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EXAMINING THE AGENDA SETTING PROCESSES OF THE
UGANDAN PARLIAMENT:
A CASE STUDY OF THE UGANDA PARLIAMENTARY
FORUM ON YOUTH AFFAIRS IN ITS EFFORTS TO END
YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT

by
NANCY OTYANG

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By
OTYANG NANCY

Approved by:

_____
Signature

Dr. Hiba Khodr, Associate Professor   Advisor
Political Studies and Public Administration

_____
Signature

on behalf of Dr Tell
_____
Dr. Tariq Tell, Assistant Professor   Member of Committee
Political Studies and Public Administration

_____
Signature

Dr. Nikolas Kosmatoupoulos, Assistant Professor   Member of Committee
Political Studies and Public Administration

Signature

Date of thesis defense: *January 6th, 2022*

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ABSTRACT
OF THE THESIS OF

<u>Nancy Otyang</u>   for   A <u>Master of Arts</u>
                                      <u>Major</u>: Public Policy and International Affairs

Title: <u>Examining the Agenda Setting Processes of the Ugandan Parliament: A Case Study of the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs in its Efforts to End Youth Unemployment and Underemployment</u>

The study assesses the agenda setting processes undertaken by the parliamentary forum on youth affairs to address youth unemployment and underemployment in Uganda. The forum is an advocacy body formed in 2008 by the youth parliamentary representatives to ensure effective representation in parliament from all political parties in the country. In parliament, 152 members of parliament sought to alleviate the plight of Ugandan youth by shedding greater attention on youth concerns. Unlike other youth policy programs, the forum is not directly affiliated to the ruling party and was founded by various members of parliament across all political parties. However, its autonomy is debatable as the ruling party holds majority seats in parliament.

Drawing on the work documented by the forum, civil society, media and government institutions in the past five years (2017 to 2021), the current study analyzes the level of autonomy of this forum and other factors in prioritizing key youth policy issues such as unemployment and underemployment in all aspects and stages. My research analyses the agenda setting processes undertaken by the forum in formulating policies to address these issues and the role of civil society and media.

The research uses a qualitative case study approach in which primary and secondary data was employed. Secondary data from existing work documents of the forum, information

retrieved from websites of various stakeholders working with the forum and previous studies on similar subjects were assessed and analyzed in themes to arrive at findings. Eight important stakeholders, including young members of parliament, national youth council leaders, civil society activists, and media representatives, were interviewed in semi-structured interviews to acquire primary data. The study also investigated the works of leading government interventions to curb youth unemployment and underemployment. The key data sources were the websites of numerous civil society organizations identified as collaborating with the forum after conducting a stakeholder analysis, as well as the websites of media outlets that report the forum's and partners' work.

Regarding the theoretical framework, this study relied on the agenda setting theory to assess the agenda setting processes in youth policy making in Uganda in collaboration with other policy actors such as media. This theory aided in assessing the role of the various policy actors working with the parliamentary youth forum. A stakeholder analysis was also conducted to identify key stakeholders working with the forum, at government, private and media level. Their influence and contribution in policymaking, particularly at the level of agenda formulation, was evaluated in collaboration with the parliamentary youth forum.

According to the study, the parliamentary forum on youth affairs has done an outstanding job collaborating with civil society, the media, and national youth council leaders to execute its advocacy role. In fact, they managed to propose, design, and pass at least four legislations in parliament aimed at addressing youth unemployment and underemployment. However, due to political and bureaucratic challenges in obtaining financial approval of private member bills by respective institutions, particularly the final step of obtaining a finance certificate to ensure successful implementation of the bills,

most of the bills have remained dormant, while the forum promises to look into other funding options. Furthermore, it is evident that the forum has failed to reach a quorum of young people during youth interactions and dialogues on crucial problems affecting them and future directions. According to the forum, a little over 2000 youths were met in the last five years, which is a relatively modest amount given the large population statistics of the youth. There is a need therefore to roll out the consultations more and build strategic partnerships with legible funders to finance successfully passed bills.

As a result, this study seeks to educate the government, civil society, the general public, and the media about the role of each policy actor in defining the agenda for youth policy issues. These findings will aid in the formulation of policy-related changes and contextualized ways to solve these problems.
The study also proposes approaches for creating autonomous bodies to champion policy making of other interest groups both globally and nationally in similar contexts as well as recommending approaches to ensure a leveled ground for participation for all policy actors is in place to ensure effective and efficient policy making.

This study lays a foundation for future research on the country's agenda-setting processes, as well as recommendations for the case study, its partners (civil society and the media), and government institutions.

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ABBREVIATIONS

UBOS: Uganda Bureau of statistics

NUYO: National Union of Youth

NUSU: National Union of students of Uganda

UYDO: Uganda Youth development organization

YFU: Youth Farmers Union

NYP: National Youth Policy

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

YLP: Youth Livelihood Programme

KCCA: Kampala Capital City Authority

ILO: International Labor Organization

FES: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

UIA: Uganda Investment Authority

EPRC: Economic Policy Research center in Uganda

CEPA: Center for policy analysis

DGF: Democratic governance Forum

UYONET: Uganda Youth network

WFD: Westminster foundation for democracy

NYC: National youth council.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Uganda is facing a problem of generating economic growth and providing employment for youths considering that the youths consist of a third of the global population (Makumbi, 2018), World Bank. 2015).   Africa and Asia share high dependency ratios of people younger than 15 and older than 64 (Kilimani, 2017).

The youth unemployment rate has been growing for decades now globally and is anticipated to grow further given the alarming statistics of the youth, (Yeung & Yang, 2020). Moreover, Africa has the world's youngest population and accounts for close to half of the entire world's unemployed youth (Baah-Boateng, 2016; Ozler et al., 2005).

A youth in Uganda is a person who is aged 18–30 years(Makumbi, 2018; UBoS, 2017), and the Ugandan bureau of statistics (UBOS) for 2015 shows that while 74.5 per cent of the youth were employed, the remaining 25.5 per cent were either unemployed (4.9 per cent) or inactive (20.6 per cent) (UBOS 2015). Research also indicates that approximately 400,000 Ugandan youths enter the job market annually to compete for approximately 9,000 available jobs (Magelah & Ntambirweki-Karugonjo, 2014). Urban youth are more likely to be unemployed than rural youth, and young women are twice as likely to be unemployed as young men (Ahaibwe & Mbowa, 2014).

 The statistics raise questions about how this is being addressed by various policy actors, starting with initiating a conversation on the topic, seeking expertise in the field, and seeking guidance from the rights holders through a gendered lens, in this case the youth.   Finally, effective monitoring and assessment, as well as successful

implementation of current policies is questionable. These are legitimate questions that the study sought to explore and provide ample solutions.

The study discovered that the Uganda parliamentary youth forum holds youth engagement meetings on a regular basis, both regionally and nationally, with the goal of hearing from them on approaches to be taken to address key youth policy issues such as unemployment and underemployment. However, the number of youths reached is non-representative of the large youth population in the country to ensure contextualized and gender inclusive policy design. According to the parliamentary youth forum and responses from key informant interviews, this is mostly due to limited resources to reach out to as many adolescents as possible.

Additionally, the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs is tasked with advocating for bills under private members' bill, which are barely considered financially by government financial institutions (Uganda Parliamentary forum on youth affairs, 2020).

Basing on secondary data from the parliamentary forum on youth affairs, partner organizations, media and primary data from 8 virtual successful key informant interviews, the study assessed the agenda setting processes undertaken by the Uganda parliamentary forum on youth affairs as an advocacy body in collaboration with civil society and the media, reiterating youth unemployment and underemployment issues to ensure contextualized formulation of policy programs to counter this youth problem.

According to the study, the major issue that this forum as a key advocacy body of legislators in youth policy making faces is its somewhat limited autonomy from government, unresourceful and weak coordination with civil society (primarily their ability to build reputable alliances with potential funders since they cannot rely on

government as a private entity to finance their bills), and media in shedding light on the issue of youth unemployment and underemployment. Furthermore, the Ugandan parliamentary forum on youth affairs is short in numbers, making it difficult to properly rally and lobby for youth concerns to the point of successful implementation. This is primarily due to unequal party representation in parliament and a split personality between representing party interests and focusing on working together with other party members, civil society, and media to present a joint front in fighting youth unemployment and underemployment.

The study found out that the parliamentary forum has done much in engaging all policy actors and has gone as far as to ensure that bills are passed in the house but the challenge comes in at the point of getting the financial certificate to effectively implement the bill, majority if not all of the bills they proposed in the last five years have not yet been issued a financial certificate which is crucial for successful policy implementation.

The study focused on data from the four bills championed by the parliamentary youth forum in the last five years, as well as the youth livelihood program, which is the lead government program addressing youth unemployment and underemployment, to determine the forum's agenda-setting processes and their efficacy, as well as the forum's level of autonomy, collaboration with the media and civil society, and youth representation.

The rest of the report is organized as follows: chapter 1 introduction, chapter 2 Literature review, chapter 3 methodology, chapter 4 setting the context, chapter 5 findings and analysis and finally chapter 6 conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Agenda setting

The term agenda setting was first mentioned in 1966 by Jack walk in his study 'a critique for elitistic democracy' as a set of questions recognized by active participants in politics as legitimate subjects of attention and concern, (Zahariadis, 2016). Later, it was legitimized by Elder and Cobb (1984) who define it as, "the process through which problems and issues come to command the active and serious attention of government perspective matters of public policy."

Kingdon and Stano (1984) bases its articulation of agenda setting on the statement, '*Greater than the tread of mighty armies is an idea whose time has come*' - Victor Hugo. Kingdon and Stano (1984), seeks to answer the question of how the idea whose time has come happens and factors that influence this. The study also gives accounts as to how such choices are made but also gives an overview (step by step) process of policy making; with agenda setting as the first step in policy making hence its significance in the process. The theory of multiple streams of the problem, policy and political stream is also key in understanding how agenda setting works, it was essential is examining how the three work hand in hand.

Kingdon and Stano (1984) defines an agenda as, "the list of subjects or problems to which governmental officials, and people outside of government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time." The study explains how agendas are identified and how interventions to such issues are established. Kingdon and Stano (1984)'s work is essential and provides a guide to assessing the

functionality of the Uganda parliamentary youth forum on youth affairs and aspect that this study seeks to undertake.

Majone (2006) states that the complexity of decision making which is at the core of effective agenda setting is often complex. He argues that to better understand this, it is best to focus on the pre and post decision processes rather than the actual decision made. This study therefore sought to bring to light what happens behind closed doors before youth issues appear on the floor of parliament, establishing actors responsible for tabling those issues before they are debated upon on the floor of parliament.

B. Agenda setting in Uganda

Umeh (2006) acknowledges that post-colonial Africa does not lack knowledge on public policy making and agenda setting entirely but there are still legitimate questions as to why Africa as a continent is lugging behind in the aspect of political and economic development. Umeh (2006) goes on to examine African countries' public policymaking and agenda-setting processes. Questions like how each African country's policymaking process is structured? In Africa, what role does civil society play in developing and structuring public policy? What criteria do policymakers use to choose between opposing values? How do they resolve the thorny issue of aligning state capabilities with state goals? To what extent do such goals and state capabilities meet citizens' expectations of the government? (Umeh, 2006).

These questions are exactly what this research sought to answer not in broad as an African continent but narrowing and scaling it down to the agenda setting of youth policy processes undertaken by the Uganda parliamentary forum on youth affairs, given the

population size of this sector. Similar studies assessing and analyzing agenda setting processes in Africa with emphasis on agenda setting include; (Barya & John–Jean, 2012; Briefs, 2015; Henning & Hedtrich, 2018; Johnson, 2018; Juma & Clark, 1995; Kpessa, 2011; Machakanja, Chinsinga, Muchena, & Kwandayi; Rasch & Tsebelis, 2013; Santiago, 2016) the studies vary in approaches used to conduct the research, both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied.

Public policy and agenda setting processes in Uganda are stipulated in the constitution of Uganda, listing down the procedures to be taken by legislators and other policy actors to formulate policy. Issues that make it to the agenda are influenced by government, civil society, public opinion and media (Rasch & Tsebelis, 2013). Machakanja et al. (2011-2015), In his study into the impact of political party representation on policy choices, he discovered that the party with the most seats in the August house had more influence in creating agendas and making judgments about which agendas to pursue. This research however sought to determine this fact from the angle of the Uganda parliamentary forum on youth affairs in parliament and narrow it down to understand the agenda setting processes undertaken by the forum in engaging various government institutions, their influence, and the impact of their influence on the agendas that are taken up. The goal of the study was to determine the scope of this effect and its impact on legitimate policymaking.

Briefs (2015) assesses the significance of youth participation in public policy processes in Uganda, however this research sought to assess the influence of policy actors collectively in the agenda setting of youth issues. Because excellent policy outcomes need the collaborative and collective work of all policy actors, this will allow the significance and influence of each actor's contribution in the creation of the youth policy agenda to be

determined. The youth alone will not be able to provide the necessary remedies; civil society and government knowledge, as well as the media's role in highlighting the issues and bringing them to the attention of the appropriate entities, are required.

The history of agenda setting teaches us that it is at the heart of policymaking and serves as the bedrock for effective and efficient policymaking. The kind of issues that make it to the agenda are crucial to the making of relevant policies befitting of the societal problems, that is why it is crucial to examine these processes and assess how the agenda is set up. Questions such as what, who, how and why certain issues make it to the agenda and not others are crucial for the better outcome of policies. (Elder & Cobb, 1984) clearly depicts the impact of agenda setting on policy results that have a direct impact on people's lives, "The choices made in agenda setting have profound implications on the lives of people."

C. Role of Government, civil society, and public opinion (media) in agenda setting.

To determine the influence of political party representation on policy choices, researchers discovered that the party with the most seats in the August house has more clout in creating agendas and deciding which agendas to pursue. (Machakanja et al.; Rasch & Tsebelis, 2013). However, the purpose of this study was to determine this fact from the perspective of Uganda's parliamentary forum on youth affairs in parliament and narrow it down to understand the agenda setting processes undertaken by the forum in engaging various institutions, their influence and the impact of their influence on the agendas that are adopted. It is the extent of this influence and its impact on legitimate policy making that this research sought to establish.

Other studies highlight the role of civil society in setting the agenda, mostly in terms of issues the donors are more interested in funding, or more lucrative projects that are more achievable to shine light on the organization (Grebe, 2014; Johnson, 2018; Santiago, 2016). However, this research sought to establish the role they play in fronting youth policy issues to relevant forums like the Parliamentary youth forum on youth affairs and the level of uptake of issues fronted by civil society by key policy decision making bodies.

The literature on the role of media and public opinion in agenda setting is dense, (Alina & McCracken, 2020; Hanitzsch, Hanusch, & Lauerer, 2016; Kalyango, 2008; Nalwoga, 2017; Robinson, 2008), stress the various role media and public opinion play in setting or guiding the agenda. The majority of this literature is indirect in its approach to illuminating and enticing the public to pay attention to concerns. However, this study sought to look for direct links and collaborations between the Ugandan media and the public with the Ugandan parliamentary youth forum on youth issues, such as through formal consultative meetings to determine what issues should be on the agenda, the level of uptake of these issues, and their impact on effective policy formulation to address youth problems.

D. Theoretical Framework

This study relied on the agenda setting theory to assess the agenda setting processes in youth policy making in Uganda in collaboration with other policy actors such as media,(Kim, Kim, & Zhou, 2017). The agenda setting hypothesis highlights the importance of policy actors such as the media in controlling the narrative, which is often overlooked. The agenda setting theory introduced by prominent scholars such as Dr. Maxwell McCombs of the University of Texas at Austin in partnership with Dr. Donald

Shaw of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill in 1972 , originally it was a business term which, according to (Kim et al., 2017), has evolved and is now being used widely to analyze business, political, finance history and sports concepts. In this study, agenda theory asserts the study in the political fields and aids in affirming the notion that there is power play in agenda setting (Zucchini, 2011), this helped in understanding the level of autonomy of the parliamentary youth forum in setting the agenda of youth policy. The example of Italy indicates that government is controlling the agenda (Zucchini, 2010). Furthermore, the study found that the politics of party affiliation impair autonomy, and that the drive to maintain power, which includes the authority to dictate the agenda, is a common occurrence. (Curini & Zucchini, 2012). In Uganda today, the ruling party holds majority seats and all the 5 youth members of parliament who champion the activities of the Uganda parliamentary youth forum belong to the ruling party. This alone raises eyebrows on whether the control of the youth policy agenda is indeed autonomous.

Regarding the legitimate recognition of the media in setting the agenda of youth policy, the agenda setting theory emphasizes that media plays a significant role in setting the agenda by controlling the narrative of what the public may discuss, resulting in substantial public demand ,(Feezell, 2018; Kim et al., 2017). However, the media's direct role on policy adoption or reform is largely unclear Therefore, understanding the agenda setting processes undertaken by parliamentary youth forum in setting the youth policy agenda in partnership with policy actors such as civil society and media given the current dynamics of the country was vital.

A stakeholder analysis was also conducted to identify key stakeholders working with the forum, at government, private and media level. Their influence and contribution

in the policy making, especially at the level of agenda setting together with the parliamentary youth forum was assessed,(Brugha & Varvasovszky, 2000)

E. Conceptual Framework

A multidimensional conceptual framework was undertaken by the study ((Chang & Rice, 1993; Mitchell & Linsk, 2004; Oliver et al., 2008), so was the study design, data collection and analysis. This framework entails identification of themes from the data collected to come up with conclusions.

In this study the main theme was to establish agenda setting processes undertaken by the parliamentary youth forum and partner policy actors to shed light on youth unemployment and underemployment issues. Under this theme, inclusivity and efficiency of these processes were assessed followed by challenges faced and a way forward to improve these processes were established.

Another theme was on the level of autonomy of the forum, this was done by establishing the political parties of the youth members of parliaments and all those members of parliament that are members of the parliamentary forum on youth affairs, to finding out if their work is influenced by party interests in any manner. This is crucial in understanding the power dynamics of the forum in regard to agenda setting and policy making in general.

The third theme was on establishing the validity of the partnerships between the various youth policy actors. This was aimed at establishing the significant role they play in youth policy formulation all through.

The fourth theme was policymaking challenges and the way forward proposed by various participants.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

A. Methodology

Content analysis according to Weber (1990) refers to " a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the context of their use." Many researchers historicize and legitimitize content analysis as a method of research especially for social scientists through reviewing documents, speeches, newspapers to make sense of them and come up with patterns that can be used to explain certain issues of a researchers' interest (Drisko & Maschi, 2016; Duriau, Reger, & Pfarrer, 2007; Erdener & Dunn, 1990; Jauch, Osborn, & Martin, 1980; Weber, 1990).

Content analysis can be used to reveal the focus of individual, group, institutional or societal attention and describe trends in communication patterns(Weber, 1990). Some studies use content analysis to assess mediated justice in Lebanon(Hanafi, Knudsen, & Flahive, 2016). Others use content analysis to assess the state of Ethiopian immigrants in the Israel press using content analysis Mengistu & Avraham, 2015). Such examples inspired the study to evaluate the role of public opinion and the media in bringing attention to youth issues that are eventually brought to the attention of the Ugandan parliamentary forum on youth affairs, which then pushes for them to be presented on the floor of parliament by young parliamentarians.

The media's role in shining light on matters to be included on the agenda is heavily emphasized in the agenda-setting literature. Some studies use content analysis to assess the role of interest groups such as civil society in contributing to proposed policies by government(Seuring & Gold, 2012; Yackee, 2012). Studies such as this one guided the

study on the role of civil society organization in the agenda setting process of youth issues that make it to the agenda.

B. Data collection Methods

1. Secondary Data

The study relied heavily on secondary data due to the exceptional times that the globe is experiencing at the moment because of Covid19. First, a desk review of existing documents from the parliamentary youth forum was conducted thoroughly; these documents included, work reports, work plans of projects the forum had embarked on to formulate youth policies addressing youth unemployment and underemployment.

The website of the parliamentary youth forum was a major source of data, plus documents accessed from one of the staff of the forum virtually with the permission of the clerk to parliament. From these documents, information regarding working partnerships of the forum and civil society or media, consultative and youth engagement meetings, bills that the forum is working on to address youth unemployment and underemployment were accessed. Websites of existing partner policy actors were also checked to collaborate the information. Furthermore, government websites of the bodies in charge of youth policy were also reviewed for any information on what is being done to address youth unemployment and underemployment in Uganda.

2. Primary Data

Key Informant Interviews (KII) guides were applied for all the primary data collection because the study was relying mostly on secondary data, given the nature of the current times (Covid19 pandemic). The proposed 20 Key informant interviews were conducted primarily for the purpose of grounding secondary data and obtaining the perspectives of people working in this field on their work in general, challenges they face, and providing them with an opportunity to offer a solution to some of the problems they are encountering in the formulation of youth policies. All the questions were derived from the primary research questions. Out of the 20, 8 responses were received.

After a successful research proposal defense in June 2021, I commenced on the desk review. In October 2021, after getting approval from the research council to conduct primary data virtually, I started off with primary data collection of the 20 participants who were purposively sampled for the study.

Members of parliament, District youth council, National youth labor affairs secretary and advocate, National youth council secretary female affairs, Associate director at the Center for Policy Analysis, and a Program Manager with a Donor Basket Fund were among the eight people who responded to the survey. Some of them are involved in policy legislation, youth economic empowerment, research, policy analysis, and advocacy on youth-related issues as part of their work in the field of youth policy. Dialogues and community engagements on the subject, advocacy, and some even participate in program funding. Most of these respondents (75%) have worked with or are currently working with parliamentary youth.

C. Data sources and materials

1. Secondary

- Uganda Parliamentary forum on youth affairs website and hard copies of documents accessed from their office.

- Websites of the international labor organization, Uganda bureau of statistics, Uganda investment authority, Uganda parliament, Uganda constitution, Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) in Uganda, Center for policy analysis, Uganda youth network, Media sources such as NBS, NTV, New vision, UBC, Daily monitor, AUB library, Google scholar, Westminster foundation for democracy, Democratic governance facility (DGF), FES and ministry of gender, labor, and social development

2. Primary

Members of parliament, leaders of national youth councils, and civil society organizations include the Democratic Governance Facility, Uganda Youth Network, and West Minister Foundation for Democracy, Center for Policy Analysis, and the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development. NTV, NBS, Daily Monitor, New Vision, and UBC are among the media outlets.

D. Data Analysis

The data was analyzed basing on the objectives of the study and the research questions, this helped in the formulation of themes.

The first theme is the parliamentary youth forum on youth affairs' work on youth unemployment and underemployment policies over the last five years. The number of

bills presented, whether or not they were passed into policies in parliament, policy actors who collaborated with the forum in the formulation of these bills, implemented bills, the impact of implemented bills in reducing youth unemployment and underemployment, and reasons for their success, if any, are all assessed here. Reasons for why bills that were passed but not implemented did not pass are also provided. To summarize this issue, a general path forward for enhanced policy formulation is provided.

The second theme rotates around agenda setting processes undertaken by the parliamentary youth forum and its partner policy actors. Pointers such as methods of youth engagement are assessed, the number of youths all together in comparison with the youth population statistics are made, the extent of involvement of other policy actors, such as civil society and the media, is determined, and the obstacles encountered in these interactions are identified, along with possible solutions.

The third theme is on the level of autonomy of the parliamentary forum on youth affairs. This is assessed by looking at the number of members of parliament who are members of the parliamentary youth forum and the party membership of its registered members in parliament.

Finally, generalized recommendations to address the issues raised in the formation of youth policies are considered and made available to both academic and non-academic audiences.

E. Ethical Considerations

Virtually, all relevant stakeholders were contacted and briefed about the study and its significance. This helped in obtaining consent from the policy actors targeted and establish their availability and participation. This also contributed in the development of rapport between the participants and the research team. An introductory letter bearing

university authorization of the research was presented to the key stakeholders virtually to enhance the validity of the study. The purpose of the study was presented to participants before data collection during the key informant interviews virtually. Participants were informed that participation is voluntary, and one can opt-out at any point during the interviews. Conclusively, the anonymity of participants was ensured (except for special cases-after seeking consent) during report writing.

1. Trustworthiness

The research ensured integrity by exercising the right community entry by fully informing the stakeholders of the study and its significance. Invitation letters were virtually sent out, and consent was sought virtually before the research process begun. Considering that the research study was conducted during a pandemic, no focus groups were conducted. Key informant interviews involving 20 purposively sampled participants were conducted virtually by filling out and online survey, however only 8 responses were received.

CHAPTER IV

SETTING THE CONTEXT

A. Context of Study Area

Ugandan became a nation in 1962 after it gained independence from the British(Leggett, 2001). Uganda has had a series of governments ever since starting with the Kabaka of Buganda to the current National resistance regime that has been in power from 1986(Tripp, 2010). The regime's long stay in power has been attributed to key policy outcomes over the years because the regime takes majority seats in parliaments (Mwenda & Tangri, 2005). According to (Kingdon & Stano, 1984) in his multiple stream framework of the political, problem and policy streams he emphasizes that the political stream which consists of the executive and legislative arm often are influential in policy making. This study evaluated the legislative arm and how it interacts with the rest of the actors in agenda setting. In Uganda the Ugandan constitution article 79 describes the process through which a bill can become a law and actors responsible and private members bills under which the Uganda parliamentary forum presents its bills is part, but it is clear according to the structuring of the guide that priority is given to government bills which is ranked first, and private members bills come second. This also explains why according to the findings of the study the parliamentary youth forum which is under private members bills has in the past five years failed to get its bills passed into laws or even acquired financial certificates, and this has led to failure by the forum to effectively implement their passed bills.

https://www.parliament.go.ug/sites/default/files/THE%20PROCESS%20OF%20A%20
BILL%20IN%20PARLIAMENT-min_0.pdf

It is therefore clear that according to the constitution, the regime has an upper hand in decision making during policy making.

Uganda, through the national youth policy from the 1960s initiated programs to address youth policy problems starting with; national union of youth organization (NUYO), which was replaced by Uganda youth development organization (UYDO) in the 1970s; national union of students of Uganda (NUSU) and youth farmers union (YFU).

NUYO targeted out-of-school youth between the ages 13-30 years, young farmers union (YFU) targeted in and out-of-school youth between 10-25 years while national union of students of Uganda (NUSU) targeted youth in secondary and tertiary institutions, all integrated in the various ministries. The national youth policy (NYP) has concentrated on agriculture and related industries since its inception in 2001. (Republic of Uganda 2001), because that sector has been the main source of livelihood for Ugandans.

Out of a national population of approximately 41 million people, 83.2% live in rural areas (Aghasili, 2015) who mainly depend on agriculture. Uganda also has a large agricultural economy, which accounts for more than 20% of the country's gross domestic products (GDP) growth (Dalipagic & Elepu, 2014), Small-scale agriculture is a major source of employment (Diao 2010), and several analysts still agree that commercial food crops have the potential to generate economic opportunities,(Kumar & Kalita, 2017)**.**

 (Reeg, 2015) states that there is need to create more jobs in low-income countries to counter the spiraling statistics. It is therefore based on the above that Uganda's youth unemployment policy approaches are more leaned towards job creation in the private

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sector with its major purpose being to create environments that support job creation, revenue generation as well as export , (Makumbi, 2018).

The adoption of the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP), a government of Uganda financed a Programme designed as one of the interventions of Government in response to the high unemployment rate and poverty among the youth in the country. It covers all the 112 Districts of Uganda (including Kampala Capital City Authority). Cabinet and Parliament approved budget of UShs265 Billion (Approx. US$. 100 million) for the first 5 years of implementation 2013-14 to 2017-18. (https://mglsd.go.ug//ylp/) Ministry of gender, labor, and social development. It is yet unknown whether non-government actors were involved in the development of this initiative. This points to a lack of inclusivity in its formulation.

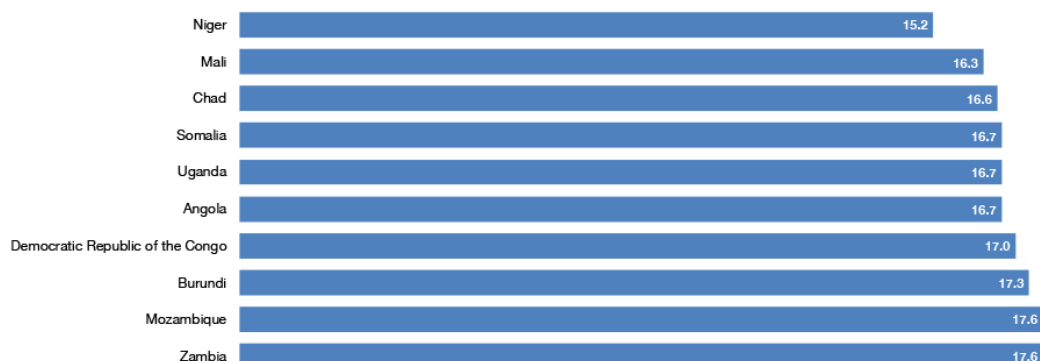**B. Youth in Uganda; population size, youth policy issues and youth representation**
1. Africa's Youthful Population.

According to the world economic forum, Africa harbors the world's youngest population with more than 60% of its population being of youthful age as per the World population prospects of the United Nations data of 2019. Uganda comes 5th on the list of Africa's youthful populations.

These are the world's youngest countries
Median age of the total population, 2020 forecast

Country	Median Age
Niger	15.2
Mali	16.3
Chad	16.6
Somalia	16.7
Uganda	16.7
Angola	16.7
Democratic Republic of the Congo	17.0
Burundi	17.3
Mozambique	17.6
Zambia	17.6

Source: UN World Population Prospects 2019

Figure 1. Median age of the total population, 2020 forecast

Briefs (2015) defines youth as; a 'transitional phase' associated with behaviors and actions that signify 'coming of age' and puts the average size of Uganda's population under 40 years of age at 78%. A more detailed report by Uganda United Nations Population Fund, states that; 34.8% of Uganda's population are adolescents, 80% of Uganda's youth live in rural areas, 10.9% of males aged 10-24 are household heads, 38.5% of young people aged 10-19 live in the two poorest wealth quintiles, 19.6% of the young people aged 10-19 live in households where the head is uneducated, 8.8million young people in Uganda aged 15-24 are not engaged in education, employment or any form of training. Furthermore, In Uganda, one in every four adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 has had a child or is pregnant. 42% of all the pregnancies among adolescents in Uganda are unintended, only 43% adolescents have ever tested for HIV. Every year 9,600 young people aged 15- 19 years are newly infected with HIV, 66% of all the new HIV infections are concentrated among adolescent girls, 10% of women age 20-24 were married by the age of 15 and 40% of women aged 20-24 married by the age of 18. 60% of adolescents

10-19 years have experienced physical violence, 42% emotional violence, 10% sexual violence and 1% of girls 15-19 years are circumcised (Female Genital Cutting).

According to the state of Uganda's population 2019 report, and, Rasch and Tsebelis (2013), there is bound to be high fertility rates in Uganda since more than half of the country's population is young, and is of productive age. This translates to a high child dependency ratio, necessitating the provision of additional social services such as health care and education, which the government lacks the capacity and resources to provide. On a lighter note, the high young population could be harnessed if the right investment strategy is employed. As a result, it is critical to ensure that current and future policies take into account the country's demographic composition.

2. Youth Unemployment and Underemployment

The International Labor organization states that in Sub Saharan Africa, unemployment rates are low. However, the youth are disproportionately underemployed and labor in terrible conditions; 23.5 % of the 38.1 % working poor in Sub-Saharan Africa are youth, and young girls are frequently the most disadvantaged. According to Uganda Bureau of statistics 2015 report, 74.5% of the youth were employees, the remaining 25.5% were either unemployed (4.9%) or inactive (20.6%). Majority of the employed youth work in informal jobs with vast poor working conditions such as long working hours, very low remuneration and poor staff benefits. The various policy interventions focus more on providing the employment. The question on what is being done to improve the quality of the employment provided is one that this research sought to establish from the point of agenda setting. The national youth policy for the 21st century prioritizes

youth unemployment but little is indicated on approaches to counter youth underemployment, (Ayele, Glover, & Oosterom, 2018; Makumbi, 2018)

Briefs (2015)'s research on youth involvement in policy outcomes states quite a number of gaps; legislative, being policies such as Uganda's National Youth Policy of 2001 which was passed but never implemented effectively. The study points out the political dependence of youth platforms by stating.

"The Youth Affairs section in the Ministry of Culture and Community Development, established in the 1960s –, through to current institutions – such as the National Youth Council and the Representation of Young People in Parliament – is presented. These developments are positioned within an assessment of the country's political environment, and it is argued that a lack of independence from the state has served to restrict the remit and influence of these institutions." Briefs (2015).

This research therefore sought to determine the autonomy of the Uganda Parliamentary forum on youth affairs especially from the agenda setting perspective. It is vital to determine the impartiality of the forum in giving attention to all issues tabled by various policy actors.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND CHALLENGES

A. Overview

The Chronology of youth unemployment and underemployment in Uganda gives a vivid picture of the current situation of the policy problems the research is focusing on. It acknowledges all the government is doing in terms of policy to address young unemployment and underemployment while pointing out policy gaps in terms of the quality of the output, stating that as of 2011, 95% of the youth were working in low-quality informal jobs (Ahaibwe & Mbowa, 2014). It is also evident that as of 2012, there was a 2% increase growth in the public sector youth employment which is noted to be mostly quantitative but of low productivity.

The majority of Uganda Investment Authority's 63.3 % jobs created by 2013 were primarily unskilled and casual labor, which is also of low quality. As of 2014, Uganda was ranked 132 out of 189 countries in terms of offering a favorable environment for business growth due to poor infrastructure. Ahaibwe and Mbowa (2014), also quotes that majority of the policies are urban biased since they favor youth urban areas and yet majority of youth in Uganda live in rural areas and highly underemployed. However, a modification of the Youth livelihood program to roll out to all districts addresses this issue, but with still no clear widespread evidence of the improvement in the underemployment aspect.

The key informant interviews from the perspective of youth members of parliament revealed that, the parliament as viewed by some respondents has an adequate youth representation and it is even considered by some to be "the best in all of Africa."

This might be argued however, as some of the respondents disagree, to say its efficiency is influenced by the nature of politics just as any other parliamentary representation.

Taxes, inclusion at bill drafting time, duplication of similar policies, lack of proper monitoring and evaluation, poor implementation, lack of piloting and thus dying on birth, unemployment, sexual reproductive health, inclusion in governance and democracy processes, labor externalization, and youth participation in agriculture, education, business, and entrepreneurship were among the key issues voiced by participants.

The responses from the key informant interviews also went ahead to reiterate that government is not doing enough to curb youth unemployment in Uganda. Some respondents even measured the approach on a scale of 1-10, with the government's approach being on 3. While some believe the government's structures are adequate, others believe they are not long-term.

"The government programs to address youth unemployment have been through Youth Livelihood Program, Youth venture capital fund, and NAADs. The politics and bipartisan nature of implementation of such programs, the corruption and failure by the implementing agencies to learn and redesign these projects to better meet the intended objectives has been a problem. However, the efforts of government are commendable nonetheless"

B. Findings

1. Policies/Bills Formulated by the Parliamentary Youth Forum from 2017-2020 to Address Youth Unemployment and Underemployment

The findings revealed that, in order to combat youth unemployment and underemployment, the Uganda parliamentary forum on youth affairs, after holding consultation meetings with civil society, the media, and youth engagement meetings at both the regional and national levels, was able to introduce the following bills on the floor of parliament in the last five years:

The national graduate scheme bill, the bill aiming at issuing fresh graduates with certificates showing that they can be employed by both private and public sector companies without necessarily conditioning them to having experience first before getting a job. This bill was tabled on the floor of parliament and was passed, later the ministry of finance refused to issue a finance certificate for it to facilitate its successful implementation.

Secondly the forum also worked on the labor externalization/export bill. This bill was aimed at protecting migrant workers, especially women who are sexually abused and exploited by their foreign employees, with little or no support, protection, or response from the authorities. The bill which was passed in 2019 in collaboration with the ministry of gender labor and social development still has not been issued a financial certificate but since the bills was processed in partnership with the ministry of gender labor and social development, it is now under the docket of the ministry to ensure its successful implementation.

Thirdly, the forum also worked on the youth development bank, with the goal of ensuring that young people have easy access to loans from financial institutions with low or no interest rates for starting enterprises. The bill was formulated in collaboration with Uganda development bank. This bill was also processed but still failed to get a certificate of finance since it is under a private members bill, but none the less the forum is still pushing for it to get the certificate. One of the staff of the forum stated;

"It is always a hustle to push for private members bills, the ministry of finance does not want to commit hence it takes long for the bills to receive finance certificates affecting the process of successful implementation of the bills."

The forum also played an important role in the introduction of a motion in parliament that was seeking to exempt fresh graduates looking to start enterprises in the city from having to pay rent in Uganda shillings rather than dollars, as is currently the case, in order to make it easier for them to start businesses. But again, due to various political differences, the motion was not given any keen attention and was neglected, which still ushers in the issue of power, influence and authority in policy making and how it has affected successful formulation and implementation of policies.

The study also discovered that, the parliamentary youth forum started the youth business forum in 2017 during the commonwealth youth ministers meeting and is still on going, which was open to the public. A large number of youth attended, many of whom networked with notable entrepreneurs and gained information and skills in business management. The parliamentary youth forum on youth affairs' reports on the business forum indicate that it is a key platform for youth to discuss openly with experts and get timely responses on their business queries. According to the Uganda parliamentary forum on youth affairs, the business forum has made a significant contribution to the fight

against youth unemployment and underemployment. This is a baby of collaborative policy making because of a marriage between the forum and various policy actors.

The study also found out that the forum started the state of the youth address in 2018 and has been done annually ever since, where they address key youth policy problems that is education and sports, health, creative arts, youth in industries, youth in agriculture, social development, and Information communication technologies.

Some of the respondents were successful in initiating bills, such as the youth development bank and the graduate scheme bill, to name a few. Despite the fact that some of the respondents were involved in the agenda-setting process, the majority had little involvement.

2. Agenda Setting Processes Undertaken in Youth Policy Formulation to Curb Youth Unemployment and Underemployment 2017-2020

According to the study, the forum had five regional and five national youth engagements in the last five years, reaching out to over 2,000 youth around the country to consult and engage them on a variety of problems that concern them.

This is admirable and an important component of defining the agenda, as it leads to the realization of contextualized policy problem identification and proper policy design, a subject that the study looked into in depth. However, the sample is not representative enough to get a youth voice on issues that affect them considering the youth in Uganda are over 7million as of the UBOS 2020 report.

According to the responses received from participants, some of them were able to arrange consultative meetings to solicit views on youth-friendly policies. Those involved in research have focused on delivering technical information that is needed for policy formulation and strengthening through research. Some of the respondents were able to propose a legislative agenda for Parliamentary youth. Minorities, on the other hand, have had little say in determining the agenda.

3. Partnerships with Civil Society and Media

According to the findings, the Parliamentary Youth Forum on Youth Affairs collaborated with a number of institutions, including the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development, the West Minister Foundation for Democracy, the Democratic Governance Facility, the Uganda Youth Network, the National Youth Council, the Center for Policy Analysis, and the Uganda Women's Parliamentary Forum. However, these partnerships have resulted in the development of well-informed, contextualized, and relevant bills that have even made it to the floor of parliament. There is still a need to build strategic alliances with influential institutions such as the ministry of finance, major donor organizations such as the united nation agencies to ensure that these contextualized bills see the day of light and the youth can benefit from them.

The study also discovered that the forum acknowledges that the media has been and continues to be a significant influence in the development of the above-stipulated bills. NTV, NBS, Daily Monitor, New Vision, UBC, and the majority of other online media platforms collaborated and continue to collaborate with the forum to shed light on these bills and solicit public opinion on them. The forum also reports that the media is key in guiding them on issues that are pressing the youth and so be embedded on the agenda.

The key informant interviews also revealed that majority of the participants acknowledged their collaboration with the forum which led to various bills tabled in the past five years.

4. Level of Autonomy of the Parliamentary Youth Forum on Youth Affairs.

The study found out that the forum in the last parliament 2017/2020, had a membership of 192 members of parliament. According to the forum report, this is a small number for effective advocacy in parliament. The forum needs more members of

parliament to join the forum to make at least 200 or more to boost the influence of the forum in advocating for youth policy solutions effectively and efficiently.

Furthermore, the bulk of prominent youth representatives in parliament are from the ruling party, raising questions about whether their commitment to political party objectives overshadows their work on youth policy legislation.

According to the key informant interviews, there have been mixed reactions to partisans' influence on youth policy, based on the respondents' feedback. Majority of the respondents (86%) view the parliamentary youth affairs is an autonomous body. For those that believe it is not an independent body expressed that strengthen its partnership with youth led organizations like the National Youth Council and other youth organizations would make it independent. While some believe it has aided in the resolution of youth issues in parliament, the majority sees it as a challenge because it has produced a dependency syndrome and restricted freedom of expression. Some of the responses from our respondents are listed below.

"It has negatively impacted the articulation of issues in parliament and getting majority support of the bills concerning youth since youth representation in parliament is still lacking"

C. Analysis

1. Policies/Bills Formulated by the Parliamentary Youth Forum From 2017-2020

The findings revealed that the parliamentary forum on youth affairs proposed quite several bills seeking to address youth unemployment and underemployment which were successfully passed on the floor of parliament but did not get a financial certificate to enable successful implementation. The fact that the forum worked on these bills in collaboration with other policy actors to address key youth policy issues is admirable and demonstrates public will, which plays a big role in successful policy formulation and implementation (Anderson, 2014; Ansell, Srensen, & Torfing, 2017; Catford, 2006; Nabukenya, van Bommel, & Proper, 2009; Post, Salmon, & Raile, 2008).

However, the bills passed were not given financial certificates, the reasons for this, according to the parliamentary forum for youth affairs was because the bills were presented under private members bills which are often not granted financial certificates by government bodies responsible. The forum revealed that bills presented by private members frequently face difficulties in the final stages of obtaining a financial certificate because bills presented by government institutions are given priority. This is a clear indication of inadequate political will which is detrimental in policy making,(Stoker, Jennings, Evans, & Halupka, 2017).

The findings also indicate that the parliamentary forum on youth affairs sought other avenues besides legislation to counter the prominent youth policy on youth unemployment and underemployment. They started the youth business forum in 2018 which gives youth a platform to network with investors and exposes them to knowledge of various business scheme they can engage in to improve their livelihood. The findings also indicate that the forum initiated the state of the youth address which reiterates key policy issues to the public, which is a key policy agenda setting approach,(Alemanno, 2015).

2. Agenda Setting Processes Undertaken in Youth Policy Formulation to Curb Youth Unemployment and Underemployment 2017-2020

The findings indicate that the forum in its agenda setting strategy undertook a consultation approach in the initial stages of problem identification. They conducted five regional and five national youth engagements that targeted quite a vast number of youths countrywide approximately over 2,000 youth to consult and engage them on various issues affecting them. This is admirable and an essential part in policy agenda setting

hence leading to the realization of contextualized policy problem identification and appropriate policy formulation an issue that the study was investigating extensively, (Alemanno, 2015; Pieczka & Escobar, 2013; Stewart, Dubow, Hofman, & Van Stolk, 2016). The youth business forum and the state of the youth address initiated by the forum are also key policy agenda setting that the forum undertook. This initiative is key in policy making.

However, the sample is not representative enough to obtain a youth voice on issues that affect them, even though there are over 7 million youth in Uganda, as per the UBOS 2020 report.

3. Partnerships with Civil Society and Media

The findings indicated that the forum has done tremendous work in upholding partnerships with other policy actors such as civil society and media. The findings highlight the prominent partnerships that the forum has had with, West minister foundation for democracy, Democratic governance facility, Uganda youth network, center for policy analysis, Uganda National youth council and Uganda parliamentary women forum. These partnerships yielded into bills such as West minister foundation for democracy, the website states;

> *"Working with the parliamentary youth forum on youth affairs has created platforms for young parliamentarians to engage and advance pro – youth policies, bills and motions on employment and youth inclusion in governance,"*

The foundation also highlights that as a result of working with young members of parliament, 4,000 jobs in the sugar cane industry have been realized, as well as the convention of the first moot parliament, which has resulted in the fast tracking of bills

that address youth issues in parliament, West Minister foundation for democracy 2020, https://www.wfd.org/network/uganda/.

The Uganda parliamentary forum on youth affairs, in collaboration with Uganda youth network one of the major youth policy advocacy organizations in the country, center for policy analysis, Open space center, African youth development and National youth council leaders convened a dialogue to create a platform for youth to reflect on the country's budget. They also brainstormed an advocacy strategy among youth leaders and various civil society organizations. These platforms complement the policy agenda setting as they give youth the chance to air out their view on issues that affect them. https://uyonet.wordpress.com/2017/08/30/uyonet-organises-national-youth-leadership-dialogue-2017/

The findings also reveal that the Center for policy analysis, has an existing partnership between the Uganda parliamentary forum on youth affairs, the media   and the center that resulted into the externalization of labor bill. According to the Center for Policy Analysis, the country is unable to accommodate the 500,000 young people who enter the labor market each year due to the country's very young population (about 78% of whom are under 30 years old) and increasing labor force, which is offset by a shrinking labor market. This has then led to exploration of external labor avenues such as expert labor as an alternative to curb the scourge of the growing youth unemployment. However, in 2019, social media and mainstream media reiterated the appalling states of the African/Ugandan Migrant workers especially in the middle East.

According to the Center, a study conducted by the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs found that as of 2016, 70,000 people, 60% of whom are youth, were recruited to work in the Middle East, while another 50,000 looked for work on their own.

As a result of these numbers, remittances to the country increased from 1.6 billion USD in 2016 to 2.0 billion USD in 2017. Remittances are incomes repatriated by these workers to their home countries.

Despite the fact that the country is gaining economically, reports of the welfare of these workers are appalling, resulting in the loss of lives, sexual harassment, and worse. This prompted the center for policy analysis, media, and the parliamentary forum on youth affairs to front the labor externalization bill. This bill seeks for a review of the externalization of labor bill to ensure that; regulation of labor export, issuing licenses for recruiting agencies, imposing obligation on recruiting agencies and foreign principles, providing for repatriation of Ugandan migrant workers, providing for rights of migrant workers and empowering the labor minister to enter into bilateral labor agreements with qualifying countries. https://cepa.or.ug/the-externalization-of-labour-bill-why-uganda-needs-to-embrace-but-regulate-the-labour-export-industry/ Center for Policy Analysis 2019.

While the country is profiting economically, reports of the welfare of these workers are appalling, resulting in the loss of lives, sexual harassment, and worse. However, for the most part, only a few people benefit; remittances received by governments have led to governments ignoring the plight of migrant workers for years. It took the media to extensively expose the system's dirt, which resulted in the formation of alliances of various policy actors to join forces and seek a review of this policy.

The study established based on the above work of the forum and other policy actors that, the policy actors are doing their part, but government needs to strike a balance between the remittances and the welfare of the migrant workers. https://cepa.or.ug/the-

externalization-of-labour-bill-why-uganda-needs-to-embrace-but-regulate-the-labour-export-industry/

The findings also show that the forum acknowledges that the media has been and continues to be quite influential in the formulation of the above-mentioned bills. Media houses that have worked and continue to work collaboratively with the forum include NTV, NBS, Daily Monitor, New Vision, UBC, and the majority of other online media platforms to shed light on these bills and seek the public's opinion on them. The forum also reports that the media is critical in guiding them on issues of importance to the youth and should thus be embedded on the agenda.

However, findings show that the parliamentary youth forum relies on the media to; first, publicize bills that they are working on, and second, analyze public opinion on issues that affect the youth. Reports on the efforts that civil society and the government are doing to reduce youth unemployment and underemployment can be found on the websites of some media outlets.

The daily monitor newspaper of September 3rd, 2017, stipulates the gaps in the youth livelihood program based on the research conducted by the parliamentary youth forum. As a result, the discussion proposed the establishment of a youth development bank to address the gaps in important government programs targeted at reducing youth unemployment and underemployment. Because it was introduced as a private member's bill, the youth forum's suggestion has yet to be implemented. This reveals that there is need for government to be open to grant financial certificates to bills that effectively address issues at hand regardless of who proposes them, https://www.dgf.ug/news/international-youth-day-2016-ugandan-youth-shun-handouts-development-projects

In January 2017, NBS television covered a story on how the parliamentary youth forum and Uganda police raided Dubai explorer a migrant labor recruiting agency after realizing that it has been robbing young people instead of getting them jobs abroad. The news showed that this action was taken after the parliamentary youth forum realized that companies such as Dubai Explorer and many others had been operating freely and this was because of the lack of checks and balances of the 2005 labor externalization bill. Actions like this revealed a weak link in the existing youth policies setting the agenda for the forum and other policy actors like the center for policy analysis to review the labor externalization policy seeking to include mandatory vetting of recruiting companies and legal protection of the youth seeking migrant labor. This clearly highlights the unpronounced role that the media plays in policy making that this study is reiterating.

https://nbs.ug/2017/01/parliamentary-youth-forum-police-raids-dubai-explorer-offices/

The NTV television reports of 13th August, 10th May, 3th September 2018, 11th November 2019 and 23rd February 2020 revealed that youth unemployment is a major issue and highlighted existing gaps in government programs geared at curbing youth unemployment. This is key in setting the agenda on the prominent youth issue and policy actors can refer to while carrying out policy formulation.

https://www.ntv.co.ug/service/search/ug/2457728?query=Youth+unemployment

The new vision paper of February 2020 highlights the role of youth unemployment in protecting the environment, the youth go green executive officer as reported by the paper urges government to deal with youth unemployment as it may lead youth to destroy the environment in a desperate move to survive.

https://www.newvision.co.ug/articledetails/96282

And in another copy of the new vision, the communications officer of the federation of Uganda employers brings to light the alarming international labor organization statistics as per the global youth employment forum report of 2019 which state that globally 63million young people are looking for jobs. He also goes ahead to highlight opportunities for solving youth unemployment that government can adopt for policy making. This type of information is frequently disseminated through media outlets, bringing it to the notice of various policy actors, who can then decide whether to use it favorably or adversely. . https://www.newvision.co.ug/articledetails/96165

The findings show the significance of building alliances among policy actors, commonly termed as collaborative policy making, (Ansell, Sørensen, & Torfing, 2017; Innes & Booher, 2003; Vernon, Essex, Pinder, & Curry, 2005) to tremendous success in addressing issues at hand. The parliamentary youth forum on youth affairs needs more alliances such as this one to realize ultimate success especially in ensuring impactful policy implementation otherwise their work will be a failure.

4. Level of Autonomy of The Parliamentary Youth Forum on Youth Affairs

According to the findings, the last parliament, 2017/2020, had a membership of 192 members of parliament, which is a tiny number for effective lobbying in parliament, according to the forum report.
The forum requires more members of parliament to join, at least 200 or more, in order to increase its influence in lobbying for effective and efficient youth policy solutions.

It is also important to note that out of the 5 youth members of parliament 2017/2020, 4 members were from the national resistance movement political party which happens to be the ruling party and only 1 was from a different party. Factors such as this

can be used to question the level of autonomy of forum. However, all factors indicate that the forum is an independent entity.

D. Challenges

The study although it turned out to be successful, was faced with quite several challenges.

The most obvious being that it was conducted during the most unprecedented of times due to the covid19 pandemic which limited the study to rely mostly on secondary data and virtual primary data collection limited to only key informant interviews which turned out to be achieve the study's intended goals and objectives although with a bit of difficulty accessing the secondary data and difficulty.(Bradt, 2020; Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020; Tremblay et al., 2021)

Regarding the challenges highlighted by policy actors in agenda setting and the entire policy process, it can be noted that financing of bills especially private members bills is a challenge. This shows the influence of the government in policy making. The parliamentary forum on youth affairs struggles with financing bills that were passed in parliament hence leading to the failure of the bills to create impact hence challenges in solving youth unemployment and underemployment in Uganda which is key in curbing the tremendously growing youth population.

The key informant interviews also confirmed that not all of the youth issues tabled in parliament were remedied. This has been due to several factors such as poor government coordination, poor youth development financing and failure to prioritize youth policy issues by government, lack of political will and no follow up, they did not align with the priorities of government and bureaucracy.

The key informant interviews and desk review both show that the agender setting processes are not gendered, that is, the gender perspective in terms of inclusivity is not adequately considered.

CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Recommendations

Collaboration in Policymaking,(Ansell et al., 2017) collaborative policy making requires for various policy to join hands throughout the policy process to ensure appropriate policy making and successful implementation of policies. In the context of Uganda's youth unemployment and underemployment, policy actors can be mobilized to achieve effective and efficient policymaking. (De Vreede & Briggs, 2005), Collaborative engineering provides an open platform for all actors to contribute towards solving a common goal with pointers that reduce conflicting interests among actors,(Briggs, De Vreede, & Nunamaker Jr, 2003)

Redefining policy as "*a policy is a purposive course of action followed by a set of actor(s) to guide and determine present and future decisions, with an aim of realizing goals*" (Sabatier, 1999)

This approach combined with collaborative policymaking can help in curbing the challenges policy actors face in trying to come up with solutions to youth unemployment and underemployment. If policy actors collaborate throughout the policy process not only limited to agenda setting and policy formulation, then problems such as funding can be solved when all actors are bound to ensure the successful implementation of policy including ensuring finances are available and collected collaboratively to fund the implementation of the brilliant policies they formed. This does not only ensure successful implementation of policies but also creates a sense of ownership to the policies formed.

There is also need to ensure that mechanisms zeroed on should lead to implementation otherwise then the entire process yields nothing,(Mintrom & Luetjens, 2016). Such is the case in majority of the bills passed in the last 5 years aimed at curbing youth unemployment and underemployment. The reason as to why majority of these bills have not yet reached implementation phase are highly bureaucratic and political in nature.(Furlong, 1998; Meier & Nigro, 1976; Rockman, 2020)

Establishment of formal partnerships with the media is required. This is necessary because as per the study finding, the role of the media in not only agenda but during the entire policy process is underrated and not legitimately recognized and yet it is role is significant. Therefore, formal partnerships with legislative bodies and media would go a long way in not only motivating the media to go work harder but also it legitimizes the work that they do.(Protess & McCombs, 2016; Wolfe, 2012; Wolfe, Jones, & Baumgartner, 2013)

The recommendations proposed by participants during the key informant interviews include; Prioritization of key youth issues, improve on youth development coordination, finance youth development as well as monitor the implementation, put more emphasis on Autonomy of Parliament, Wider consultation that brings together Civil society, national youth council and Parliamentary Youth representatives, when developing the youth legislative agenda, increase on advocacy of youth affairs in parliament by adding in more number of representatives

It was also noted that the approach undertaken by the forum well stipulated in the bills they worked on in the last five years to curb youth unemployment and underemployment are taking a one-sided angle which is the entrepreneurial one which does not offer a diverse approach taking into consideration the diverse needs and abilities of the youth in the country. There is need to explore other approaches in addition to

entreprenuership in order to offer the youth various opportunities suiting their needs to choose from.

Finally, there is a need to reach out to youth at all levels, including the grassroots, to ensure that their voices are heard, particularly in setting the agenda for issues that affect them and in proposing solutions to their problems. Therefore there is need for policy actors to at least engage 50% of the youth in setting the agenda and in providing policy solutions a thing that is lacking right now.(Agnes, 2010)

B. Conclusions

The non-government policy actors, in this case the parliamentary youth forum on youth affairs is autonomous from government and has done a tremendous job at bring various policy actors together to set the agenda on youth unemployment and underemployment. However, there is still need for this forum to take on the approach of collaborative policy making and engineering to ensure that challenges such as funding of bills to realize their impact can be got among actors where government fails to come through.

The parliamentary youth forum on youth affairs should also ensure that youth participation in policy making, particularly agenda setting, is widespread, and that the samples taken meet the quorum, which should be at least 50% of the youth population. it is only with this percentage that reflective and contextualized policies representative of the youth can be formulated.

C. Future Studies

There is need to further examine the level of influence that the media in public policy, a debate that has not been defined especially between policy process scholars and the political communication scholars. Questions such as whether media can legitimately

be a considered to have immense influence in shaping policy outcomes at all stages of the process. Policy process scholars argues that political communication scholars over simplify the role of media by using it to explain complex matters, on the other hand political communication scholars argue that media using the information processing framework influences policy outcomes,(Freedman, 2006; Wolfe et al., 2013). This contrasting argument gives rooms for further research to be conducted on the subject.

The study could also be furthered by examining the challenges faced private members bills in achieving their intended goals in contributing effective and inclusive policy making. The study discovered that private members had difficulty successfully seeing their bills fully adopted by government; factors surrounding this challenge need to be investigated further.

The study can also be extended to assess issues of gender inclusivity and climate sensitivity in policy formulation. These two issues are not only contemporary but are also universal and need to be highly considered in policy formulation at every point of the policy process including agenda setting an aspect that is not effectively and extensively pronounced in the current policy process in Uganda and beyond.

The study can also be furthered by assessing the level of influence of the ruling party on the decision making process of the parliamentary youth forum.

APPENDIX

SECONDARY DATA GUIDE

CHECKLIST AND GUIDE FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

1. Number of youth issues proposed to be on the agenda to the Uganda parliamentary forum on youth affairs from (2017-2021)
2. Reasons why these issues were considered and not others
3. Which policy actors were involved the formulation of the proposed youth policy issues?
4. What procedures were used to formulate the youth issues that made it to the agenda on the floor of parliaments from 2017 to 2021.
5. Number of issues that were presented by policy actor that were presented and passed on the floor of parliament
6. Number of issues presented by policy actor that were passed into bills, or polices or solutions provided
7. Reasons why these issues were considered and not others that were presented
8. Challenges

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