.3
	Total	20.4	21.9	21.3
N=497; Missing responses: 35, 40, 51 respectively for questions from top to bottom.				

6. Concluding Discussion

The new illiteracy is about more than not knowing how to read the book or the word; it is about not knowing how to read the world (Giroux, 2013).

According to our analysis it is highly questionable whether schools are democratic change agents and stimulate induvial political agency in Uganda. The country's weak democratization process seems to be reflected in the public schooling system, reconfirming earlier arguments that educational institutions are embedded in and dependent on surrounding social, political and economic structures (omitted ref.). In the case of Uganda, these structures are rooted in colonial history, independence struggles and subsequent conflicts. Current strategies by the GoU, influenced by donor policies and standardized global education norms, to foster human capital development through education sideline the potential role of education to address and come to terms with the legacies of past conflicts and present social

injustices. Yet such a critical reflection and debate about Uganda's past (and present grievances) would ultimately shape an individual's political identity.[29]

Our findings further challenge common assumptions about limited political agency in marginalized and remote areas with shortage of public education institutions and generally lower quality of education as outlined in sections 4.1 – 4.2. Besides, we find gender-related and spatial differences quite striking, and of significant relevance. By and large, respondents from the impoverished North-East generally indicated a much higher political engagement in various categories, including females, if compared to the central region. Finally, despite possible biases in levels of understanding and agency due to self-reporting, the paper has made the case for putting the perceptions and voices of students central in understanding their individual political agency shaped by education embedded in the cultural political economy environment of Uganda. That is, even if students may over- or underestimate their levels of agency, it is essential to understand the elements that influence it and how these differ for gender and region, to come up with more nuanced understandings of education's role in shaping students' agency.

To begin with participant's ***perceived understanding of politics*** – in alignment with other studies, we find that knowledge about local and national political structures is strikingly low. Educational institutions make only a very limited contribution towards understanding of national and local politics. Overall, perceived knowledge of local political structures tends to be much higher in northern and north-eastern regions – especially among young males, despite the generally lower quality of education in these areas. One reason could be that young males in marginalized regions with less developed infrastructures are more exposed to the necessities of local political and communal structures, whereas central and southern regions are much more developed and politically closer to the central government. This also

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[29] For a more detailed discussion on the role of education in Uganda's reconciliation process see: omitted ref.

reflects Uganda's north-south division (fuelled by conflict), its history of state formation and weak democratization process. Largely, females gave more modest answers about their levels of political understandings than young men, supporting an earlier study, in which we found that women still have a smaller space to exercise or develop their individual political agency (omitted ref.). Especially the levels of understanding reported by young women in the central region are surprisingly low. More attention is thus needed for their education and community participation in a highly urbanized setting.

While participants had generally a good grasp of their rights as citizens, none of the respondents indicated *how* they would or could claim their rights in a comments section related to questions of agency. While this could be due to the above noted limited knowledge of political structures, this finding does also not come as a surprise, considering Uganda's rather restrictive political environment and the recent decision to remove citizenship education from the secondary school curricula. However, more research is necessary to further investigate to what extent Uganda's political environment has affected the education sector at large. At the same time, we found the extent to which education encouraged ***independent critical thinking*** is quite difficult to assess, which admittedly may be also due to the broad formulation of survey questions. Although respondents had the impression that they critically reflected in school about the world and society they live in, the additional comments section suggested otherwise. Hardly any remarks were made on *why* societal problems occur or that schools are (or should be) spaces in which the causes of global and social injustices can be discussed. Some participants even noted that they never thought about or were confronted in school with the questions they were asked in the survey. This begs the question whether global strategies to improve the quality of education (e.g.: World Bank, 2017) should go far beyond standardized PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) and TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) results and explore how

'non-measurable' skills like critical reflection or creative thinking could be further nourished in schools.

On average, more than half of the respondents reported an ***interest in politics***, though their interest levels varied between genders and country regions. The lowest interest was reported by women in Kampala (34.6%), and the highest by men in the South-West (75%), where president Museveni has historically strong political ties. Unexpectedly, 69.7% of females in the North-East reported to be most interested in politics, more than young men in the same region (55.1%). We do not have an explanation for this phenomenon and hope that future research will reveal additional findings.

Reflecting on the last category – ***political participation*** – it is worth noting that the majority of the youth (95.1%) participate in politics through reading, watching or listening to news at least once a month, while a third of the respondents voice their concerns through social media. Even though the north-eastern regions have the lowest access to internet, they still report to make most use of social media to express their political concerns. Despite an average interest in politics of 57.1%, youth seem to have few opportunities to get in contact with local political leaders (averagely 17.9%), the highest being surprisingly females from the north-eastern region with 25.4 %.

Taken as a whole, our findings call for more contextualized analysis and perspectives, not just in Uganda. For instance, a presumed urban advantage in education and its effects on individual political agency is currently not present for Ugandan females in the central region, which may also be the reality for girls in other countries and urban settings. This further suggests, that the quality of education may not be linked to an individual's political agency, but rather social and communal structures outside schools. At the same time, political participation initiatives outside of schooling may have a positive relation to improved

political literacy. While we could not do justice in the scope of this paper to substantiate these claims with our own data, these relationships are worth being scrutinised in future qualitative and quantitative research.

To conclude, we would like to place our main findings into Uganda's cultural political economy context surrounding educational institutions by giving voice to one respondent, who stated:

> *There is generally little exposure to the outside world for students in my community because most of them can't express themselves openly and there is also a lot of academic work which gives no room for interaction; besides that, the high cost of living makes it hard for one to have time for politics since they must look for money to survive.*[30]

In addition to this comment, a few respondents also used the survey as an advocacy instrument to plead for financial help for tuition fees from the authors, thereby explaining their everyday struggles to continue with schooling. Remarkably, none of the respondents mentioned, claimed or demanded financial support from the Ugandan government. Although corruption was a recurring theme in written comments, barely any respondent held the government accountable or asked for the provision of better access to public education. We found this quite surprising as poverty in Uganda is still pervasive affecting access to and retention in schools (omitted ref). Yet our respondents did seem to find it important to also discuss their daily struggles in schools. In the words of a female respondent who noted the following about the survey in the final comments section:

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[30] Written statement from survey participant, male, aged 15-29, university, northern region (Gulu)

I like these kind of questions, it makes me feel we are not neglected in the world.[31]

Acknowledgements

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[31] Written statement from survey participant, female, aged 15-29, secondary school, northern region (Gulu)

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Annex 1

	Interviewee	Gender	Type of Organization	Place	Date
Annex 1: List of Interviews in Uganda (2017). Anonymized Version					
1	Curriculum Specialist	M	National Curriculum Development Centre	Kampala	04.05.2017
2	Curriculum Specialist	M	National Curriculum Development Centre	Kampala	26.04.2017
3	Curriculum Specialist	M	National Curriculum Development Centre	Kampala	26.04.2017
4	Professor	F	Makerere University	Kampala	25.04.2017
5	Programme Manager	M	INGO	Kampala	25.04.2017
6	Programme Manager	F	INGO	Kampala	25.04.2017
7	Component Manager	M	INGO	Kampala	25.04.2017
8	Chair	F	Local CSO	Gulu	21.04.2017
9	Director	M	Local NGO Network	Gulu	21.04.2017
10	Executive Director	M	Local CSO	Gulu	18.04.2017
11	Director and Founder	F	Local Training Centre	Gulu	18.04.2017
12	Programme Officer	M	Coalition of local Civil Society Group	Kampala	13.04.2017
13	Executive Director	F	Local CSO	Kampala	12.04.2017
14	Project Officer	F	Local CSO	Kampala	05.04.2017
15	Project Officer	F	Local CSO	Kampala	05.04.2017
16	Programme Officer	M	Local CSO	Kampala	21.03.2017
17	Research Officer	M	Local CSO	Kampala	21.03.2017
18	Executive Director	M	Local CSO	Kampala	21.03.2017
19	Director and Founder	F	Local CSO	Kampala	17.03.2017
20	Director and Founder	M	Youth Centre	Kampala	17.03.2017
21	Coordinator	F	Local CSO Network	Kampala	16.03.2017
22	Communications Officer	F	INGO	Kotido	10.03.2017
23	Project Officer	M	INGO	Kotido	10.03.2017
24	District Education Officer	M	Local Government Kotido	Kotido	10.03.2017
25	Project Officer	M	Local Association	Kotido	09.03.2017
26	Director and Founder	M	Local CSO	Kotido	09.03.2017
27	Education Programme Officer	M	UNICEF Uganda, Moroto Zonal Office	Moroto	08.03.2017
28	Chief Field Office	F	UNICEF Uganda, Moroto Zonal Office	Moroto	08.03.2017
29	Executive Director	M	Civil Society Network	Moroto	07.03.2017
30	Programme Officer	M	Local CSO	Moroto	07.03.2017
31	District Education Officer	M	Local Government Moroto	Moroto	06.03.2017
32	Co-Director	M	Local CSO	Moroto	06.03.2017
33	Co-Director	M	Local CSO	Moroto	06.03.2017
34	Co-Founder / CEO	M	Local CSO	Kampala	03.03.2017
35	Senior Lecturer	F	Makerere University	Kampala	02.03.2017
36	Senior Programme Officer	F	Local Think Tank	Kampala	01.03.2017
37	Programme Officer	M	Local NGO Network	Kampala	20.02.2017