YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND POLITICAL GOVERNANCE IN MANDERA COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The participation of youth in political governance is a crucial aspect of a vibrant and inclusive democracy. Youth participation ensures that young people have a voice and representation in political institutions, enabling them to contribute their perspectives, ideas, and concerns. This study sought to establish the relationship between youth participation and political governance in the County Government of Mandera. The specific objectives of the study were to establish the effect of social exclusionary practices on political governance in Mandera County, to determine the effect of levels of youth coordination on political governance in Mandera County, to examine the effect of youths' divergent views on political governance in Mandera County and to assess the youths' involvement in county project evaluation on political governance in Mandera County. The support of the objectives the study adopted the human capital theory and the Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) Of Political Participation. This study used a descriptive study approach. Descriptive research allowed for an in-depth investigation of a single or a small number of objects, which gave the study additional information and detail regarding the study participants. The research targeted, 60 County Elected Leaders (Governors, MPs, Senator, Women Reps and MCAs), 11 County Executive Committee Members, 56 Community Elders, 60 Youth Leaders and 33 County Chief Officers at the County Government of Mandera. Data was collected by use of questionnaires. Questionnaires were used as they had potential of reaching out to a large number of respondents within a short time, given the respondents' adequate time

to respond to the items, offer a sense of security (confidentiality) to the respondents and was an objective method since there was no bias resulting from the personal characteristics. Data analysis involved uncovering underlying structures; extracting important variables, detecting any anomalies and testing any underlying assumptions. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Data was also be analyzed using a multiple regression analysis so as to establish how the dependent variable Political governance relates to the independent variables. Of the questionnaires issued, 88 filled in and returned the questionnaires making a response rate of 71.5%. This response rate was satisfactory to make conclusions for the study. This response rate was satisfactory to make conclusions for the study. The coefficient of determination as measured by the R-square (R^2) (0.676) shows that all the four predictor variables (exclusionary practices, level of youth coordination, new generations views, youth feedback mechanisms) explain 67.6% of the total variation in political governance in Mandera County. The study concluded that exclusionary practices, level of youth coordination, new generations' views and youths feedback mechanisms are statistically significant in enhancing political governance in Mandera County. The study recommended that the county government should establish robust evaluation and monitoring mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of youth participation initiatives in enhancing political governance. Regular reviews, feedback surveys, and performance assessments can help identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement,

ensuring that youth participation efforts are aligned with the county's goals and objectives.

Key words: Youth Participation Political Governance.

INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations, 'Young People' means those who are 15 to 24 years old. However, this particular research is using a different age range for youth, which is from 18 up until 35 years old. The group of countries known as East Africa Community has mostly young individuals in its population. Around three-quarters of people are considered young. It is important to create chances for these young ones so they can be part of the growth plans in Eastern African communities, as stated by Hlophe in 2015. To really involve the youth in Eastern African society's growth, policies for joining regions together were put into action. These plans are to make more chances by growing economies and markets bigger. The policy for young people in the EAC, known as the EACYP, got its start from the secretariat of the EAC and received formal acceptance in August 2013. Its main purpose is to guide member countries on how to create, implement, evaluate and manage initiatives focused specifically on addressing issues faced by youth within the EAC. It was carried out to ensure that the young people have lasting growth in their economy, politics and society (Mold, 2018).

Young individuals getting involved in political leadership is a vital part of an active and broad-ranging democratic system. It includes young people taking part actively, being included, and giving their backing to the processes that involve politics, making decisions, and creating policies. Young people getting involved ensures that those who are early in their years have the chance to share their ideas and be included in political places. This lets them give their opinions, thoughts, and concerns (Alesina, Baqir & Easterly, 2019). To do this one method is creating groups for young people like youth councils or parliaments or making special positions for young representatives in bodies that make decisions. Encouraging young individuals to take part in political activities, like voting during elections, joining political groups or trying for a position in politics, helps increase their participation in civic duties and builds a sense of duty towards democracy (Bartels, 2013).

Many people who study society agree that young people make up a large part of the world's population. The information comes from these papers: Resnick in 2013, Robertson (2009), Ben-Attar (2010), Henn (2005) and from organizations like the UNDP (2014) report and OECD Development Centre's work (2018). In the beginning of 2012, over half the people on earth were younger than thirty years old (Gordon, 2012). The United Nations Youth Strategy for 2030 says that now there are more young people living than at any other time we know from history. It has space for nearly 1.8 billion young people and a lot of them live in countries that are still developing (UN, 2018). The United Nations Development Programme operates in 177 countries around the world and notes that over sixty percent of people in these places are between 15 to 24 years old, as stated in their report from 2014. Even though a large number of young individuals is found especially within developed countries, many studies indicate that these younger groups participate less in political governance than earlier generations did. Kimberlee (2020) said that the number of people who voted in the United Kingdom's primary election of 2001 went down. Her study from (2020) showed a clear indication that not as many young people participated in voting. Robertson (2019) points out that many young people in countries with a past of communism choose to stay away from traditional political

participation. They feel distanced from the politicians who are supposed to represent them, and we see this happening elsewhere too. In Australia, where it's required by law to vote, there still exists an important problem with younger individuals not being interested or involved in politics; (Saha, et al 2017) highlighted how much concern this trend is causing.

The lower participation of young people in political activities has bad effects, especially in Africa. In Nigeria, the politicians give duties to the youth that sometimes result in violent behavior and this makes it difficult for the country to keep up a democratic system. It becomes achievable when leaders promote a democracy-focused mindset among the youth by including them in decision-making processes, as referenced from Inokoba et al. (2011). Musarurwa (2018) mentions that Zimbabwe's law-making system does not give chances to the youth. The main problem is there isn't enough teaching about citizenship for young people, mostly because of money issues. Therefore, many young individuals stay away from involvement in political activities and choose to find jobs in countries nearby for their financial stability. The young population of Malawi is feeling more doubtful and unsure about politics which causes them to have less interest in the issues related to how they are governed (Kalepa, 2016). Additionally, because there is more poverty, many young people in Malawi focus on economic issues to support themselves instead of political matters. Also, most enter politics by working for politicians who use them for their own benefit.

Africa's youth are an integral part of its human capital. Within this framework, it is imperative to grant the younger generation appropriate acknowledgement and involvement in all endeavors pertaining to national and regional progress (Nzioki, 2013). To ensure the youth's views and interests are expressed and to promote their participation in economic development, it is crucial to have active and effective representation of young people at both regional and national levels (Wiegratz & Cesnulyte, 2016). To foster participation among the youth in development, East African Community (EAC) has established a Sectoral Council dedicated to youth affairs. This council is tasked with integrating several important concerns by involving young people within development of strategies and implementation of projects. Additionally, the subject offers explicit tactics within the sector, along with a comprehensive strategy plan that considers matters pertaining to youth. If the youth strategy is adequately executed, it can facilitate the empowerment of young people, enabling them to actively engage in and derive advantages from the regional economic, social, and political integration (Cleaver, 2019).

Despite the implementation of policies aimed at enhancing young involvement and representation, the data still indicates a low correlation between the youth population and their representation. In the 2017 election, there was an increase of proportion among the youth who registered as voters, with their share increasing from 46% in 2013 to 50% of the overall voter registration. This information was reported by the Unified Election of Referendum Council 2018. Despite comprising the majority of registered voters, the representation of young people in various political positions remained very low. In the 2017 general elections, one young individual was elected as Governor, eleven as senators, twenty-seven as Members of National Assembly (MNAs), eight as County Women Representatives (CWRs), and four hundred and thirty as Members of County Assembly (MCAs) (Independent Electoral and Boundaries

Commission (IEBC), 2018). The Carter Center's 2018 poll on "youth and women political participation" revealed that 90% of the respondents participated in the 2017 elections by casting their votes. However, less than 40% of them actively pursued political office, indicating a relatively low level of ambition in seeking political positions. Additionally, over 70% of the participants showed a poor comprehension of the various aspects involved in political participation (The Carter Centre, 2018). Based on the aforementioned figures, it is evident that young people are inadequately represented and marginalized in governmental and political institutions, remaining on the outskirts of the country's political activities.

In Kenya, the youth demographic consists of individuals aged 18 to 35 years, making up 60% of the total population. Despite the large number of young individuals, a significant portion are not yet integrated into the workforce, leading to a notable joblesness in the nation. As a result, Kenya currently faces a significant disparity in unemployment rates between young people and adults. As the nation progresses towards its goals for 2030, the younger generation continues to encounter difficulties, notably in the economic aspect of sustaining their lives (Muthee, 2020). A segment of the youth population is unemployed, with a significant number involved in temporary, low-wage employment in the informal sector. Macro-economic regulations were developed inside a scope of young efforts to develop, taking into account the current situation. These youth development efforts include programs that promote self-determination, provide technical education, support business growth, and offer monetary help..Our primary goal is to tackle the problems of not having jobs and intense financial difficulties among young people. (Koigi, 2018) Even though we have started many programs to speed up skill development for the youth, it seems that their skills are improving more slowly than we expected. As a result, there are ongoing differences in wealth and social status between the young people and other residents. This study aims to find out how involving youth in Mandera County's political leadership affects these issues.

Therefore, the youth policy clearly places the development and active participation of young people as the focal point of all development initiatives. Recognizing the significant contribution of young people to the overall economic progress, the partner States have taken steps to introduce and execute various programs aimed at youth development. These programs encompass areas like health, education and training, employment, and participation in integration processes (Mold, 2018). Despite the numerous initiatives undertaken, the youth still encounter several obstacles that impede the complete realization of their capabilities. The underutilization of the full potential of young people has been ascribed to the difficulties associated with the execution of youth policy.

The participation of youth in governance has also faced hurdles within the region. One major challenge is the fact that many youths are not employed and sometimes this acts as a platform to engage into criminal activities rather than a substantive youth development approach (Maseno & Wanyoike, 2020).The elevated unemployment rate has also been ascribed to insufficient education and information. Consequently, it is imperative to provide young individuals with education and facilitate the exchange of knowledge in order to enhance their creative abilities and talent. This will enable them to actively contribute to the progress of the

region. Furthermore, issues such as the surging youth population growth and inadequate competitive skills among the youth have also impeded the implementation of the youth policy in the region (Porter et al., 2020).

After enduring years of exclusion, violence, and repeated disruptions, the county of Mandera has increased the susceptibility of its youth. Moreover, the North Eastern counties frequently exhibit low development indicators, as seen by elevated poverty levels, inadequate health and education accomplishments, and elevated unemployment rates (Rink & Sharma, 2018). As a result, young people have been the focus of radicalization, leading the government and other stakeholders to develop interventions that are tailored to the specific area and also draw inspiration from other locations (Botha, 2014). However, the efficacy of these interventions has not been examined in relation to the underlying issues that drive young people to engage in terrorism, nor is there much evidence of their involvement in improving political governance (Rink & Sharma, 2018).

Recently in Kenya, there has been concern about the participation of young individuals, those who are between 18 and 34 years old, in political matters. Since they make up a large part of the population, their involvement is very important for democracy to work well. According to the survey numbers from 2019 by Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, young people are 29 percent, that is 13,618,462 individuals of all in Kenya. From them, males count as 6,504,514 and females are more at 7,113,427.

The research by Koigi (2018) looked into how partnerships and working together affect the way universities in Kenya are managed. Cowen and Laakiso (2022) explores political management and the rights of people. In his writing, Badejo (2006) talks about ideas of governing politically in old Africa. Khamisi's research in 2021 looks at how young people being involved in politics is connected with good government and becoming part of the community. (2019), Michela talks about surveys from OECD on young people managing things in their countries. Kisiangani (2023) examines where feelings of not fitting into society among African youth started during colonial times. Smedt (2019) and various researchers who look into how young people in Kenya participate in politics often highlight the importance of ethnic backgrounds and economic aspects as significant social elements that shape political matters. However, there is a known link between young people participating in government and the network between schools and political leaders. This project aims to address the current lack of information by studying how youth participation relates to political governance in Mandera County Government.

Mandera is located in the northeast part of Kenya and it is one of 47 administrative areas there. From what was found in the census of 2019, it covers about 25,797 square kilometers and more than 1.4 million people live there. The area is mostly filled with different Somali ethnic groups such as Gurreh, Murule, Degodia and the tribes from the corners. It's up to the Mandera County Government to look after public services, put policies into action and support economic and social growth in this region (The Mandera Region Integration Strategy of 2022).

The Administrative divisions of Mandera, along with other counties in Kenya, functions within a decentralized system of governance that was established by the 2010 Constitution. The administrative structure comprises a democratically elected County Governor, a County Executive Committee, and a County Assembly. The County Governor serves as the primary executive authority of the county and holds the responsibility for overseeing and directing all aspects of county governance. The County Executive Committee, designated by the Governor, aids in the execution of county policy and provision of services. The municipality council, consisting of representatives of the county legislature who have been nominated, is tasked with legislating and supervising the actions of the county government (Mandera County Integrated Development Plan, 2022).

The primary responsibility of the government in Mandera County is to provide important services. This includes health care, learning facilities, building roads and other structures, clean water and sanitation systems, farming support, and keeping people safe. They want to improve how citizens live their lives and make sure development continues for a long time. The government of the county has a very important part in making the economy grow better in Mandera County. They work on attracting investors, helping people to start their own businesses, making more jobs available and improving how much food is grown by farmers. Work is being done to build infrastructure such as roads, provide electricity, and improve communication systems for economic progress. In Mandera County, we push for the involvement of young people in politics and making important choices. Young people have the opportunity to engage in political activities by joining groups led by youth, the young sections of political parties and platforms such as the Youth Assembly. This allows them to voice their issues, be part of creating policies, and support important matters for young individuals. The goal of this research is to figure out if there's a link between how young

Statement of the problem

The participation of youth in governance has a desired objective for various stakeholders due to the significant role they may fulfill in protecting democracies. Nevertheless, the younger generation holds a pessimistic view of their involvement in politics (King, Harel, Burde, Hill, & Grinsted, 2020). This can be attributed to either their political ineffectiveness or their predominant utilization by politicians as instruments of violence during electoral periods (Kagwanja, 2005; Anderson, 2002; Rasmussen, 2010; Kimari, 2020). It is important to mention that resorting to violence goes against one of the aspects of democratic participation (Sanders, Fisher, Heath, & Sobolewska, 2014). Consequently, there has been a shortage of youth involvement in politics outside of election campaigns. Consequently, this creates a contextual void for the researcher to examine the degree to which youth engagement impacts political governance in Mandera County, Kenya.

According to section 55 from the Kenyan law, the country is required execute actions, such as equal opportunity programs, that guarantee young people possess the ability to utilize appropriate schooling and learning, chances to engage in community based political activities, representation in various aspects of life, employment opportunities, and protection from harmful practices and exploitation. This is stated in the Kenyan Youth Development Policy of

2019. Hence, it is imperative for the government to give precedence to youth policies and initiatives that align with the nation's development aspirations, the Constitution, international conventions, and worldwide trends pertaining to the young agenda.

Studies in the field of young political engagement have primarily concentrated on electoral participation, with some examining protest involvement as well (Kanyinga and Njoka, 2022; DRC, 2019; Apter, 2021; Mchakulu, 2017; Kimari, 2020). This argument fails to sufficiently address the reasons behind the marginalization of youth involvement in the governance landscape regarding the nation. In order to have a thorough knowledge of the low levels of democratic engagement among the youth, it is necessary to take into account the particular characteristics that pertain to people (Tambe, 2017). Researchers have determined that resources and motivating factors have a significant role in elucidating political participation and, ultimately, democratic engagement (Kim & Hoewe, 2020). It is necessary to analyze the attitudes and views held by young people that form and impact their levels of democratic participation (Kanyinga and Njoka, 2022). Equally significant is an analysis of how the resources they possess impact their participation in democracy. This study lacks information on the correlation between youth involvement and political governance in Mandera. In filling the gap in literature the study sought to establish the relationship between youth participation and political governance in the County Government of Mandera

Objectives of the Study
i. To establish the effect of exclusionary practices on political governance in Mandera County
ii. To determine the effect of levels of youth coordination on political governance in Mandera County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study elucidates the theories providing anchorage to the study before delving into study variables empirical literature with the focus of bringing out gaps informing the study.

Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory
Human assets theory is a useful idea to understand how every person is an important resource in society. Adam Smith first used the word "human capital" back in 1776, saying that it's like investing money when people gain skills and knowledge from education or training, which has a real cost but turns into a kind of personal wealth. Diebolt and Haupert (2016) his skills add to not just his own money but also the society's wealth. People who think about economics in a neoclassical way find their ideas from what Adam Smith said a long time ago. He talked about how people's knowledge and abilities can make a country richer and improve the life of its people (Laroche, Merrete, & Ruggeri back in 1999).

The theory of human capital highlights the importance of investing in individuals to enhance their output within the workforce. Acquiring knowledge and skills is essential in the labor market to improve performance. According to the theory perspective, in the 21st century economy, where wealth is primarily driven by innovation and the generation of new ideas, quality education and training play a crucial role. Enhancing performance relies on effectively harnessing skills in the informal sector. According to human capital theory, education and training are considered a social investment in the community. This investment leads to social benefits for the community as a result (Canton & Lindahl, 2007). The involvement of young people in political administration should consequently improve their long-term well-being by virtue of the government and community's social investment in them. According to human capital theory, providing education and training to young people in Mandera County should have beneficial effects on the government.

Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) Of Political Participation

Civic Voluntarism Model, created by (Verba et al 1995), has emerged as a prominent framework in the field of civic engagement research. (Seyd et aI., 2001) with support from a large number of studies (for example Barkan, 2004; Eriksson, 2007; Lidstrom, 2006; Oliver, 2001; Pattie, et aI., 2003; Rose, 2002). This paradigm is founded on the notion that those with higher socioeconomic privileges seem more predisposed to actively engage in electoral endeavors. The Civic Voluntarism Model examines the impact of fundamental factors such as resources, engagement, and recruiting on political involvement.

The concept is enhanced by surpassing the socio-economic status model (SES) of participation, popularly known as the SES model. The core proposition of the socio-economic status model posits that individuals with a greater socioeconomic status, characterized by factors such as advanced education, higher income, and prestigious occupations, exhibit greater levels of political engagement (Norris, 2002). This model is regarded by scholars as empirically robust (Verba, et al., 1995). However, they shift their focus from the socio-economic condition of individuals to the resources possessed by each individual. By focusing on these assets, they can more effectively elucidate the correlation between socio-economic position and political participation. Verba et al. (1995) argue that class and status stratification influence individual resources, which in turn limit individual options regarding political engagement.

CVM, created by Verba, et al. (1995), challenges conventional approaches by investigating the reasons behind individuals' lack of political engagement rather than focusing on their involvement in politics. They hold the belief that three answers emerge. These answers are due to their inability, lack of desire, or the absence of a request. Similarly, individuals may exhibit less interest in politics due to limited finances, a lack of psychological involvement with political matters, or exclusion from the hiring channels that facilitate political engagement (Verba & Nie, 1972).

Verba, et al. (1995) downplayed one significance of not being asked. The reason for this is not due to lack of necessity, but rather because individuals consider involvement to occur without any explicit demands for engagement. Their primary focus is on the resources, since they deem

this component to offer a more dependable and accurate explanation compared to a justification that relies on specific objectives. There are three main propositions advanced by scholars of Civic Voluntarism Model on political participation. These are the resources aspect of participation, the psychological engagement and participation through recruitment networks (Verba et ai, 1995). These propositions on why youth may be less active participants in local governance systems are discussed below:

Concept of Youth Participation

Youth participation in decision-making procedures is not only a request for fairness and democracy, but it also serves as a contribution to fostering a government that is transparent and responsible. Barnes and Kaase (2019) have classified participation activities into standard and unusual categories. Conventional involvement refers to established forms of political engagement, such as reading about politics, participating in political discussions, contacting government officials, working for a political party, and engaging in activities related to the electoral process.Young people being part of settling issues is important for fairness and democracy and also helps to create a government that is clear and accountable. Barnes and Kaase in the year 2019 categorized ways of participating into normal and less common types. Traditional participation is about the usual ways people take part in politics, like learning about political issues, having conversations on politics, reaching out to those who work in government, helping a political group, and taking action connected with voting.They recognize protests as a possible engagement in non-traditional forms of political action and remedy. A wide range of strategies, such as demands, rallies, bans on rental or revenue attacks, informal workplace attacks, possession of construction sites, obstruction of congestion, destruction of assets, and individual domestic abuse, can be employed in the process (Marsh & Kaase, 2019). Political involvement is described as voluntary activities aimed at either right or secondarily impacting decisions in politics at different governmental hierarchies, due to the differentiation between traditional and non-traditional participation (Marsh & Kaase, 2019).

Verba et al (1995) opine that political participation enables citizens such as youth in a democracy a conduit to communicate their concerns and preferences to government officials and to mount pressure on them to have their demands met. In any democratic society, citizens, including the youth, has the right to articulate their perspectives and ideas on matters that impact them, which necessitates the attention of government officials. The youth consequently ought to take part in local governance decision making in order to contribute significantly to the socioeconomic development of their locality. At this point the priority is not just being receptive to politics (watching news, debating politics with friends etc), but also "Performing politics' (Hix, 2005) in a way that will help portray the youth as an engaged element of the Ghanaian society. It is crucial to note that the supranational level is seeing a shift from representational democracy to participatory democracy, but representation still remains a basic democratic characteristic.

Engagement can be regarded as a procedure associated with legislative authorities like the Parliament of Ghana, the Council of state and ministers through local bodies that are responsible to and chosen by the people of Ghana. As Dahrendorf (2013) has argued, if people

(or the youth) are denied the opportunity to be part of this process, then undoubtedly, tum to the street to demonstrate in order to press home their demands. In Ghana, majority of youth only participate in politics through their vote during elections. Although voting is widely seen as the primary and most immediate means of political engagement in a democratic society, it is not the sole method of exerting influence on the decision-making processes of the local governing body. Some suggest that although voter turnout may be decreasing, engagement in political activities can still be maintained by alternative kinds of political participation, such as protests, petition signing, and consumer boycotts (Norris, 2002).

The commercialization of the nation's political landscape has introduced a culture of marginalization of the youth in most political activities by the older politicians. Youth organizations serving as mouthpiece for youth engagement are often the target of political victimization. According to Verba et al.'s (2015), a wide range of political activities are available to citizens suggests that youth participation in Ghana should not be limited to voting. Besides participating in the voting process, the Ghanaian young have the opportunity to engage in electoral campaigns and groups, communicate with government officials, and participate in protest marches or rallies. Additional methods include collaborating informally with others to address community issues, volunteering on locally elected and appointed committees without compensation, engaging in political activities through voluntary organizations, and making financial contributions to political campaigns in response to mail requests (Verba et al, 2015). This is particularly important as political involvement, both formal and informal, has been found to be generally low (Howard, 2013; Rose and Munro, 2013; Van Millard, 2014) in countries around Europe with compelling cases of that of Ghana. Specifically, young people tend to have the lowest level of motivation when it comes to casting or becoming an individual affiliated with an electoral organization (Fieldhouse et al., 2017; Rotariu and Consa, 2012; Szczerbiak, 2021). Conducting an inquiry into the extent of youth involvement in Mandera County is so crucial.

Devolution has a significant advantage in promoting participation, since it brings the government closer to the people, enabling citizens to have a greater ability and empowerment to engage in political activities (Zoe and Alam, 2021). Participation is expected to improve four specific advantages: social gains (and decreased public expenses), fairness, local capability, and project sustainability. Participation had an essential part in preventing misuse of power by government officials and political figures. Additionally, it has served as a safeguard against government workers having too much discretionary power during open proceedings. The active involvement of citizens, particularly young people, serves as a means to prevent unwarranted political intervention in service delivery and the contempt for professionalism and meritocracy. This applies on a global scale and at the local scales of government (Odhiambo et al., 2005).

The presence of citizen participation is important for creating stress on the government and ensuring transparency to the citizens. However, the way in which citizen engagement is structured and established is crucial in determining how accurate the system is and whether it leads to outcomes that benefit the poor (Devas and Grant 2013). Based on the previous discussion, it is crucial to address the influential variables that impact the level of involvement

in politics among youths through local government. local governance. Various communal, cultural, economic, governmental factors influence the level of effective young participation in politics. The elements are classified into three distinct areas: administrative and regulatory structure, demographic considerations, and politico-cultural aspects. (Odhiambo et al., 2015). The organizational and regulatory setting refers to the organizational structure and legislative framework that regulates the governance system. It is crucial to have a favorable system of institutions and supportive legal framework in place to ensure the active involvement of citizens in the processes of decision-making at the local level. This should be done in a systematic and gradual manner (Rina, 2022). An investigation carried out in Kenya found that a socially repressive and extremely centralized governmental organization, combined with political value searching, hindered the participation of those who are disadvantaged and underprivileged in the local decision-making process (Zoe and Alam, 2021).

Furthermore, the complex system of laws that controls how people participate in politics acts as an obstacle to bringing them into community improvement efforts and giving them power. It is very important to set up suitable laws for explaining how things work and protecting the privileges of young individuals who are involved in deciding what local governments do in Ghana. The way people get involved is greatly affected by their social and economic situation, which forms the environment they live in and how well they can adjust. Young people who do not have much money or advantages often don't get enough attention when it comes to asking for their participation in projects that the government pays for (Gupter, 2014). This is shaped by the strong social customs and cultural ways of a society. Social theory says that what decides involvement are gender, money status, level of education finished, and how much a person affects the community (Odhiambo et al., 2015).

Indeed, social-economic variables exert a substantial influence on both the level of engagement and the resulting results of participation. Societal policies that exclude some groups, such as gender inequality and religious issues, can hinder youth engagement, especially women, during the procedure of determining choices (Gupter, 2014). In a conventional society, the degree of income of an individual is regarded as a significant measure for assessing one's capability. Similarly, when evaluating the degree of young involvement in local administration, it may be important to take into account economic level as a potential contributing factor. There is a prevailing idea that there exists a direct relationship among income and participation rate. Consequently, it may be asserted that a decrease in income level has an impact on involvement.(Norris, 2022). It is argued that citizens' educational level is instrumental in determining effective involvement on political life.

A degree of meaningful participation that youthful individuals can engage in in society is heavily influenced by their level of education (Blais et al., 2014). Therefore, in order to assess the extent of involvement of ordinary individuals in development initiatives, their level of literacy or academic achievement has been selected as a key indicator (Karp and Banducci, 2018). Politico-cultural constraints hinder the level of significant engagement that the youth can engage in and local government projects, notwithstanding the existence of decentralization. Until recently, the political landscape of Ghana has shown little acknowledgement of women's

involvement in collective decision-making at the municipal level of governance. Similarly, the socio-economic conditions and political background of the youth have had a crucial influence in influencing the results about their engagement.

Influential participants such as adults, who wield significant political, social, and economic power, may hinder the participation of youth in order to serve personal goals. Richardson (2020) contends that politicians show less concern for the opinions of the youth. Studies have also confirmed that when officials in political life are confronted with conflicting demands, they may be apprehensive about the potential for youth participation to escalate conflict within the political system, exacerbate issues with government decision-making, and diminish the efficacy of government agencies (Yang, 2015).Historically, a limited and quite alike collection of people have usually controlled politics; they hold common educational backgrounds, cultural values and principles. They participate in mingling together socially and commonly choose partners for marriage among themselves. Many local people find it difficult to join in development projects because of the common informal connections between patrons and clients in politics. The complex organization of the nation, along with these patron-client networks, makes it hard for them to take part (Kochanek, 2020).

Exclusionary Practices on Political Governance

Active involvement of the youth at democratic African laws and regulations has the potential to yield significant social, political, and economic advantages. Africa possesses the most youthful population on a worldwide scale, with individuals under the age of 35 comprising over 65% of the overall population. From one standpoint, young individuals provide a significant potential for not just improving economic growth, but also for tackling Africa's numerous social, economic, and political issues. Alternatively, the increase in young people can be seen as both advantageous and disadvantageous for the continent. Although it has the potential to stimulate innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship, all of which contribute to progress, if not well controlled, it may also exacerbate instability and lead to armed conflict. Hence, it is imperative to efficiently implement policies, structures, and methods, as they will significantly influence whether the increasing youth population will have a favorable or unfavorable impact (Lauren & Kahuthia, 2017).

Kahuthia et al (2017) observed that many African nations suffer because government leaders do not commit to making changes. Cultural differences and strong beliefs left from colonial times, as well as strict control, stop young people from helping improve their countries or speaking about issues they face. This also means these youths are often excluded when it comes to creating solutions for social-cultural, and governmental problems which usually affect them directly. Therefore, it is important for governments to make sure young people are included in democracy and development endeavors.This research aims to find out how being left out of political governance affects things in Mandera County, Kenya.
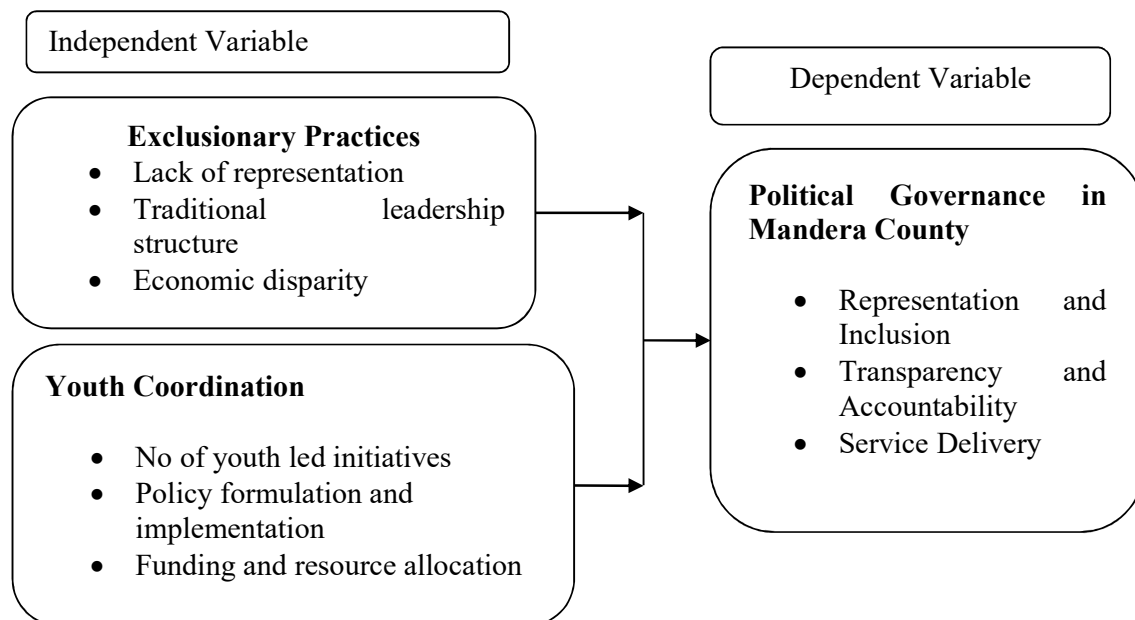
Level of Youth Coordination on Political Governance

The implementation of the youth development agenda necessitates the need for constant policy coordination mechanisms and institutional arrangements. Zukane and Tangang (2017)

maintained that coordination is the central nervous system of any regional economic 16 community. Therefore, a lack of effective coordination could hamper successful implementation of youth policies. The initiatives in the coordination provide the pathways along which decisions flow that ultimately helps in formulating, analyzing, implementing and ultimately evaluating the progress of youth agenda. It has been established that without appropriate coordination mechanisms, youth development projects as well as the realization of full implementation of youth policy could be hard nuts to crack. This, therefore, points out that there is indeed a nexus between youth and development as such coordination of youth policies has a link with the development initiatives.

Makoko (2018) states that youth cooperation and execution of rules in the locale encompass every task aimed at executing the strategies established by the legislative branch at both the regional and national levels. For effective youth coordination, the activities could include the creation of new structures such as departments and agencies that drive youth agenda at the national and regional levels. The institutions are required to convert legislation into practical guidelines and laws to accomplish the goals of the youth agenda. National structures in conjunction with local youth committees are mandated with formulation of youth policies at the national level and consequently implementing policies and programs that are formulated. However, the level of coordination of youth programs has been wanting as such youth related programs have failed to be fully implemented. This study aimed to ascertain the impact on youth cooperation of governance and politics within Mandera County Government.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable		Dependent Variable
Exclusionary Practices • Lack of representation • Traditional leadership structure • Economic disparity	→	**Political Governance in Mandera County** • Representation and Inclusion • Transparency and Accountability • Service Delivery
Youth Coordination • No of youth led initiatives • Policy formulation and implementation • Funding and resource allocation	→	

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive study approach. Descriptive research allows for an in-depth investigation of a single or a small number of objects, which gives the study additional information and detail regarding the study participants, according to Creswell (2011). The investigation aimed to ascertain the correlation between youth participation and political governance in Mandera County. The research's independent variables were social exclusionary practices and the levels of youth coordination. The dependent variable for the study was political governance in Mandera County. The research targeted 60 County Elected Leaders (Governors, Senators, MPs, Women Reps, MCAs), 11 County Executive Committee Members, 56 community Elders, 60 Youth Leaders and 33 County Chief Officers at the County Government of Mandera. The chosen cohort were recruited in order to evaluate the correlation between youth engagement and political administration within the County.

A representative sample of 123 respondents was scientifically determined using Slovin's technique, which the value of n is determined by the equation $n = N / (1 + NE * E)$.
Surveys were used to collect information because they can contact many people quickly. They gave the people who took part enough time to answer the questions, made sure there was privacy, and they used a fair method that removed any unfair influence from personal characteristics. To analyze the data, we had to find patterns that were not obvious, pick out important factors, look for things that didn't fit the pattern and check if our basic ideas were correct. We used descriptive statistics to study the information we collected. The information was processed and shown using tables, charts which are important methods for showing data, based on the study's findings. After gathering it, we worked on the data to remove any irrelevant or not working information.
This investigation used numerous reversion surveys to find out how regressors are related to the outcome. This investigator applied this model of reversion to see what effect different factors have on Political Governance, like when young people are left out socially, how they work together, their different opinions and their participation in evaluating projects.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This investigation focused on 43 County Elected Officials, including Governors, Senators, MPs, Women Representatives and MCAs. It also involved 8 members of the County Executive Committee, 8 community elders, 43 leaders from the youth population and 23 Chief Officers at Mandera's County Government. Out of all the survey forms distributed for this study, we received back a total of 88 completed forms which results in a reply value of 71.5 percent. The reply value was good enough to draw closure of the research. Weisberg, Krosnick & Bowen (2006) suggested that a 70% reply value is suggested.

Data distribution on gender indicated that 70 out of them or 79.5%, were men and only 12 participants, which is about 13.6%, were women. Therefore, it was clear that there are more men participants compared to women in this survey. This research suggested that it is important to have equal participation of young men and women in the political leadership within Mandera's County government.

Data on age brackets indicated that most of the people surveyed (70 persons or 79.5%) were between the ages of 18 and 35. Next came a smaller group (12 participants of 13.6%) who reported being older than 35 years. The researcher claimed that most of the people who answered were young, which made them good for giving data about how much young people take part and how it connects to politics in Mandera's local government.

Data on position held by the respondents indicated that the largest group, with 34 people making up 38.6%, said they were leaders of young people in the regional government. Following them closely, there were 32 participants, which is 36.4%, who reported being officials at the regional government level. From the results, it was also observed that 6.8% of those who answered said they are leaders in the community within the County. Additionally, 4.5% mentioned that they serve on executive committees at the county level and a small number (1 person or 1.1%) reported being chief officers in their county.

Data on the highest level of education indicated that most people who answered the survey, 38 or 43.2%, said they finished a university bachelor's as their top schooling grade. The next large group, with 32 or 36.4% of them, reported that the diploma is their top schooling achievement. The smallest number of responses, which was 8 or 9.1 percent, came from people who stated that their highest educational achievement is a postgraduate degree. Therefore, most participants expressed they have sufficient education to give useful insights about how the involvement of young individuals relates to the political management in Mandera County.

Exclusionary Practices and Political Governance

This investigation aimed at establishing if the participants were discriminated against when making decisions in the County.

Table 1: Discrimination when Making Decisions

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	52	59.1
	No	29	33.0
	Total	81	92.0
Missing	System	7	8.0
Total		88	100.0

From the investigation findings, the majority of respondents (52, 59.1%) indicated that they were discriminated against while making decisions. just 33% among the participants designated not being discriminated against when making decisions in the County. Of the respondents who conceded to a level of discrimination in the County, most asserted that

"A graduate must use an educated elder or rich person to get a job. Your master degree in nothing without elders"

Others asserted still that

"Youth are not allowed to be among decision makers because they are regarded as juniors. Where his/her parents participated as a county was based on tribe in every office."

Investigation results aligned with Kahuthia et al (2017) who found out that in numerous African countries, absence of governmental determination to undertake changes, cultural disparities, and deeply ingrained postcolonial and totalitarian mindsets prevent young individuals from engaging in the advancement of their nations and expressing their concerns.

The people answering the survey were asked to give their opinions on various factors linked to different exclusionary tactics, using a scale with five points. The highest score was "strongly agree" which is 5 and the lowest was "disagree" with an outcome of 1. The outcome of one stood for "forcefully oppose," the outcome of two meant slightly "oppose," an outcome of three was for feeling neither agree nor disagree - so, neutral. When someone chose 4, it showed they agreed and picking five indicated that they concur.

Table 2: Exclusionary Practices

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age restrictions can limit young people's ability to engage in the democratic process	81	3.9753	1.23466
Youth in Mandera lack meaningful representation in politics and decision-making bodies	79	4.1772	1.15203
Social exclusion can lead to policies and legislation that do not adequately address the needs and concerns of the youth population.	81	4.1358	1.02168
Youth face issues of accessing reliable information about political processes, candidates, and policies	80	4.1625	1.09595
High costs associated with political campaigns or participation in political organizations may deter young people from getting involved.	81	4.3827	.99458

Source: Author, (2024)

From what the people answering the survey said, many could see there is a connection between keeping some groups out and how politics are run in Mandera's County Government. The numbers from the study show that a lot of these people agreed very much (average score 3.9753, standard deviation 1.23466) with this idea: rules about age can stop younger individuals from taking part in elections and democracy. A large portion of the people answering the survey, with much agreement (mean value is 4.1772 and standard deviation is 1.15203), believe that young individuals in Mandera are not properly represented in political matters and bodies making decisions. From examining the results, it was also observed that many respondents hold the opinion (with mean score being 4.1358 and standard deviation at 1.02168) that if society excludes groups, this can result in policies and laws which fail to take into account what young people need or worry about sufficiently. Many of the people who answered showed agreement (Average=4.1625, Standard Deviation=1.09595) that young individuals have problems getting trustworthy information about political methods, people running for office and political plans. Also, a number of those who responded supported the idea (Average=4.3827, Standard Deviation=0.9948) that big expenses linked to running in elections or being part of political groups might discourage youth from participating. The research showed that when young people are left out, it really affects how politics work in

Mandera County. The results of the study matched what Kahuthia and others said in 2017; they saw that a lot of times in African countries, governments don't try hard enough to make changes. Because there's so much difference between cultures and because old ways from colonial times or dictatorships are still strong, youth find it hard to take part in making their country better or even just saying what they think should happen.

Level of Youth Coordination

The study sought to establish how youth in Mandera County can effectively coordinate their efforts and collaborate to address pressing societal issues. Out of thematic investigation, many participants suggested the youth can form networks and alliances with like-minded youth organizations, community groups, and NGOs to pool resources and share expertise. Another group of participants conceded that the youth can coordinate by leveraging technology and social media platforms that enable youth to connect, communicate, and mobilize supporters across geographic boundaries. Online forums, virtual meetings, and social networking sites provide avenues for collaboration, information sharing, and grassroots organizing on key issues affecting youth and communities.

It was also discovered from the findings that in facilitating youth coordination, the County government can facilitate capacity-building programs, training sessions, and workshops for the youth to develop expertise in authority, advocacy, negotiation, as well as project management. Building the capacity of youth enhances their effectiveness in coordinating efforts and driving positive change in their communities. The respondents also asserted that a good governance structure like devolution brings information and resources close to the youth. Some of the challenges pointed out in youth coordination was lack of representation in formal governance structures and decision-making bodies, which can marginalize their voices and perspectives in policy discussions and decision-making processes. Limited representation undermines the inclusivity and legitimacy of governance systems. The research results agreed with Ganthi (2008), who discovered that regimes of exclusion tend to have a limited social foundation, keeping many groups based on society, religion, and ethnicity away from having power.

On a five-point Likert scale, with five being "concur" and one as "failing to agree," the participants rated their feelings about various factors connected to how well youth coordination affects political leadership in Mandera County. The score of 1 meant they strongly disagreed; 2 meant disagreeing; if they felt neutral, they chose 3; for agreeing it was marked by a score of 4, while choosing number five showed that participants strongly agreed.

Table 3: Level of Youth Coordination

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
A well-coordinated and organized youth constituency can amplify its voice and advocate for issues that matter to young people.	81	4.5926	.89132
Representation ensures that the concerns of the youth are integrated into the policy-making process,	78	4.4359	.84653
Youth coordination leads to more comprehensive and inclusive governance.	81	4.5556	.70711

Effective coordination efforts mobilize young people to participate in various political activities	81	4.4074	.80277
Youth coordination fosters an environment where diverse perspectives and experiences can be shared	81	4.2840	.86940
Higher levels of political participation contribute to a more vibrant and responsive political system.	81	4.2469	.95565

Source: Author (2024)

The results from the SPSS analysis show that many people who took part in the study agree very much (average score 4.5926, standard deviation 0.89132) with the idea that if a group of young individuals is well managed and put together, it can make its voice louder and stand up for things important to them. A big portion of those answering also agreed a lot (average score 4.4359, standard deviation 0.84653) with this; having someone to represent us makes sure what matters to youth gets taken into account when making policies. The research observed (M= 4.5556, S.D= 0.70711) that when young people are involved in coordination, it results in governance that includes everyone and covers everything more thoroughly. From examining the results, it was also seen that when there is good organization among youth groups, this encourages them to take part in different kinds of political actions. The average number was found to be 4.4074. And the S.D, having a value of 0.80277, showed that the answers were quite consistent. The research also stated that many of the people who answered agree (M=4.284, S.D=0.8694) when young people work together it creates a place where different views and experiences can be exchanged. The research found that most of the people who responded think (M=4.2469, S.D = .95565) that if more people take part in politics, it leads to a political system with more energy and better reactions to what is needed.It was therefore clear from the findings that the level of youth coordination has a significant bearing on political governance in Mandera County. As evidenced by numerous studies, including the work of Ahmed et al. (2019) and Mohamed (2020), effective coordination among youth groups can lead to enhanced political engagement and participation. In Mandera County, where the youth represent a substantial portion of the population, their collective actions and coordination can influence political decision-making processes.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This investigation found out that exclusionary practices, level of youth coordination, new generations' views and youths feedback mechanisms are statistically significant in enhancing political governance in Mandera County. The study asserted that exclusionary practices often lead to the underrepresentation or complete exclusion of certain segments of society, such as minorities, women, or marginalized communities, from political processes. This undermines the principles of democracy and can result in governance that does not reflect the diverse needs and interests of the population as a whole. The study concluded that exclusionary practices have significant implications for political governance, undermining democracy, social cohesion, economic development, and legitimacy. Addressing these practices and promoting inclusivity is essential for fostering effective governance and ensuring the society's well-being as a whole.

This investigation also found that the level of youth coordination has a statistically important impact on political governance in Mandera County. The study pointed out that a high level of youth coordination ensures that the voices and perspectives of young people are effectively represented in political decision-making processes. This leads to more inclusive governance where policies and programs reflect the needs and aspirations of the youth population. The study asserted that effective coordination of youth initiatives empowers young people to actively engage in civic activities, such as community development projects, advocacy campaigns, and electoral processed. It helps young people feel like they own and are responsible, which is good for the growth and steadiness of the nation. The study surmised that by actively involving young people in decision-making, empowering them to contribute to development efforts, and promoting social cohesion and accountability, the county government can realize the full potential of its youth population as partners in progress and agents of positive change.

Recommendations

Exclusionary Practices
From the analysis, the researcher recommends that the Mandera County Government should establish formal youth advisory boards composed of diverse youth representatives from different communities and backgrounds. These boards can serve as platforms for young people to provide input on policy matters, advocate for youth-centric initiatives, and advise government officials on issues affecting the youth population.

Level of Youth Coordination
This investigation also advocated that the Mandera County Government should prioritize integration of civic education programs in schools and educational institutions. These programs should educate young people about their privileges as citizens, parliamentary principles, governance structures, as well as the importance of active civic participation. By fostering a culture of civic engagement from an early age, the county can cultivate a generation of informed and responsible citizens.

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