Light up the Darkness

Transforming the Ugandan situation of Waithood with Non-Violent Methods

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Cloak of Darkness

Since colonization Europeans have legitimized their white superiority and civilization over Africa by creating a symbolic narrative of Europe as the continent of Light and Africa as the continent of Darkness.

Moreover, the European colonial powers did not develop but under-develop the African societies. Their colonial legacies of dictatorship and rigid tribal divisions were, and still are, adopted by African leaders in order to maintain control of the few over the many.

Instead of Europe as the bringer of Light, their legacies are working as a cloak of Darkness, maintaining the status quo with waithood as the result in many African countries.

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List of Abbreviations

ALED – Action for Liberty and Economic Development

ASC – Africa Study Centre

DP – Democratic Party

EU – European Union

FDC – Forum for Democratic Change

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

IMF – International Monetary Fund

NABC - Netherlands Africa Business Council

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

NRA – National Resistance Army

NRM – National Resistance Movement

MP – Member of Parliament

PP – People Power

SAP – Structural Adjustment Programme

SEE – Students for Economic Empowerment

UCU – Ugandan Christian University

USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

VPN - Virtual Private Network

Preface

Personal experiences influence the lenses through which one looks. That is why Chabal (2009) argues that instead of obscuring it, one should acknowledge it.

When I was 14 years old, I was lucky to have a history teacher who could tell historical stories so passionately that I got enthralled by the world of the past, especially situations about conflict. Since then, I have been passionate about history, peace and conflict which led me to become a student of warfare. I took a membership at the 'Royal Association for the Art of War' (KVBK) and started to read the Military Spectator, a magazine about strategic and military issues. I learned about the number of fragile states in Africa, and the persistent violent instability that plagues the continent. That is why I decided to focus on this continent at the age of 20, sharing my thoughts in a guest column called 'Africa is the Future' (Volume 180 Number 4 - 2011) for the Military Spectator.

To learn more about conflict in Africa, I went to Uganda in 2011 to contact students in order to learn from native people themselves instead of books alone about the African situation. I visited the Uganda Christian University (UCU) where I met several student leaders. We brainstormed about issues, such as peace, conflict, dictatorship, and development. We decided to start a local initiative to organize and empower students and made plans to make it an international initiative. This led to the foundation of International Development Student Society (IDSS). We believed that youth were Africa's most important resource, who could lead to development once those youth were organized and enlightened. Our focus was on empowering students, so that they could become the backbone of African development. The initiative came forth from critique over the status quo, that both the development industry and African governments had so far not been able to bring development to most of the people. IDSS was supposed to become an umbrella for several youth institutions, functioning as a bridging platform for youth aimed to develop Africa. At least, that was our dream.

IDSS present at Positive Debt project that empowered single mothers. (2014)

I have visited Uganda multiple times. One was an internship as project coordinator at IDSS for a duration of four months in 2014. It was this internship that I came to learn about the abuse of power, corruption and dependency of the people. After some time, it became clear that both co-founders had exploited me for their personal profits. This became a crude but important wake up call for me.

Ever since, I have been intrigued by the larger picture of the current social-political situation in Uganda and Africa in general. I have written my bachelor thesis about this under-development in Africa, its historical causes and the local situation where youth stood still. These are merely symptoms of a system that is still in place, inherited since colonial times. In order to gain peace in Africa, freedom must be achieved first.

This bachelor thesis brought me an invitation to the chairman of Ugandan diaspora in the Netherlands in 2017, Moses Atocon. Atocon explained how his party, Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), had been trying to launch a non-violent movement for transformation against

their president Yoweri Museveni since the Walk to Work protests in 2011. However, they had been unable to succeed yet. They have lacked a grand strategy.

Moses Atocon, chairman of Ugandan Diaspora in the Netherlands since 2015. (Atacon, 2019)

This search for vision expanded my study up to the current social-political situation in Africa, to a feasible method for transformation. I searched for literature in the Africa Study Centre (ASC) in the period from 2015 to 2019. Friendly contact with the Ugandan diaspora, with political exiles who are still active within Ugandan politic gave me the opportunity to do a 3-month internship for my master African Studies at the office of the FDC.

This very internship gave me the opportunity to collect valuable information and the unique possibility to talk to important opposition leaders in Uganda, especially Patrick Oboi Amuriat, (Party President of FDC), Kizza Besigye (Founder FDC) and Bobi Wine. It is with their help that I became able to discover issues of oppression under the surface, delicately hidden for the outside world but essential for the president to remain in power.

Kizza Besigye, founder of Forum for Democratic Change. (2018)
Source: https://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Government-Bobi-Besigye-kill-Tumwebaze-Opposition/688334-4791958-b7ioce/index.html

It became my personal mission to help empower African youth, to find ways to make African countries more peaceful and to contribute to more freedom.

Bobi Wine, protest singer and opposition leader. (2019).
Source: https://www.telegraaf.nl/entertainment/3515116/optreden-bobi-wine-in-nederland-onzeker-na-arrestatie

1. The African Situation: From Wealthy Societies to Contemporary Waithood

Highly developed forms of culture, society and political organization were established for thousands of years over the African continent. Empires, kingdoms, sultanates and republics had risen and fallen. Trading centers evolved, adapted to the local environment and available resources, often resulting into enormous prosperity for the region (Meredith 2015). Life was neither uncivilized nor a paradise (Walraven 2018). In the case of centralized kingdoms in Uganda, clans played a political role in creating checks and balances on the power of their kings. For example, the elites in Bunyoro acted as counterbalance to the centralizing ambitions of its king (Rubongoya 2007). The European colonizers, who sliced up the African continent at the Berlin Conference that took place in 1884-85, forced this enormous diversity of governance, culture and society into an artificial mold to ensure the most effective rule for their new colonies.

Colonialization of Africa

The European powers, with over 350 years of colonial experience, had initially little interest in the massive and hostile lands of Africa interior. This completely changed after the year 1885, when disinterest turned into expansion mania. The military innovation of the Maxim machine gun made it possible for the well-organized European armed forces to defeat much larger African armies. In 1880 most areas in Africa had been outside of the spheres of influence of European control, but in 1913 almost all of Africa was colonized (Olivier 1963, Walraven 2018).

After colonizing the gigantic lands, called the 'Scramble of Africa', this expansion mania quickly turned back into disinterest after the territories were conquered. Small colonial administrations were established to rule the enormous lands and their populations, often with little help from the metropoles such as London and Paris. Such led to the essential question: How can a small minority rule a much bigger majority? The question is known as the 'Native Question'. It was clear that ruling large populations would be impossible without using existing governing structures, without dividing the populations, and without using native personnel. One leading colonial practice became that of Great Britain. Even though differences in colonial

schools of thought existed, the practical results were often quite similar (Mamdani 1996, Walraven 2018).

The British administrator Lord Lugard, who gained first colonial experience in Uganda, described the ultimate colonial system in his book the 'Dual Mandate of British Tropical Africa', published in 1922 in Nigeria. He argued that African societies should be divided into different classes of people. This led a hierarchical structure for the urban and rural areas (Mamdani 1996).

1. Urban Elite (The European, governance)
2. Urban Middle Class (Local personnel, administration, police and army)
3. Rural Society (African majority divided by native chiefs and tribes)

The city was residence for the urban elite where white conclaves formed the centre and colonials could live and organize their society similar to their metropoles. Around this centre resided urban middle class, local workers, local police, army, and local administrators of colonial government (Mamdani 1996, Branch & Mampilly 2015).

In Uganda, the colonial state fundamentally changed the diverse political practices based on clanship towards a despotic system of chiefship where the source and legitimacy of power resided with the external colonizer instead of internal people. The consent on the people lost political meaning while the legitimacy of the metropole in Kampala and London became the deciding factor (Rubongoya 2007).

The rural areas were residence to the other Africans, without rights nor access to the white urban conclaves. Most of the rural Africans lived under the control of local rulers, to administer the African populations as effectively as possible. These rural populations all became allocated and divided by tribes, led by a chief. Existing tribes were appreciated, and new ones were created were none existed. Chiefs were installed with brute force, often with the help of local despots (Mamdani 1996). These newly formed tribes were often suspicious and hostile to each other, which allowed the colonial administrators to divide and rule them. The British had learned from their colonial times in India that when the local population got civilized and not internally divided, they could unite and rebel, demanding the same freedom and rights as their

masters (Mamdani 1996). Thus, instead of civil law, which was used for Europeans, Africans were governed by customary law, based on tradition and myths. Oppression was maintained by an intelligence veil, creating fear and distrust. In general, the control and oppression of the rural population was guaranteed by the local chiefs, who were financially supported by the urban elite. The urban middle class were the people who worked for the colonial administration (Cooper 2002, Mamdani 1996).

The urban elite claimed that they wanted to develop their African subjects. However, they were more interested in controlling the local population as effective as possible. As a result, African society was not developed but under-developed, remaining within the artificial construction of the tribal form with despotic chiefs. The economy and infrastructure were developed in such a way that the lands could be maximally exploited. Especially agriculture, used for food production, was transformed towards cash crops production, oriented for the global market. The increasing trade and growing industries around the cities started to attract people from rural areas, leading to an increasing urbanization. Over decades this led to a social economic crisis, as it created a growing group of people that did not fit in the ideal colonial picture of the Europeans. These new urban dwellers were excluded from the cities are much as possible, placed into townships outside the urban centers. Between 1900 and 1960, this fast-growing mass of poor Africans, not ruled by tribal divisions and control of rural tradition and chiefs, formed an ever-increasing tensed atmosphere for the colonials. They formed a fourth class besides the urban elite, urban middle class and rural society; they were the urban lower class (Branch & Mampilly 2015).

First Protest Wave: Decolonization
The growing urban populations put more pressure on the colonial state, as it faced increasing demands of the urban population to gain a larger stake in the colonial state, especially in the 1930's and 1940's. The situation changed after 1945 when the legitimacy of colonial (white) control started to wane (Walraven 2018). While the Allied forces fought with all their might against the genocide of the Jew, who were perceived to be an inferior race by the Nazi regime, and for liberation of Germany and Japanese rule, the British and French claimed to rule over African populations because of their white superiority. This led to the loss of legitimacy, especially since African veterans fought in Asia and became acquainted with ideas of independence. Combined with the conferences of Manchester in 1945, Bandung in 1955, and

Accra in 1958, this illegitimacy made the call to independence more appealing over the years (Cooper 2002, Branch & Mampilly 2015). The first large protest wave over Africa was about to start.

The richer Africans in the urban middle class wanted to gain access to the exclusive white upper class, to share the same luxury and power. The urban middle class wanted better wages and working conditions. The lower urban classes, who were created by the increasing urbanization, wanted freedom from brute police violence while gaining access to jobs. The rural population wanted to abolish the forced labor for cash crops (Walraven 2018).

One of the results was that many new native leaders, who had climbed up the ladder in the colonial administration, had good relations with their former colonial rulers. In the case of Uganda, Milton Obote became first prime minister and later president of Uganda through a 'negotiated surrender' of the British, who remained influential and maintained a neo-colonial relation. While Obote earned initial legitimacy because of his role in gaining independence the relation faded after several years when he started to use coercion as primary source of power, as had been the case since colonization.

The African elites took over the place from the white upper class and started to build developmental states. This initially led to more jobs, increasing social services and economic growth (Nugent 2012, Branch & Mampilly 2015). Similar as in colonial times, the African urban middle class was made up of those who worked for the (then colonial) state. Since their independence the colonial states were transformed into developmental states. Governments were exceptionally large as they became the main job provider for most sectors. This is different from the middle classes in the West, where people and work were often independent from their governments. Yet Africa seemed to be on the rise.

Second Protest Wave: One Party Regimes and Military Coup D'états
However, the situation did not really change for the urban lower classes and the rural population. The governments became increasingly corrupt, as both leaders and civil servants working for the government allocated state resources for their own families. Due to such corruption, governments became unable to maintain their large expenses and started to borrow massively. Because the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) demanded rigid

adjustments, based on the neoliberal school of thought of the Washington Consensus, this led to the notorious Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). The SAPs made the governments increasingly smaller. They privatized governmental institutions, such as hospitals and universities, with the purpose to decrease expenditure and corruption.

Unfortunately, the Western neoliberal economists were not conscious about a powerful human emotion: greed. Instead of the African rulers becoming less corrupt, austerity adjustments resulted into an unemployed middle class, urban poor and rural populations who were no longer supported with social services while education, healthcare and infrastructure became neglected. The remaining government finances became increasingly used for patronage or intimation to ensure the power of the elites, resulting in defense budgets that started to grow (Branch & Mampilly 2015). The one-party state and an increasing role of the militaries were the result, often paired with violence and coup d'états. When the Cold War ended and the United States lost its interest in financially sustaining friendly kleptocracies, such as Mobutu in the Democratic Republic in Congo, many governments collapsed, resulting in anarchy and violent conflicts (Branch & Mampilly 2015).

It is at the beginning of the second wave protest that Yoweri Museveni launched his guerilla war, forming the National Resistance Army (NRA). Using an armed struggle against despotism and corruption, they were able to overcome ethnic and religious divisions, bridging urban and rural and eventually became the first guerrilla army to defeat a sitting government since independence in Africa (Ori Amazi 1998). Museveni gave a historical speech when they captured power in Kampala, 26 January 1986. Many Ugandans hoped that change would follow when he proclaimed that:

"No one should think that what is happening today is a mere change of guard: it is a fundamental change in the politics of our country" (Ori Amaza 1998).

The second protest wave spread over the African continent when the middle classes, often organized in labor unions, took to the streets joined by urban lower classes. The middle class had lost most of their income and influence since the austerity programs. They wanted their privileged lives back. This resulted into claims of the middle class to fight for another liberation, to free the African populations from dictators and corruption. Their outcries were voiced

through demands for reform by multi-party elections. The results from these people power pressures led indeed to an enormous increase in elections and multi-party democracies. Unfortunately, these elections and reforms did not lead to the expected effects, as the governments rigged them. In fact, it gave them an instrument to build external legitimacy. For all parts of the population, there was little change. The elite stayed into power, dependent on massive corruption and militarized police violence, while it became increasingly difficult for the middle class to find jobs. The urban lower class and the rural population remained marginalized and underdeveloped. Governments lost the social pact with the people while force became the dominant method to solve conflicts. Eventually, elections started to lose meaning in Africa. Meanwhile, large demographic shifts took place, with fast-growing populations and increasing urbanization as the result. Youth started to become more prominent in society and started voicing their political demands (Branch & Mampilly 2015).

Third Protest Wave: Dictatorship and Corruption
The youth in particular initiated the third protest wave, which took form in 2011 in the North African countries of Tunisia and Egypt. Instead of demands for political reform, the protests transformed quickly into national uprisings using non-violent methods that would not stop until their dictators stepped down. In Tunisia they went on until their dictator Ben Ali had resigned, while the Tahrir Square in Egypt had showed the new method of opposing dictators. Many other movements below the Sahara followed with a third wave of massive protest. Due to the economic failures, inequalities and increasing corruption it had become nearly impossible to find a job for youth, resulting in many informal low-paid day-to-day jobs and many aging youths hanging out on the streets.

Without stable income, youth became increasingly unable to make the transition to adults, defined as 'Waithood' by Honwana. She claimed that waithood is the stage of youth who are unable to get formal and stable employment, therefore unable to start providing for their families and thus not entering the stage of adulthood. This made the concept of youth contested, as even people above 40 years and older remained unable to become adults, as there were no jobs. As a result of the increasingly growing youth populations, it was these youngsters living in waithood that played a prominent role in protests and uprisings (Honwana 2013).

Many of these revolutions or resignations have not delivered the results of fundamental change they hoped for, but the pressure is increasing day by day. In some cases, it was the military, in the other religious brotherhoods, that hijacked these revolutions when the resignations as a result of the people's pressure led to power vacuums. For many, the standing political parties do not represent or act in the interest of the protestors; the youth, or the other neglected group; the rural population. Some autocratic governments have successfully withered the storm of people power due to geopolitical alliances with the United States or the European Union (EU). Since the 'War on Terror' after the 2001 Al Qaida attack on the World Trade Centre or the fight of migration in Europe, these states could count on the unfailing financial donor support of the western powers out of strategic interests (Branch & Mampilly 2015).

The decreased social services after the collapse of the developmental states as the result of the SAPs led to a weak civil society and started to attract foreign (especially Western) Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to help the local populations devastated by conflict, starvation or HIV/AIDS (Branch & Mampilly 2015). This help has gone so far that African populations have increasingly become dependent on such NGOs. The middle class found employment in this NGO sector while the poor lower urban class and rural population became dependent on their aid through social services and financial help (Branch & Mampilly 2015). The development industry that has risen out of this dependency have created a Western image of 'Africa as a country', with millions of flee-invested babies and starving Africans, often combined with HIV/AIDS. Instead of transforming such negative image of Africa, the development industry survives on this desperate portrayal focused on creating pity (Ellis 2010). Moreover, trade from Western countries even thrives on this situation.

In the case of Uganda, history was repeating itself when Museveni slowly turned into a dictator himself (Rubongoya 2007). Especially several months after the 2011 elections the legitimacy of the regime was damaged when food and fuel prices rose exponentially. This resulted in a national uprising, called the 'Walk to Work' protests, where protestors took to the streets, led by opposition leaders with Kizza Besigye in particular. Inspired by events in North Africa, Ugandans were asking themselves if they too could liberate themselves through a non-violent mass uprising. Since that 2011 uprising, the Ugandan police was even more professionalized, intelligence agencies expanded, opposition more effectively isolated and demonstrations prevented (Branch & Mampilly 2015).

Contemporary Waithood

The three protest waves over the last century, where the masses from the urban lower class and the youth took to the streets because they have no jobs, no money, and no prosperity, can be explained as a critique to the status quo of the social political situation. Until this situation is broken, they are unlikely to stop protesting because they want their circumstances fundamentally changed. Many colonial compartments are still in place, where the gaps between urban classes or urban-rural remain. Ethnicity, the modern concept of tribe, is still a crucial aspect in separating African society and creating political instability. Governments and opposition parties still form the elite and are involved in massive corruption scandals, acting on self-interests. The middle class is opposite to the Western experience not independent from the government and thus not a strong pressure group for freedom and democracy (Branch & Mampilly 2015).

The 'Africa Rising' narrative proclaims that Africa is economically booming based on steady Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth since the SAPs. Yet it turns a blind eye to the fragile political instability and authoritarian rule (Branch & Mampilly 2015). Western governments, companies and organizations praise the GDP growth, in combination with increased wealth for the African elites, but do not realize that this economic growth is a jobless one (Dietz 2017). This jobless economic growth has condemned the urban and rural majorities to a cycle of waithood. While the slowly growing middle class might have found some jobs, the lower urban classes and rural population still have no faith in their governments. They have little prospect for any change in their state of poverty, dependency and neglect (Mills 2010, Meredith 2015, Branch & Mampilly 2015).

Problem Statement: the status quo of social political situation in Africa endures

It seems that even though almost all African countries are independent and decolonized by now, they are still plagued by colonial legacies. Society and government are not really transformed since the decolonization, and their situation is similar to the situation as it was under colonialism. Their independence movements are not yet finished if compared to other decolonizations. Where for instance the United States combined its independence from its former colonizer Great Britain with the abolishment of colonial structures in their government

and society, most African countries have not yet taken the last step for the necessary transformation. The inherited colonial structures, such as the rigidly divided compartments, the enforced tribal divisions, and the oppressive governments, of which the purpose was to divide and control the people, have not been abolished, but rather adopted by the African elites to remain in place (Chabal 2009, Meredith 2015). The African middle class is still dependent on either the government or non-political NGOs. This dependency on the state and NGOs has resulted in an inert middle class not able to put pressure to the elites for a social political transformation to change to freedom of speech and escape the waithood. Such led us to the main research question for this thesis:

Why are youth in Uganda not able to transform their status quo with non-violent methods?

2. Theoretical Framework

Youth in Africa are unable to escape their waithood. The social-political situation formed in the colonial period seems to have endured. While African leaders led their nations to independence, they did not abolish colonial structures but rather adopted them. Even in Uganda, where the young revolutionary Yoweri Museveni was the first to successfully capture power from a dictatorship in 1986 without external support, the situation is not positive. He promised fundamental change, but eventually became what he fought against himself, repeating the historical process of dictatorship and corruption. This chapter delves into the academic and intellectual debate over how youth cope with their waithood and try to transform their social political situation as agents of change or how they are held hostage in the Conflict Trap and choose for violence.

Marginalized Youth in Waithood

Scholars De Bruijn and Both (2018) studied youth that aimed to make sense of their citizenship in the context of an increasing illegitimate state in their respective countries of Mali and Chad. The study illustrates the search of youth for new political spaces and positioning in society, combined with an increased use of ICT for connectivity and the experience of repressive governments.

In the case of Mali, some young Fulani groups were followed who formed self-defense groups since the state abandoned the security of the people in their area. Due to the lack of the government, Jihadi groups temporarily took over the function from the state in providing security and education, radicalizing Fulani youth in the process. An effective narrative of the Jihadist was on marginalization and exclusion, creating a sense of victimhood. In the theme 'War of Terror' the French and United Nations forces reinforced the national government, therefore providing external legitimacy for a government that was perceived as illegitimate by its own people. Even though these Fulani vandals are creating new forms of citizenships in self-defense groups with radical Islam as its ideology, their prospect for peace and prosperity is not promising (De Bruijn & Both 2018).

In the case of Chad, educated youth became increasingly angry on the regime after the state was declared bankrupt in 2016, shortly after a heavily contested election and continuation of

'eating' by those in power acting in their self-interests. 'Eating' is often used in Africa to describe the practice of corruption, where leaders are 'eating the money'. Channeling their anger through social media, street protests, and act of civil disobedience, they remain unable to bring change for the regime reacted with a narrative about the youth as terrorists and using cracking violence. While the regime has become illegitimate in the eyes of the youth, their active role in the 'War on Terror' has gained international support and legitimacy for the Chadian government. It resulted in financial, political and military aid of countries, such as the United States. The youth remained unable to escape their waithood and became even more marginalized in return (De Bruijn & Both 2018).

De Bruijn and Both ask themselves how this vicious circle can be broken and what the role of young people would be in areas deeply affected by the dynamics of illegitimate states supported by external powers, especially those in the Sahel. While in waithood, their already high frustration and despair seem on the rise (De Bruijn & Both 2018).

However, while this example and several other studies focus on the resilience and creativity of youth coping with their waithood, finding new means of survival and sense of citizenship, they do not provide answers on how these youth could escape their waithood. It remains unclear how they could transform their social-political situation. While there is a good understanding of the mechanism and coping of youth in their status quo, and that ICT and Social Media provide unique opportunities for organization, awakening and mobilization, there is a lack of vision to what exactly is needed to make the change, and to where they want to transform their situation to. There seems to be a lack on research to how youth could become vanguards in their struggle to escape their waithood.

Youth as Vanguards or Vandals when Transforming their Social Political Situation

One of the first major studies in the academic debate about youth in African politics was conducted by Abbink and Van Kessel, published in 2005 under the name *'Vanguard or Vandals'*. The term 'Vanguard' of 'Vandals' portrayed the way youth perceived themselves, but also how they were perceived. The definition of vanguard is a group of people leading the way to new developments or ideas while the definition of vandal is a person who deliberately destroys or damages property belonging to others. These two opposite images portray the youth as either 'agents of change' or 'agents of destruction' (Abbink & van Kessel 2005).

The general focus of the 'Vanguard or Vandal' study was on how youth became vandals in violent conflicts. Due to the miserable economic situations, youth were often easily manipulated to join violent groups such as militia, rebel groups, and street gangs. Other examples were given over how marginalized youth take the initiative in governing themselves, violently resisting the state, resulting to destruction in their communities. Such marginalized groups of youth often explode into outbursts of violence, destroying everything on their path. Since independence, youths often turned into vandals because of the 'Conflict Trap'.

The Conflict Trap

By using violent methods, youth turned into vandals and became trapped in what is named the Conflict Trap: a cycle of violence and political instability. The 'Conflict Trap' is a concept used by Collier (2007) to explain a situation where a country has a long-term risk of repeated conflict after an initial conflict. Collier argues that there is a tendency for repeating patterns of conflict, as 40 percent of studied countries experienced a new civil war within a decade (Collier et al. 2008). When a country is subjected to a burden of war, which means that they have suffered from a civil war in the last 10 year, they have increased risk to experience new violent conflict. Seven factors to determine this probability were formed (Havard et al. 2011. 6-14):

1. Economic Decline measured in GDP, unemployment rate, inflation.
2. Infant Mortality Rate as an alternative measure of the Human Development Index.
3. Growing Youth Bulges based on number of angry unemployed young men.
4. Increasing Ethnic Tension, derived from growing distrust and nepotism.
5. Increasing Inequality, which stands for a growing divide between rich and poor
6. Increasing Oppression, which is defined as the level of basic freedoms
7. Neighbouring Conflict, as the bordering conflicts have a spill-over effect.

According to Sharp (2002), the main scholar on non-violent methods for achieving freedom and democracy, it is not a good idea to use violent methods for transformation. He argues that:

"By placing confidence in violent means, one has chosen the very type of struggle with which the oppressor nearly always has superiority. Even when successful, guerrilla struggles often have significant long-term negative structural consequences. If the guerrillas should finally succeed, the resulting new regime is often more dictatorial than its predecessor due to the centralizing impact of the expanded military forces and the weakening or destruction of the

society's independent groups and institutions during the struggle" (Sharp 2002).

Consequently, youth have to find ways to transform their social-political situation and escape their waithood as vanguards with non-violent methods. Katebalirwe Amooti Wa Irumba, Member and Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission reinforces the role of youth as potential vanguards in Uganda. Besides this potential, he warns about the potential violent outburst when youth are oppressed. It easily turns youth into vandals. He argues that:

"The stage of youth is the most transformative stage in life. It is a stage where personal qualities can be developed to the highest desirable levels, and shaped and oriented towards a given direction; or when they can be seriously underdeveloped, stifled or destroyed. Unlike the rest of society, youth are much less constrained by traditions determined by culture, ideology, politics and economic life. Youth possess the most creativity, passion and energy that can be utilized for positive change, and often results into outburst of violence when their energy is contained" (Amooti Wa Irumba 1985).

Youth as Vanguards in Non-Violent Revolutions

Scholar Honwana published *'Time of the Youth'* in 2012, one of the most comprehensive studies about youth in Africa to date. She did research in Tunisia, Senegal, South Africa, and Mozambique, to how youth cope with their situation with a focus on how to radically change their social and political world. She argued that the current waithood generations in Africa are finding creative ways to transform their nations, with mass protests or revolutions as the result (Honwana 2012).

Next to illustrations on how youth are coping with their desperate economic and political situations, she delved into how youth shaped their identities of citizen and how they contributed to social change. Honwana argues that the youth do not longer feel represented by their elders and political parties, since they associate the former with ongoing corruption and poor governance, unable to bring change and mostly interested in filling their own pockets (Honwana 2012). Yet, they are neither apolitical or apathetic, since they are politically involved in new ways, for instance with hip hop music, or blogging critiques, or through civil society associations. They take on participatory citizenship, which creates their own political spaces instead of using the traditional ones.

She sees a shift from politics through political parties to direct activism; through the street, through music, and through social media. In Uganda, Bobi Wine and other musician in the People Power movement are good examples of such direct activism.

Another example is the "Y'en a Marre" movement in Senegal, which illustrates how youth do not feel represented by any of the politicians. Thiat, a leader of "Y'en a Marre" claimed that:

"We are on the side of neither the President nor the opposition; we are on the side of the people and we are creating which guards and upholds respect for democracy and the institutions of Senegal (Honwana 2012)."

Through mobilizing youth to register for national identity cards, they were able to stop planned amendments of the constitution by their dictator through the secret ballot, combined with mass protests. The pressure and vigilance were so high, that intended rigging became impossible (Honwana 2012).

Honwana gives several detailed cases of youth that in response to their contemporary waithood create their own citizenship and transform their social-political situations through new methods, outside of party politics. This broad focus on youth as Vanguards, combined with stories on the use of non-violent methods, start to shape a picture for a whole generation that is looking at innovative ways to break with the status quo.

The result has been mass protests and even revolution, such as in the case in Tunisia. Yet she analyzed that the status quo did not change after the revolution took place. The youth were able to mobilize and unite in innovative ways, able to force dictators to resign, but had no clear vision what institutionally caused the despotism and corruption, and therefore no framework to replace the deposed regime with. Her study leaves the third protest wave out of the greater context of protest waves that had started in the colonial era, losing focus on abolishing colonial structures, leading to an unfinished 'second liberation'. The question remains how the status quo can be broken, and how the situation of waithood is to be transformed.

Acemoglu and Robinson (2013) argued that in order to break the 'vicious circle' of extractive political and economic institutions, such as dictatorship and corrupt elites, there is need for a turning point. They argued that throughout human history turning points, often in the forms of revolutions, led to inclusive political and economic institutions, which started a 'virtuous circle' of increased political stability and prosperity. One example they use is the Glorious Revolution of 1688 in the United Kingdom, which led to the 'Declaration of Rights', which would protect

the freedoms of the people by law, while limiting the power of the monarchs and elites. Since then, enduring inclusive political and economic institutions led to the virtuous circle of peace and prosperity. In order to change the status quo, there is need of a group of vanguards transforming their institutions from exclusive to inclusive. Amooti Wa Irumba also claims the need for a turning point led by youth. He argued in 1985 that:

"Uganda's educated youths have only one choice to make in order to participate positively and effectively in this development. In order to do this, they must struggle to become ideologically revolutionary and progressive and stand firmly against all forms of exploitation, domination and oppression of man by man" (Amooti Wa Irumba 1985).

Even though some studies and articles have been written about the potential of youth becoming vanguards, or the potential of using non-violent methods, it remains minimal. No literature could be found on how youth in Africa effectively can transform their situation with non-violent methods, and this clearly forms a gap within the current academic debate.

Debate about African Revolution

Besides academic literature on vanguards, the conflict trap, and non-violent methods, the intellectual legacy of revolutionary leaders in Africa influence the behavior of contemporary politicians and activists. This intellectual legacy focus on the need to abolish the colonial legacies and by doing so light up the darkness as natives call their escape from the current status quo situation.

Through his campaign for independence, Kwame Nkrumah united the divided compartments of the colonial society; the detribalized urban poor, the middle class and the rural population. He convinced them to first focus on gaining political power from the British, so they could afterwards transform the social, political, cultural, economic and ideological situation. His famous slogan became: *"Seek ye first the political kingdom, and all else shall be added unto you"* (Branch & Mampilly 2015).

Yet while Nkrumah succeeded in gaining national independence through non-violent methods, he became increasingly oppressive himself once in power. Instead of transforming the social, cultural and economic situation, protests became forbidden and the new elite under the leadership of Nkrumah started to 'eat' themselves (Branch & Mampilly 2015). While he

betrayed his promises and the social contract with the people, he was right about one thing: by gaining political power, all else was indeed added unto him personally.

He was therefore critiqued by another independence figure named Frantz Fanon. He warned that if liberation was only political, the other forms of colonial domination such as society and economy would remain, as they were inevitably reintroducing political domination as well. Fanon argued that the colonial middle/working class was not revolutionary, contrary to European experience, but reactionary and privileged (Branch & Mampilly 2015). He was especially distrustful about the African leaders which he claimed would become African agents of neo-colonialism after a 'negotiated surrender' from their colonial masters (Branch & Mampilly 2015). He feared that under the direction of these African elites, the economic exploitation and political oppression would continue, and white dictators would only be replaced by black dictators.

He argued that all aspects of the colonial institutions had to be abolished, changing the whole social structure. Everything had to change for anything to change. If African nations were to achieve genuine liberation, they had to overcome the rural and urban divides and abolish colonial legacies with all its aspects: political, economic, social and cultural. Fanon furthermore argued that one of the greatest evils of colonialism was that it had turned to the past of the oppressed people and distorted, disfigured, and destroyed their history (Blackey 1974).

Hamilcar Cabral was the organizer and leader of the revolution of Guinea-Bissau in 1973 (Blackey 1974). Like Fanon, he expected revolution to be more than just independence, becoming a liberation from the colonial oppression and its structures. He claimed that: *"The national liberation of a people is regaining the historical personality of that people, its return to history through destruction of the imperialist domination to which it was subjugated"* (Blackey 1974). Cabral claimed that revolutionaries must not fight for ideas alone, but for the betterment of living standards of its people.

Contrary to Fanon, who believed that the center of the revolution had to lie in the urban areas, Cabral realized that in order to succeed with the African revolution one needed massive rural support. Rural peasants first had to be enlightened and united, as they lacked experience of resistance. Because of their large numbers and ownership of economic production, the peasants would be essential in making a successful national democratic revolution possible (Blackey 1974). Transforming the rural areas politically, socially and economically would start a virtuous circle of peace and prosperity.

He argued that in order to have a successful revolution, three things were needed: good leadership, a correct ideology and an efficient organization. One interesting notion is the discussion of Cabral on the party as vehicle for the revolution. It was Lenin who introduced theory and practice of the party as the vanguard group that would show the masses the way. An idea followed by most revolutionary theorists and leaders ever since.

Conceptual Framework

After providing a theoretical framework, several concepts came up which will guide the research. These concepts are 'waithood', 'vanguards' or 'vandals', 'conflict trap', 'non-violent methods' and 'transformation'.

Youth are currently in a status quo of **waithood**, a situation without prospects of jobs and prosperity, stuck in the phase of youth and unable to enter adulthood. From their waithood they have two options: to use non-violent methods and become **vanguards**, or to use violent methods and become **vandals**. When violent methods are used, they remain stuck in the **conflict trap**, which keeps them in a vicious cycle of destruction and leads them back into the status quo. **Violent methods** harm, destroy, damage or kill.

Non-violent methods could be but are not limited to strikes, demonstrations, conferences, sit-ins, music shows, songs and videos, starting a political party and take part of elections, talent workshops, mock elections, freedom essay contests, graffiti and political walking. Using these methods could help the youth to escape the Conflict Trap and transform their social-political situation. In this study **transformation** is defined as the fundamental change from one situation to another, and this study will investigate if youth in Uganda are able or not able to transform their situation with non-violent methods.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework. Violent Methods leads to Conflict Trap and Status Quo. Non-Violent Methods can lead to Transformation.
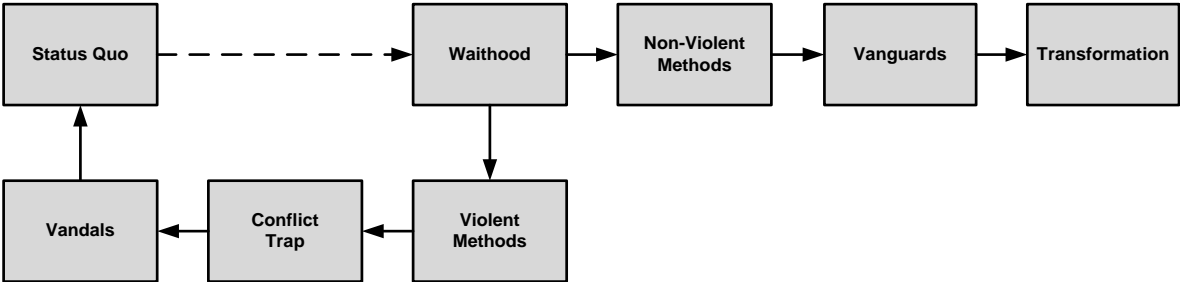
3. Research Methodology

The academic debate does not aim at approaches on how youth can use non-violent methods to transform their current social-political situation, therefore no able to give youth guidance on how to escape their waithood. Due to re-occurring conflicts and a general interest in peace and conflict, many studies have focused on how youth turned into vandals, or how they coped with the aftermath of violent conflict, or how they experienced being vandals. Another perspective is how youth had to cope with their marginalization while in waithood. For such reason, there is need for more focus on how youth can become vanguards aiming at non-violent methods for transformation of their present social-political situation.

Multi-disciplinary research

First capturing political power and transforming society afterwards, as Nkrumah suggested, has not worked. Fanon already warned that all need to change for anything to change. That is why the approach from out of a single discipline such as political science seems not enough for a research strategy. The multi-disciplinary master African Studies trains its students to look through multiple lenses, of which history, politics, economics, society and language are guiding pillars. In order to understand the larger picture, and to analyze different aspects of that picture, these different lenses are essential. When conducting this research, four disciplines were used: history, political science, political economy and anthropology, which is the study of humans and their cultures.

A historical study was conducted in the library of the Africa Study Centre (ASC). Themes that focused this literature study were African decolonization, revolution, colonial history and neo-colonialism. Political science was approached in a similar manner, but more influenced by discussion with political exiles from Ugandan diaspora, political leaders, and activists in Uganda. The study about political economy was combined with the latest (especially Dutch) news articles about economy in Uganda and Africa in general. These disciplines formed the overall body of knowledge before going into the field and were expanded during the research with semi-structured about topics from the several disciplines. The main discipline within this study was anthropology as the interviews with youth using non-violent methods were conducted. These interviews were combined with ethnographic research during the internship

at FDC for twelve weeks meeting political leaders. The semi-structured interviews and participant observations were the primary data of this research.

Research Design and Research Questions

The design for this multi-disciplinary research was completed with the unique access to leaders within opposition parties. These key players were reached through snowball sampling, which is selecting the interviewees through key informers who further introduced the researcher within hidden populations. Due to the sensitive character of the research, ethical and safety considerations were made, such as anonymizing most of the interviewees. Important concepts were waithood, vanguards, vandals, the conflict trap, non-violent methods and transformation. In order to guide and limit the research, the following research questions were formed:

The main research question of this study is:

Why is youth in Uganda not able to transform their status quo with non-violent methods?

In order to answer the main question, it is subdivided into five sub research questions. Transformation is the change towards a desired destination different from the current one, hence first the current situation needs to be described. While a theoretical study is conducted to gain insight in the social, political and economic situation since colonization, this might be different from the practical reality of the youth themselves. Concepts out of political science, such as waithood, dictatorship and revolution are instructive in making sense of the situation. However, one may ask if these ideas are also embraced by youth in Uganda in their daily life? The first sub-question aims at gaining insight in the perceptions of youth and political movements on their situation. The question is:

1. **What are the perceptions of youth and political movements in Uganda on their political, social and economic situation?**

Yet the insight in how youth perceive their situation today is only one step. The next question is where they want to go. If one wants to go somewhere, there is the need for vision, which is the ability to see something that does not yet exist. Sub-question two is about the visions of contemporary youth and political movements in Uganda.

2. **What are the perceptions of youth and political movements in Uganda on how to transform their current situation?**

Throughout African history since independence violent methods were used for transforming political situations, turning youth into vandals. This brought them into a cycle of violence, called the 'Conflict Trap'. Do youth in Uganda see violent methods as a possible option to go forward. Sub-question three aims at using violent methods to escape the current situation.

3. **What are the perceptions of youth and political movements in Uganda on using violent methods to escape their current situation?**

Transformations seem to be most effective and enduring when acquired through non-violent methods. While certain change movements in Africa used violent methods, this study focus on preventing violent situations. This led us to the fourth sub-question:

4. **What are the perceptions of youth and political movements in Uganda on which non-violent methods can be used to achieve this transformation?**

Gaining understanding in the perceptions of youth and political movements in Uganda delivers a contemporary view of the local situation in Uganda. This view needs to be confronted with the body of knowledge described and defined in literature and debate about transformations in Africa. The final sub-question aims at confronting the findings of this study with the current research status and perceived steps for transformation:

5. **How do the perceptions of youth and political movements in Uganda fit in the historical and current debate about transformation?**

Research Method

While interesting questions, locating vanguards in Uganda is a different matter. As they might have ideas on how to change the status quo, it is unsure and probably hostile for the researcher and those to be interviewed when approached within government or established NGO positions. As observed in Uganda, the current president has been in power for more than three decades, establishing a dictatorship built on a military regime. Those that are critical of the current situation and have ideas on how to transform the situation are thus likely part of a hidden population. As this is similar to a conflict situation, there might be mistrust and suspicion. They might be marginalized or working under the radar, and it could alarm the authority's regime when the acting researcher openly declares to approach these groups. Normal probability sampling among the youth could be dangerous and unwise under such circumstances. In order to guard the safety of the researcher and those interviewed, no contact was made with

governmental leaders, institutions, or formal organizations. This does not mean that vanguards are not present among these establishments.

The followed approach to conduct this research is snowball sampling. Snowball Sampling is a non-probability method where research subjects are recruited through personal connections. Key informers are recruited first. They then provide for new referrals. The referrals repeat the process as the number research subjects grows like a rolling snowball. The personal network and access of the researcher is crucial for this approach.

The advantages of snowball sampling are twofold (Bryman 2012). First, it is possible to locate hidden populations, locating vanguards within the youth of Uganda. It connects the researcher to subjects he would otherwise have missed, or unable to interview due to a lack of trust. The very same snowball sampling method generates trust in the researcher, opening doors that would otherwise remain shut. The second advantage is that snowball sampling can uncover social networks within a hidden population.

The disadvantage of snowball sampling is first and foremost that it is not random. It contradicts ideas about random selection and its representativeness. The initial contacts will have a strong impact on the sample, and it is therefore unknown if the sample would be representative at the end. It also leads to a lack of control on how the sample will expand. Opposite to other sampling methods, it remains unclear what the size of the hidden population is (Bryman 2012). In order to minimize the lack of representativeness, diverse persons are used as sample within a specific hidden population.

Ethical Considerations and Safety

With the increased importance of ethical considerations of academic research, it should be highlighted that the project had no external sponsors other than a grant obtained from Leiden University. As the study led to interviews with persons that are critical about state or society, it was made sure that the identities of the interviewed were protected, unless they demanded otherwise. The acting researcher had to make sure that while working in a sensitive environment, he treated confidential information with care not breaking given trust.

Personal note about safety

As stated before, the research was sensitive due to locating and interviewing youth that are critical to their government. One month before leaving to the internship I had talked to another

student with prior experience on a sensitive topic in Uganda. That person was followed and spied upon by government informers. Shortly after, the hotel room was broken into and laptop, notebook and all sources of information stolen, together with passport. The person claimed that many *boda boda* motorcyclists were governmental informers. *Boda boda's* are common motorcycle taxi's used around Uganda. When trying to leave the country, this was prevented, and the person had to hide in embassies while trying to flee the country.

Hence, I was warned to be careful. In order to ensure my own safety, I deleted all critical content from the Internet, and spoke to no one on the street that I was doing my internship with FDC. Through key informers and the use of snowball sampling I could interview persons that I would trust. For communication I have used WhatsApp with encrypted messages. When using mail or surfing the Internet I used a Virtual Private Network (VPN). I kept friends in Uganda updated about my movements and progress, so they could think with me. For my internship, I was embedded within the team of FDC technocrats, and tried to stay away from any event with a risk of media coverage or security personnel that could spot me.

The risk of such embeddedness is 'going native', losing my objective role of researcher. However, being aware of such bias kept me sharp in acting my role as researcher by taking observation notes, discussing findings and experiences regularly with my academic supervisor and fellow master students. Not to only talk to FDC fellows, I had contact with People Power, and other diverse non-political groups. Even though most interviewed persons wanted to use their own names, I chose to anonymize the majority to ensure their safety unless it was demanded.

Data Collection

This chapter elaborates on the data collection process during the internship in Uganda from January to March 2019. Of the total amount of persons interviewed, which delivered a data collection of recorded interviews with 18 persons. I collected around 630 minutes of interview material divided over 211 questions, which led to nearly sixty thousand words after transcription. In order to answer most of the sub-questions semi-structured interviews were taken.

Table 1: Data Collection Table

Interviewees	Safe Environment	Duration (minutes)	Number of Questions	Number of Words
O. - Jobless Brotherhood	Yes	115	13	12897
M. - Jobless Brotherhood	Yes	82	17	10018
M. - ALED	Yes	25	10	1620
A. - ALED	Yes	12	12	1151
J. - ALED	Yes	26	14	2439
K. - ALED	Yes	39	9	2217
P. - ALED	Yes	8	7	524
S. - ALED	Yes	13	6	1220
C. - ALED	Yes	20	5	1964
O. - SEE	Yes	165	33	12888
G. - SEE	Yes	21	12	2371
S. - SEE	Yes	16	14	746
N. - SEE	Yes	19	14	1870
O. - SEE	Yes	11	10	833
F. – Zion Train	No	26	6	3550
A. – Zion Train	No	6	12	498
D. – Zion Train	No	7	11	863
T. – Zion Train	No	17	6	1490
18 interviewees		**628 minutes**	**211**	**59159**

Interviewed Participants

In order to gain a broad sample of urban youth, different organizations were interviewed. These were activists, young professionals, students and ghetto musicians. The first group of interviewees were the activists of the Jobless Brotherhood, who have used non-violent demonstrations to confront injustice and economic misery that they claim are caused by the government. The interviewees of the Jobless Brotherhood were very explicit in having their names published openly. The young professionals of Action for Liberty and Economic Development (ALED) were the second selected case. They represent the educated youth who have completed their study, of which relatively many have a job, but often informal and not well-paid. The third group was selected to represent the educated youth still in education, the Students of Economic Empowerment (SEE). Especially their founder and key informer, provided long and in-depth interviews. The final group was accessible through contacts with key informers from the National Theater open podium. In contrast to the educated (students and alumni) and enlightened youth (activists) these ghetto musicians of Zion Train were selected to provide perceptions of the urban poor; who are seen as criminals by the state. With these four cases, a representation of the urban youth was formed.

Activists - Jobless Brotherhood

The first youth initiative was the Jobless Brotherhood, a humanitarian movement founded in 2014 by Norman Tumushimbise and Robert Mayanja with their yellow pig demonstration at the parliament. This group of activists was the first non-political activist organization focused on youth in Uganda. The Jobless refers to the youth in waithood. The Brotherhood is not linked to the Muslim Brotherhood but symbolizes the bondage of the unemployed youth all over Africa. I had the opportunity to interview one of the co-founders, Robert Mayanja and the National Coordinator, Augustine Ojobile. Both are shown in the picture below, when conducting one of their typical non-violent demonstrations.

The co-founder Mayanja and chairman Ojobile of the Jobless Brotherhood in action. (2017, Ojobile)

It was the Jobless Brotherhood that set an example to other youth to not fear the regime, to oppose injustice and to use personal suffering as weapon against the militarized police. Both are members of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) political party. Around 200 minutes of interview material were collected with these two which led to 22.915 words after transcription. This was in a safe environment and both demanded that I would use their names.

Young Professionals - Action for Liberty and Economic Empowerment (ALED)

The second youth initiative was Action for Liberty and Economic Empowerment (ALED), a non-political community-based organization promoting a free and prosperous society with aspects of entrepreneurship and individual liberty that was founded by a former IDSS student leader John Mugabi in 2016. Its members are generally young professionals; university graduates that found (informal) jobs aim to transform their communities. They are part of a global libertarian society, with many NGOs under the network of 'Action for Liberty' organization. Because of this global network, they are well connected to Western libertarian intellectuals and activists. When in office, they leave their political cloaks outside to prevent political differences that could create disunity while they work on developing themselves and their environment. I collected around 140 minutes of interview material with eight of their members, which led to 11.135 words after transcription. This was in a safe environment and they wanted to use their own names. Their names were later anonymized by the researcher.

Founder John Mugabi (third from right) with members of ALED in their liberty library. (2019)

Students - Students for Economic Empowerment (SEE)

The third group of interviewees was the Students for Economic Empowerment, a student association at Kyambogo University, founded in 2017. They were inspired by seminars and personal contact with ALED, in particular through ALED's founder John Mugabi who was a Guild President of Kyambogo University and often visits his old university. Prevented by university authorities to use the word liberty in their name, they focus on enlightening minds of fellow students on how to gain ideas about entrepreneurship and individual liberty. They also perceive themselves as libertarians and use the same network as ALED. I collected around 230 minutes of interview material with five of their members, which led to 18.708 words after transcription. This was in a safe environment and all wanted to use their own names. Their names (besides their founder) were later anonymized by the researcher.

Founder Arthur Odong of SEE sensitizing the minds of fellow students. (2018)

Ghetto Musicians – Zion Train

The fourth group of interviewees was Zion train, an activist band of musicians living in the ghetto, founded by a musician called Tony in 2015. Located in a ghetto in Kampala, Kisenge II, they live in absolute poverty. Most of the residents survive through criminal activities, prostitution, street vending, or as boda boda drivers. These musicians want to bring a positive voice in this area, where the inhabitants are constantly confronted with news of death, disease and marginalization. I collected only around 60 minutes of interview material with four of their members, which led to 6401 words after transcription. This was not in a safe environment, as my key informer and his friend had to actively ensure my safety from fellow ghetto residents that were often drunk or high on drugs. Conducting the interviews was also difficult, yet it gave a contrasting and crucial perspective of those youth that are most marginalized. Their names were anonymized by the researcher.

Musicians of Zion Train in their improvised studio in Kisenge II. (2019)

Ethnographic Research

The semi-structured interviews with 18 youth in four different youth organizations formed the basis of data for this research. However, these interviews would only be able to give insight in the perceptions of the youth. Thus far it was unknown if these perceptions were also shared with the main (opposition) political movements in Uganda. During the internship with the main opposition party FDC, a Strategic Youth Plan for the years 2019-2024 was developed. In these twelve weeks colleagues and surroundings were observed, taking notes daily. Such participant observation was combined with informal but undocumented meetings with political leaders.

Most information was collected through regular discussions with those in the Strategic Plan work committee for FDC leaders: the deputy chief administrative officer, the national youth chairman, the secretary of the party president, and the treasurer general for the youth. Furthermore, the study was supported with all documents, internal information and field trips to youth events. Such inside information was also crucial in gaining information and access to perceptions and practices within the Ugandan opposition.

Besides daily contact with colleagues within FDC, a special occasion occurred when meeting the rising political star Bobi Wine. We discussed the topic of non-violent transformation, first at his house and later with his team. This visit was planned the final weeks of the internship in Uganda as this contact could certainly lead to interference with the government. The initial talks with Bobi Wine led to brainstorm sessions with the leadership team of the youth movement People Power.

Bobi Wine at press statement after he was allegedly tortured, and his driver killed. (2018)
Source: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-45282125

Patrick Oboi Amuriat is the Party President of FDC. We got the opportunity to meet twice for a prolonged period where he shared his experiences and ideas about transformation, non-violent methods and the current situation of dictatorship. Although he would have liked to bring me on some expeditions outside of Kampala, he recognized the potential danger when the Ugandan government became aware about my internship and research. We still have weekly contact sharing ideas about transformation, the current social-political situation and non-violent methods.

Patrick Oboi Amuriat amidst supporters in his FDC Presidential election. (2018)
Source: https://theinsider.ug/index.php/2017/09/06/fdc-party-election-postponed/

As acting researcher, I had the opportunity to meet Kizza Besigye, who is the founder of FDC and has been the main protagonist of Ugandan opposition since 2001. Although I did not gain the same access and connection to him as with Patrick Oboi Amuriat and Bobi Wine, our meeting was insightful on his ideas about the current situation, transformation and non-violent methods. It was Kizza Besigye who was the first and most consistent advocate of non-violent methods in Uganda to transform their country and gain freedom from dictatorship.

Kizza Besigye arrested while aiming to lead a demonstration. (2012)
Source: https://citizentv.co.ke/news/kizza-besigye-arrested-moments-after-state-withdraws-bobi-wine-charges-210393/

The free discussions with these political leaders, members of FDC, and People Power were a great addition to the data collection of interviews with youth in Uganda. Although less structured, the notes made after these discussions led to an increased depth and understanding of the given research questions. Both Bobi Wine and Kizza Besigye had their loyal disciples and enemies. Much less known as the mentioned leaders, Patrick Oboi Amuriat stood out as a political leader without many enemies. Earlier experiences with IDSS has taught to be careful trusting political leaders, yet the impression was that all three were genuine and upright.

4. Findings & Analysis

The collected data from the library of the ASC and semi-structured interviews are qualitatively approached for answering the sub research questions. The transcribed interviews are often referred to in order to make the argument more plausible.

4.1 Political, Social and Economic situation in Uganda

Transformation is the change towards a desired destination different from the current one. In order to achieve change, the current situation needs to be well understood. As was suggested by scholars such as Fanon, just political transformation was likely not going to bring the desired fundamental change. Therefore, the scope of the situation is expanded to the political, social and economic situation in Uganda. This section answers the first sub-question:

What are the perceptions of youth and political movements in Uganda on their political, social and economic situation?

Political Situation – Inside Out View

One of the most intriguing answers of youth and political movements was that they live under a dictatorship, where the governance is controlled by the gun instead of consent. However, the interviewed youth explained that it is a sophisticated dictatorship. A dictatorship that operates on propaganda and manipulation with force as its final resort. This makes the oppression invisible for outsiders or those that are not familiar with the local situation. The illusion to the outside world is that there is freedom of speech. However, there is no freedom after speech. The regime closely monitors what is being said on television, radio, and increasingly also on the internet. After the Walk to Work uprising in 2011 the inspector of police Kayihura increased the professionalization and militarization of its forces, but also extended his sophisticated intelligence system. Hundreds of thousands of boda boda motorcycles were distributed in Kampala which the unemployed lower classes use to gain income, in exchange for information about all sort of people movements (Ojobile 2019).

As Augustine Ojobile narrated:

"I am telling you these things because you cannot see when you are in the Netherlands. These are the things no one can see when they are in UK, USA, you cannot see them. It is affecting so many people indirectly, yet so many people don't know what is happening to the country.

Even today, as you are seated here, interviewing me, if they realized that you are taking interviews from us, and maybe you will empower us to act, you will not fly out of this country with your gadgets. So, this is how impunity is taking place here in this country" (Ojobile 2019).

There is a strong sense of fear within many youths, as the strong intelligence, use of secret agents and moles has led to a situation where it is difficult to know who can be trusted. Teargas and armored vehicles (kiboko's) are used against people who protest on the street, making peaceful demonstrations extremely difficult. Strikes are brutally crushed. The youth in the ghetto had a relationship with the government of complete neglect. A. elaborates:

"No, our government, they don't care about those poor people. Like those people who are in suffering. Our government, they just ignore, they just ignore. That is our government" (A. 2019).

Besides a sophisticated dictatorship the reoccurrence of ethnicity into politics is another political factor, as the president's tribe, the Bayankole, have taken over most leadership positions. The National Coordinator of the Jobless Brotherhood claims:

"That is the politics where are in, as a country, we are in the politics of sabotage, intrigue today. When you open a business, to buy airtime, you will find someone from Ankole subregion, they are the owners. There is this big problem of tribe and region that has incorporated into the politics of Uganda" (Ojobile 2019).

Yet, politics is dominant in Ugandan life. Becoming a politician, especially Member of Parliament (MP's) is seen as the viable way to gain for instance financial success. Often these politicians promise to help the youth with jobs and social justice, but do not keep their promises. A striking metaphor is used by Augustine:

"Young people are used as ladders to climb, when anyone else comes on top after using the ladder, they push away the ladder and they say please don't disturb us here" (Ojobile 2019).

Social Situation

In contrast to the strongly organized and dominant government stands the fragmented and dependent society. Youth argued that Ugandans have been turned into beggars, dependent on help from the government, in particular the president. Their interaction with the government can be summarized in a saying: 'Museveni Preambe', which means please help us. Many of the youth have surrendered to the regime, resigned to their fate of poverty. This poverty has made youth distracted, lazy and just caring about getting money on short term. The best sold papers are those filled with sex scandals and gossip. As the government pays attendances to come to their meetings, youth have slowly and cunningly become corrupted, demanding money in order to come for a training or seminar. Many Western NGOs eager to help reinforce their self-grown dependency, and they have become quite adept in luring the often-ignorant volunteers for sending them financial aid. Most of the Ugandan youth are stuck in their waithood. Odong elaborates:

"Literally people in Uganda are vulnerable, you know they have been put into this box of poverty, somebody is poor and remains stuck in his or her poverty, they think they cannot do anything about it, they are vulnerable" (Odong 2019).

The local civil society organizations and political parties that aim to help empower the society are often also struggling to be effective due to a lack of resources. When asked what the main problem was in empowering society in Uganda, Mayanja from the Jobless Brotherhood answered:

"Resources, resources and resources. Without them, we are like grasshoppers in a bottle, trying to jump out. When you look at the political parties, they don't have funds to do, to implement their programs. When you look at pressure groups and movements like ours, our story is even uglier" (Mayanja 2019).

Another aspect that came up was the fragmentation of society, especially on tribalism and political parties. As J. from ALED claimed:

"The tribal differences, the tribal divisions are sharp, we try too much to minimize the reasoning of tribal divisions, but the divisions are there" (J. 2019).

Economic Situation

According to the interviewed youth in Uganda, the economic situation is controlled by the government. Monopolies are created by the state. For example, the brother of the president Salim Saleh recently got the only license to export maize. Odong experienced it himself:

"Saleh Salim, he is a brother to the president, so he got all the maize and what they did, they blocked exportation of maize out of the country. That nobody else could do it, they pretended that you needed a license. So suddenly only one individual had the license to export maize out of the country. And so, it happened that some of us had been active in some agricultural production of maize. So, maize that was 1400 shillings, came down to 200 shillings, and I tell you, no exporting, the market is closed. So, we in cultivation never know when the market is steady, because they create a monopoly. Otherwise it is just transportation costs" (Odong 2019).

Even though the government claims to use funds of donor countries for development projects to create employment, the funds for these projects often never reach the people, as they are given to groups that are part of the ruling party NRM instead of beneficiaries. K. explains:

"In Uganda, the government has given a lot of projects to transform the youth, to have 'Youth Livelihood Projects', it is a program giving youth money, but they have wasted the money. We had the operation 'Wealth Creation', we have 'Uganda Women Empowerment Program', and many have eaten the money from their colleagues because it is given to groups" (K. 2019).

The very dominant factor within the economic situation is waithood, the lack of jobs. Youth represents 75% of the population (between 15 and 35), of which 83% are unemployed. There is always a lack of resources. Even though they are long in school, they enter the job market without real skills. While education used to mean jobs, claimed to be 95% in history, this is not the case anymore. Jobs are only available through one's connections, even sleeping with someone for a job is common, sometimes with HIV/AIDS as a result. The only good jobs are with government or even better, foreign NGOs. Retirement age is very late, so most jobs remain in the hands of the elderly (Ojobile, Mayanja, Odong, Mugabi 2019), shutting the market for young people. D. illustrates the even worse situation in the ghetto:

"We go to the streets to catch people's phones, those that steal at night, and that is what keeps their families to survive, they have no option, we got girls who go the streets for prostitution for a living" (D. 2019).

Contemporary Situation

The similarities between the perceptions of the youth from diverse organizations and those within political movements such as FDC and People Power on the social, political and economic situation are striking. Basically, all interviewees talked about the government being a tyranny, a dictatorship or a military regime. While the activists of the Jobless Brotherhood were particularly good informed and well-articulated about the situation, their ideas were shared and sometimes even literally repeated by the young professionals of ALED and students of SEE. Often the political, social and economic situation was not easily divided from each other as is the case in the Netherlands. For many, the market was the government, and the government the market. This means that in order to get a job, trade or start a company, normally limited to the economic market, this was all controlled by the government. The dictatorial regime controlled the society, the market, and the government. The government was the place to get wealth, and the government was reason for poverty.

While the Jobless Brotherhood mentioned the leadership of Kizza Besigye and FDC, the young professionals quoted both FDC, NRM, Democratic Party (DP) and People Power for their political choice. Both students and especially the ghetto youth talked in-depth about the hope Bobi Wine is creating for them, claiming that they found a leader of their own, who would make sure their interests would be met. Considering the discussions with Bobi Wine and his team, it indeed seems the case that the majority of youth, especially students and ghetto youth, have become loyal followers of Bobi Wine. The more experienced and political involved activists and leaders still look to Besigye for leadership.

When the political narratives and programs of People Power and FDC are considered, they are strikingly similar on their view about the current situation: that of dictatorship and waithood. In particular the perceptions about the sophisticated dictatorship are interesting, as several stories highlighted how the Ugandan government aim to look democratic, economical sound and politically stable to the outside world. Collected arguments from the sample groups all seem to build a consistent view on the current situation: The Ugandan government has become increasingly adept in camouflaging its oppression to the people, in creating hidden instability in opposition parties and pretending economic failure in order to maintain its donor support.

4.2 Transformation of Uganda

The first sub-question gives the suggestion that youth in Uganda are captured under a sophisticated dictatorship while in waithood. The second sub-question aims at exploring the perception of youth and political movements on how to transform this situation:

What are the perceptions of youth and political movements in Uganda on how to transform their situation?

Transformation is the fundamental change from one state to another. In order to go somewhere, there is need for vision, the ability to see something that does not yet exist. So, what are the visions of contemporary youth and political movements in Uganda on where they want to go? In this section the perceptions of the interviewed youth and movements over transformation are given.

Freedom and wealth are the two most used words on to where the youth and political movements wanted to transform to. The political movements FDC, People Power, and Jobless Brotherhood were more focused on gaining freedom. The youth movements ALED, SEE, and Zion Train, were more focused on creating wealth. In order words, escaping their waithood.

Gain Freedom

Based on the interviews, freedom could be sub-divided into three different domains. Freedom in government, freedom in society and economic freedom. Freedom in government was explained as the change from being ruled by (unjust) law to rule of law, based on true freedom and democratic ideals. Freedom in society was seen to be the first step, as it would both bring political freedom and economic freedom. Ojobile elaborates:

"Looking at the politics in Ghana, gives you the freedom to associate. It gives you the true freedom, not just freedoms, the true freedom to engage whoever you wish. It gives you the true freedom to even demonstrate, when you feel aggrieved by a particular situation" (Ojobile 2019).

The interviewed youth from ALED and SEE were both enthusiastically about freeing up the market. Odong explains:

"Let it be my product, that can be appreciated, because in Africa there is too much of monopolies" (Odong 2019).

Create Wealth

The focus on economic freedom led to a shared belief that it can create wealth. The differences between the educated young professionals and the ghetto musicians are striking. While the young professional J. claims:

"We go outside, go farming, educate people how entrepreneurship is good. How the nation can benefit from entrepreneurship" (J. 2019).

The ghetto musician F. just hopes:

"We try to be transformed not to be criminal" (F. 2019).

While the more educated youth aim to transform to a situation of free market and entrepreneurship, the youth living in the ghetto dreams are about gaining income without having to break the law. Becoming entrepreneurs and using personal talents is a reoccurring idea for transformation. C. delves into this topic:

"We look for a way to turn their skill or talent, into a profit. They can get skilled, outright, you can teach him, in writing and at least, we gain" (C. 2019).

Escaping their waithood is something all youth and political movements agree on, Odong claims:

"The future is same for all of us, we need destiny, we need economic progress" (Odong 2019).

In order to gain freedom and wealth, the youth see three main stages before this transformation can be possible, 1. Changing the mindsets, 2. Uniting society, and 3. Overcoming fear.

Changing Mindset

The most effective and dominant way of transforming the contemporary situation, according to the youth, is changing the mindsets. Especially ALED and SEE were clear about this issue. Several of them explained how changing the mindset would transform their nation. An overarching idea is that if educated youth become enlightened first in vanguard institutions, they would enlighten their communities in return, as they would be exemplary to the community. G. argues how the minds of these educated youth should be ignited, changing the quality first that will come from within the communities.

"That is why I say that our minds are not something to be veiled, but like fire to be ignited, now what can ignite your mind, your mind is going to be ignited by insights from great minds, people

you believe in can inspire you, they can change your life, reading books can really change your mind. I believe we shall really achieve the goal of changing society; it is not all about changing society, it is about quality, that is better than quantity, but we shall change the quality. And then within, we can still be outstanding for all members of the society" (G. 2019).

S. and J. add to the argument that by being exemplary in the community, others will become inspired to follow the lead of these enlightened youth:

"Besides mobilization, in ALED we believe in being exemplary to the community. So, we advocate for a generation that is ready to serve the environment around them. We also teach and empower women; we focus on the people that need our support" (S. 2019).

"If someone goes out of ALED, very mindful, mindful of responsibilities, mindful of my rights. Then, one can transform the political environment of Uganda" (J. 2019).

M. argued that this would replace the mode of waithood and victimhood to a mode of engagement, self-determination and activism.

"How we can change Africa, how to change the mindset. The mindset to leave things that the government will help us do these things and wait for external support, but let youth know they have the power to control the government" (M. 2019).

Unite Society

Besides changing the mindsets, the youth were extremely passionate about uniting their society. This was a shared vision for all interviewed youth, from students to ghetto musicians. An interesting philosophy on unity is promoted by ALED, who forbid their members to have political or religious discussions when they come together, to focus on topics of liberty and economic development. By doing this, they leave their political cloaks outside, K. explains:

"What I see ALED doing is a good gesture to the community. They could unite people from different political beliefs. We have a diversity of all political parties in ALED, what we have done here is that we leave the political dreams outside, the focus on dreams of development and liberty in thoughts. And uh, I believe we have moved" (K. 2019).

G. from SEE also realized the importance of Ugandans uniting to return power to the people:

"What I believe is, standing together, all Ugandans should be united, then we should say, power, originates from us the people, because there is strength in numbers, and I think we can overcome that fear because even if they try to oppress us, other countries will see and say no,

although we still have the fear of the government. Then we can establish rule of law and democracy" (G. 2019).

Remove Fear

Another aspect of taking the responsibility in gaining freedom and creating wealth was by overcoming fear. Ojobile explains:

"Overcoming fear is basically what we are doing, we have adopted two formulas: One is to continuously engage with the people they fear on the streets. The second approach is civil education" (Ojobile 2019).

Awake and Unite to gain Wealth and Freedom

Youth in Uganda are actively working on transforming their society. They also seem to share an idea on where to go. While the political movements work hard to transform their situation to gain freedom, young professionals, students and ghetto musicians are hoping to gain individual freedom that will eventually lead to political freedom. All interviewed youth share the dream of creating prosperity, either not to be criminal, or to benefit their community. Such transformation holds three phases before it can be achieved.

The perception on the most important and first step is changing the mindsets of the youth. Instead of letting the minds to be veiled, they should be ignited and exposed to superior minds and insightful books. By a continuing sensitization of enlightened and experienced youth, the minds of their fellow youth could be opened. There seems to be several methods to achieve this, of which the urban and rural are most contrasting. Where the urban youth are best reached through music and social media, the rural youth are better reached by youth ambassadors, face-to-face interaction. According to the interviewed vanguards, other youth have to be awakened.

A second and equally important step was to overcome divisions. Especially tribal divisions, as it is part of one's identity by birth instead of choice, is quoted as a powerful emotional aspect. While tribes should not be abolished, they should be made powerless and politically neutral. A second aspect of division was by political choice or color. ALED made the agreements with its members that when they came together, they leave their political cloak outside in order to focus on dialogue, individual liberty, entrepreneurship, and economic development. They found ways to overcome divisions and experienced how this unity led to their success. For transformation to be achieved, unity needs to be established.

They seem to agree that before transformation is possible, first society needs to be awakened and united, enlightening the educated youth to become exemplary servants of their community, after which they can start to build individual liberties, entrepreneurship skills and economic development.
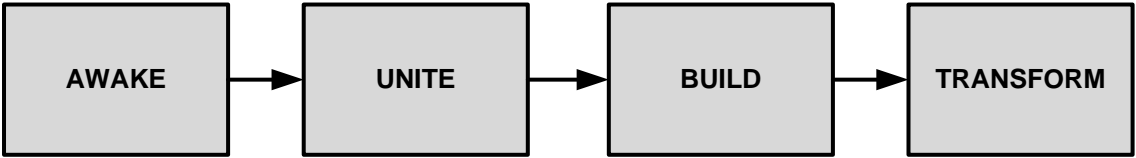

Figure 2: Ugandan youth think they can transform Uganda when using non-violent methods in four phases: Awake, Unite, Build and Transform

4.3 Use of Violence

Since colonial independency, violent methods were often used in many African countries for transforming the political situation, turning youth into vandals. This brought them into a cycle of violence, called the 'Conflict Trap'. This chapter aims to answer the third sub-question:

What are the perceptions of youth and political movements in Uganda on using violent methods?

Government using violence

Even though all interviewed youth, political leaders and activists preferred to use non-violent methods, some explained the possibility of their fellow youth turning to violence in case the dictatorship endured. One used the following quote of John F. Kennedy:

"Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable" *(Anonymous 2019).*

This is also what O. expected:

"It depends on how change is coming, if people sit down, negotiate, but if like now people are disappointed with the government it will not be peaceful. It will be violent. So, I don't think it will be peaceful unless the person in power will step down" (O. 2019).

A. also feared for the same turn to violence if the dictatorship continued to react with extreme violence on any peaceful demonstration:

"Youth do not want violence. We as youth we choose peaceful, but the ruling party use violence. So even when we use peaceful, we end up going to violence when the force is applied" (A. 2019)

Mayanja claimed the situation for violent and non-violent transformation was equal:

"It is tricky, I think it is 50/50, there are many who still believe in guns, because they have an imagination that guns will give them quick fixes, like this story of Museveni who went to the bush in 1980, and coming out in 1986, and it has been over propagated" (Mayanja 2019).

Also, Augustine explains the dangers of violent methods:

"What happens with violence is that a few people will take the pride, it is me who did this, it is the same problem we go through today, Uganda has never had peaceful change. Now what happens with all these violent means, the leader of that violent group, is looked at as a king or god, by those who were following him" (Ojobile 2019).

Peace is more effective

However, Augustine clearly stated the activists of the Jobless Brotherhood do not believe in violent methods, he claims that non-violent methods are:

"Better than the violent means. Though some keep on reminding us that the people are tired, it is wasting our time. Yes, civil means take longer, because you break the dictator, you cut the roots, you win from inside, and after winning from the inside, he shall succumb. When he succumbs to pressure, we shall have lasting enjoyment" (Ojobile 2019).

Mayanja reinforces this claim:

"And consistently we must tell them that guns will only change colours but will repress the same problems you are facing" (Mayanja 2019).

Those in ALED were also quite articulate about their stance on violent methods. S. elaborates:

"What I know is, when you create peace that is the only way you are going to create, that's the only way you are going to succeed in life. As ALED it unites youth, it trains us to be peaceful, especially when it comes to the community and the political world" (S. 2019).

Peaceful change is cheap

The ghetto activists held the same views quite clearly. A. is clear on what sort of transformation he wants:

"Peaceful, no violence, we don't want to suffer anymore. Everyone needs peaceful change" (A. 2019).

M. could clearly explain why youth in Uganda wanted to use peaceful methods:

"Peaceful change is cheap, not cheap in value but cheap in lives" (M. 2019).

Time is running out

Even though these interviewed persons were clear about the need and effectiveness of peaceful change, FDC activist Fred explained that time was running out:

"Uganda is a ticking time bomb. Because of the fast population growth and lack of any prosperity or future prospects of the youth, they can explode into violence after another election is rigged. Even though people do not show it on the street, they have been suffering a lot for many years, building anger in themselves. When they get the opportunity, this anger will lead to destruction. After 2021 elections we will either have freedom or civil war" (Fred 2019).

Fortunately, Kizza Besigye, one of the main consistencies in the opposition of Uganda, preaches non-violent change. This focus on non-violence is equally voiced by leaders Bobi Wine and Patrick Oboi Amuriat. Amuriat told the acting researcher in person how Besigye convinced him of non-violent methods although he had experienced and believed in violent methods before. All interviewed youth preferred non-violent methods and the majority believe violent methods would bring no fundamental change. As Marvin suggested, peaceful change is cheap, not in value but in lives. Nonetheless, there is real fear that their struggle for transformation could degenerate in a violent conflict and their fellow youth into vandals.

The warnings are clear that if the current sophisticated dictatorship continues to stay in power due to external legitimacy with its (often Western) donors, the next elections will result into an outbreak of violence and destruction, turning the youth in Uganda into vandals. Some call it only a matter of time, based on the anger that is hidden within the population but building up. However, the interviewed vanguard and political movements have all consistently advocated the use of non-violent methods.

4.4 Use of Non-Violent Methods

Youth and political movements in Uganda consistently choose for non-violent methods for achieving transformation. This section answers the fourth sub-question:

What are the perceptions of youth and political movements in Uganda on which non-violent methods can be used to achieve this transformation?

The interviews with political movements and youth organizations provided several non-violent methods. These methods could be divided into three modes in relation to the state: Confrontation, Critical, and Isolated.

1. The Jobless Brotherhood and political parties FDC and People Power propose non-violent methods to defiantly confront the state, often facing repressive measures. They use peaceful demonstrations, which are used to overcome fear and to apply political power as dissatisfaction is showed.

2. The libertarian initiatives of ALED and SEE use their non-violent methods critically against the state. They interact both with and within the state, not confronting but critiquing it, focusing on transforming society first. They are sensitizing the mind, to awaken the fellow youth about their and their nation's potential.

3. Zion Train used its non-violent methods isolated from the state, as the focus of their methods ignored and were ignored by the state. They focus on transforming their direct community of fellow inhabitants and thus limited their scope to local issues. They are using talents development, empowering fellow youth to develop their talents and gain skills. These talents and skills are the key ingredient in gaining freedom and escaping the dependency of waithood

1. Sensitizing the Mind

The most effective methods of sensitizing the minds of fellow youth are social media, music, ambassadors, community activities, and conferences. Odong explains why social media can be effective, as they are already exhibit the action but were suppressed.

"I think literally social media should be active, that is one thing, social media you might suppress it, though they try to disconnect, but social media is one of the best methods, it is more of the mindset than actions we exhibit, because when we exhibit the actions, they were suppressed" (Odong 2019).

N. explains how WhatsApp groups can be joined where ideas are shared to a group of followers:

"WhatsApp, so maybe if you have someone, who can feed information, maybe we can have sources of information and for the information we can access the information very fast. In most cases we WhatsApp together, but when you are on Facebook, it is broad, even if I don't have your contact, I might connect on Facebook with you. It means we are having a lot of content, on Facebook. But you can only access the important information, the inspirational information from WhatsApp, when you have someone, who has the information" (N. 2019).

However, when Mayanja was asked what the greatest challenge for transformation was, he answered that:

"Facebook and WhatsApp are very popular and powerful tools of communication. But the problem in Uganda what I want to understand, in Uganda people stop at commenting and liking and sharing, they never come out. I need to understand that. How do they digest the information they receive on their gadgets? When you call for a demo, even in writing a protest kind of petition, few would turn up" (Mayanja 2019).

Nonetheless, Mayanja saw Social Media as one of the best developments in recent years:

"As with a small gadget like this one, through Facebook, leave alone spreading, I can also get inspiration from what is happening around me. You see, if you have been here for some time you observed that the media here does not report about Sudan. But Facebook does, you understand. Internet does. So, to me, it is internet and social media, and the regime, which is consistently damaging itself, and then the population of the young people who are now a little bit sensitized" (Mayanja 2019).

Yet, Social Media is not the best tool to reach some parts of the population. P. answers on the question what non-violent methods are most effective:

"Some can be best reached through entertainment, some through schools you reach out, some through WhatsApp because some are used to the phones. So, based on the target you can devise the method" (P. 2019).

Odong also reinforced the idea that a different approach is needed for youth in the rural areas. In contrast of social media, he suggested the use of ambassadors:

"The best way is through ambassadors, through physical contact. You have to find those who are committed. You recruit the ambassadors from these platforms" (Odong 2019).

G. from SEE argued that books and conferences were effective non-violent methods.

"Friends around me have spearheaded their minds, with books, students for economic empowerment, we have different partners, we have ALED, so, we are in different conferences, through these conferences we get people to inspire us, different leaders. We find people who have different perceptions, we find people who view with different lenses, so we get information from different areas from the world. They give us a different understanding of life. A different understanding of change. A different understanding of this world and this society. So, through these gatherings I let my mind change" (G. 2019).

On the other hand, Mayanja reflects on how books had limited to no effect on his fellow youth in the urban poorer areas.

"It didn't work, he had very many copies at home, we could give them out to people. But it didn't work" (Mayanja 2019).

Another interesting method quoted by all youth organizations, repeated by members and leaders of FDC and People Power, was music. It could inspire youth everywhere, even in the poorest areas, up to those in university. M. elaborates:

"Music has a very big potential as it has no boundaries, that is its strength. So, music is very powerful. Now we have a music revolution in Uganda. Music can reach to any place, any age and any gender" (M. 2019).

F. shares the vision he got from an NGO he worked with:

"They believe that music can change someone. Music is the soul of any human being" (F. 2019).

2. Peaceful Demonstrations

Peaceful Demonstrations are a method that directly and defiantly confronts the state to address injustices. The interviewed youth divided these demonstrations into the categories of a. creative activism, b. political walking, and c. Strikes and sit downs.

a. Creative Activism

Creative activism is a form of activism which relies heavily on the use of symbols to convey a political message. In Uganda it has been the Jobless Brotherhood who first used and further developed this kind of activism. Augustine explains:

"Creative activism is where you use symbols, even when you don't speak, those symbols can explain whatever you are meaning. So that is when we ended up getting the yellow piglets. Tag them up with a message. Because you don't have enough time to talk, police never allow you to have enough time to speak to media. It impacted greatly, because it was the first time there was a message even without someone speaking, but it gave a very loud noise, I can say it was silent, but it gave a loud noise to the listeners" (Ojobile 2019).

Mayanja delves deeper into the use of creative activism:

"We have devised a serious tool of non-violent engagement and it has paid off. It has paid off, of all our demonstrations, we have never hurted anybody. Not even the pigs. By the way some of the cases they accuse us of violating animals rights, but we have never killed any pig, we have never hurted any animal, the paint we used, is water paint, when you pour water on it the animal will be healthy again" (Mayanja 2019).

b. Political Walking

Since using non-violent demonstrations, Mayanja found an effective way to help transforming Uganda:

"We have successfully identified a weapon, and very many people have used it, there were pigs brought in in various parts of the country in protest. The coffin is another signature instrument introduced by the jobless brotherhood and it has been used. That is the invincible strength of non-violence. You win without a fight" (Mayanja 2019).

c. Sit downs, Strikes

The students from Kyambogo University also realized the potential of peaceful demonstrations, by confronting the state directly. G. explains:

"Sit down strikes, you sit down, and you say, this one has been done by the Doctor (Besigye), you say I'm not going to work. For a lecturer, if you put down the tools, because they are not being paid. I think such efforts can work, and you can look for more other methods, peaceful methods, yes, I think they can work" (G. 2019).

Peaceful demonstration is not just throwing stones

However, Odong argues that currently peaceful demonstrations are not always peaceful in Uganda, and there should be established a common understanding of what can be done and what can't:

"Peaceful demonstrations, though I think when you talk about peaceful demonstrations in our country, people perceive it differently. I think some education should be done about peaceful demonstrations. That people know, when I want to demonstrate peacefully, I should not make noise and interfere with other people's freedom, because to me it is not just about making noise and throwing stones" (Odong 2019).

3. Talent Development

An important aspect was transforming the marginalized and dependent youth into vibrant and skilled citizens. Especially the organizations of ALED, SEE and Zion Train were enthusiastic about developing the talents of the youth. The focus was on gaining entrepreneurship skills, developing talents such as making music and providing positions within organizations to learn responsibilities and gain experience.

Odong elaborated on the potential of developing the inherent talents of the youth:

"I help them to work on their talents. There are talents in the ghetto, that is why I am working so much with the students of the entertainment association. So that people study, not train to get a document, but train to empower their talent, especially those from the ghetto" (Odong 2019).

K. highlighted the importance of skilling or developing talents:

"If they realize that any skill or talent should be developed, to a company, they might read small books at home. They can try to sell some small things in canteens. If that youth can indulge in other community efforts, even like cleaning, you see, if you do voluntourism, probably you can access a better network, with people who can also connect you to better opportunities" (K. 2019).

M. gave examples:

"We do sell outs, like community activities, cleaning drainages, hospitals, markets. I organize events, we call up youth who have talent to come, to sing, to dance, these talents are groomed

and then we give them awards to motivate them to develop their talents. We organize football, and other things that they can start believing" (M. 2019).

The ideas to transform their situation of dictatorship and waithood with non-violent methods are present. However, most interviewed organizations and political movements share the lack of resources to implement their programmes of non-violent change. The only exception, People Power, which uses a unique business model of collecting funds through national and international music concerts and sales of shirts and berets, might become dominant due to the possibility to allocate resources.

4.5 Contribution to Historical and Current Debate

The interviewed youth and their political leaders are clear: they need a non-violent transformation to escape their waithood and liberate themselves from their sophisticated dictatorship that keeps their voices unheard for the outside world. They have a clear vision on where they want to go and they are clear that they need peaceful change, tired of a violent history that could repeat itself. This final sub chapter answers the fifth sub-question:

How do the perceptions of youth and political movements in Uganda fit in the historical and current debate about transformation?

Not only political change but transformation in society and economics as well

There are vanguard group's active in Uganda working on the transformation within the fields of society, politics and economics. From ghetto musicians, students, young professionals and activists to opposition movements, the vanguards wake up every day to lead their nation to a new destination. The vanguards can have three relations to the state: confrontational, critical or isolated, but they all share the same destiny of peace, prosperity and economic development. Some focus on political power, while others believe that first society needs to be transformed. It could be helpful to remember the case of Kwame Nkrumah who said: *"Seek ye first the political kingdom, and all else shall be added unto you"* (Branch & Mampilly 2015).

Indeed, political power has brought riches, glory and fame to those who captured it in African countries. However, the idea that after political transformation, other areas such as the society and economics would change, was incorrect. Eventually, even the most promising revolutionaries who swore to bring fundamental change, became dictators themselves when they got addicted to power and absorbed within the system. The warnings of Fanon were correct when he warned that if liberation was only political, the other forms of colonial domination such as society and economy would remain the same, inevitably reintroducing political domination again. His fear, that under the direction of these African elites, the economic exploitation and political oppression would continue, but now under black dictators instead of the former white ones, was correct.

This means that transformation is not achieved by vanguards first capturing political power, which was the traditional way of thinking. Political movements such as FDC and People Power should therefore be careful to just focus on changing the government, as they are likely to fall

in the continuing vicious cycle that has repeated itself ever since the decolonization of Africa. It seems that the most effective way of transformation is to first focus on transforming society. This can be achieved by joining forces, 'leaving the political cloaks outside' as ALED calls it, so they can work on individual liberty and economic development together.

The philosophy of the donor community, of which the Netherlands is part, focus around the middle class for economic development. This narrative, advocated by the Dutch government and institutions, is known as 'Africa Rising', with their own perceptions on Uganda.

Uganda acts as a stable partner to donor countries

The Ugandan government is one of the donor darlings of the Netherlands. The Netherlands still gives large amounts of development aid, in 2016 it was about 20 million euros to the embassy in Kampala, about 40 million euros from foreign affairs, and another 20 to 40 million euros to international organizations (Doornebal 2016). Dutch Development Results (2019) claim the development aid is currently 17.8 million euros. Although the Netherlands reduced their development aid in the period 2005 to 2007 with €6 million euros due to criticism on the arrests and intimidation of Kizza Besigye, it has become less critical over the years (Doornebal 2016). The only large political statement and donor support cut came after the anti-gay law was signed. Doornebal, a Dutch journalist specialized on Uganda quotes an anonymous source, who claims that even that came forth from external pressure from Dutch citizens:

"The Netherlands did not want to decrease their donor support, but because of the strong protest in the Netherlands, they were forced to make a statement" (Doornebal 2019).

This 'cordial' relationship between the democratic Netherlands and dictatorial Uganda may be economically explained, because in general Dutch companies seem to thrive in Uganda. The Ugandan ambassador to the Benelux, HE Mrs. Mirjam Sow-Blaak, who helped Museveni and his family at the time of guerrilla war in 1981-1986, was born in the Netherlands (Ntale & Doornebal 2014). Doornebal interviewed several Dutch entrepreneurs after the 2016 elections in Uganda:

"To be honest, I think things are quite all right under Museveni. I know that he does not allow a lot of freedom for the opposition, but there are many things here that work. I would not prefer to be in any other country in the region with my company" (Doornebal 2016).

The Director of Matoke Tours, one of the largest tourist organizations in Uganda, also gives Museveni the benefit of doubt:

"As far as I can see, there is currently no candidate that would run this country much better than Museveni" (Doornebal 2016).

In the academic debate examples were given of how the Malian and Chad governments continued to oppress their citizens due to external legitimacy, in their case for reason of the 'War on Terror'. While the two most important development partners of Uganda, the United States and United Kingdom, use Museveni as their regional policemen for their national security interests, the national interest of the Netherlands seems to be based on profit.

Around $500 million Foreign Direct Investments took place between 2012 and 2017 (Kingdom of the Netherlands 2014). The former Dutch ambassador Hennekens responded to a question about the oppression of the opposition during the 2016 elections:

"So far the campaigns seem to be orderly and the opposition candidate Besigye seems to be able, without any hindrance, to mobilize a lot of people and hold large rallies" (Doornebal 2016)

Sophisticated Dictatorship: Inside-Out versus Outside-In perception

This outside-in picture from Dutch government and entrepreneurs about Museveni as a reliable and stable ruler (Dutch Development Results 2019) differs a lot from the inside-out perceptions of the youth. To explain such a discrepancy, one must unveil how the Ugandan government ensures its donor appearance. This oppression is invisible for outsiders or those that are not familiar with the situation. The regime uses the illusion of freedom of speech but makes sure that there is no freedom after speech (Ojobile 2019). It seems Museveni and the Ugandan military regime has become incredibly adept in camouflaging its oppression. This makes information about Uganda from outside-in likely flawed, not based on the local reality. It might also be possible that the Dutch government and its investors are aware about the true situation but rather sustain their relationship because of strategic interests (Anderson & Fisher 2016). What is clear however, is that the Netherlands provide external legitimacy for a regime that is perceived as illegitimate by its own youth (Mwenda & Tangri 2005).

Cloaked Oppression by Intelligence Veil

It seems Museveni has adopted the saying of political scientist Machiavelli, who argued in the Prince that: *"Never attempt to win by force what can be won by deception" (Machiavelli 1532).*

What the ambassador could not see, according to the youth, were those hundreds of thousands of enlisted *boda boda* drivers who reported any dissidence before it could grow into a demonstration or other mass protests. Or that the regime closely monitors television, radio and internet, hacking into Facebook accounts and arresting activists that appear on local radio with critical views on the state (Ojobile & Mayanja 2019).

Before demonstrations can start, leaders are placed under house arrest, unable to lead by example. It is made clear to those with the intentions to critique or confront the state that they might have freedom of speech, but is stops right there, as there is no freedom after speech. Organizations and political movements that confront the state such as the Jobless Brotherhood and FDC are economically strangled, so they become unable to mobilize activists and campaigns. The possibility to be embedded within the FDC for twelve weeks gave the acting researcher the opportunity to observe how freedom of expression was suppressed in practice, or how political parties and activist organizations were paralyzed due to forced economic isolation. When foreign journalists or researchers are exposed, their materials are confiscated and expelled as was confirmed by undocumented and confidential contacts. Those that openly critique the state are given harsh punishments, such as the imprisonment of scholar Nyanzi. There is a strong lock on the freedom of expression of people so that no freedom after speech is ensured. An anonymous Ugandan in exile warned for the implications of publishing this study:

"Erik, when you get back to Uganda after your findings generate discussions in Netherlands you have to be extremely careful. They can easily say to a random boda boda driver, you get 5 million (1.200 euros) if you kill this Mzungu (meaning white person in Swahili). That boda-boda, who will never see such an amount of money in his life, has learned about how these whites exploited them, and how his family is suffering, what else can he do than get that money" (Undocumented, 2019).

People in and around Uganda are kept in the dark by this sophisticated dictatorship. While the government is successful in maintaining its stable international appearance, people in Uganda

suffer daily. An interesting comparison can be made with the situation before the fall of Communism and the Berlin Wall in Central and Eastern Europe under the Iron Curtain. While propaganda maintained an outer appearance claiming that life was good behind the wall, civilians trying to escape were shot and suppressed. Information considered dangerous by the state was contained as much as possible. The main institution in this oppression were the intelligence agencies, creating fear and distrust among the population by using informers, moles and intelligence instruments. Even though some activists fought and worked on freedom, trying to light up their darkness, the majority was kept blindfolded and made fearful. Only after this cloaked oppression by that intelligence veil was lifted with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1991, the oppressed populations could start to awake their fellow citizens, unite their society, build civil society and democratic institutions and as a result transformed their nations, replacing dictatorships with democracies (Sharp 1993).
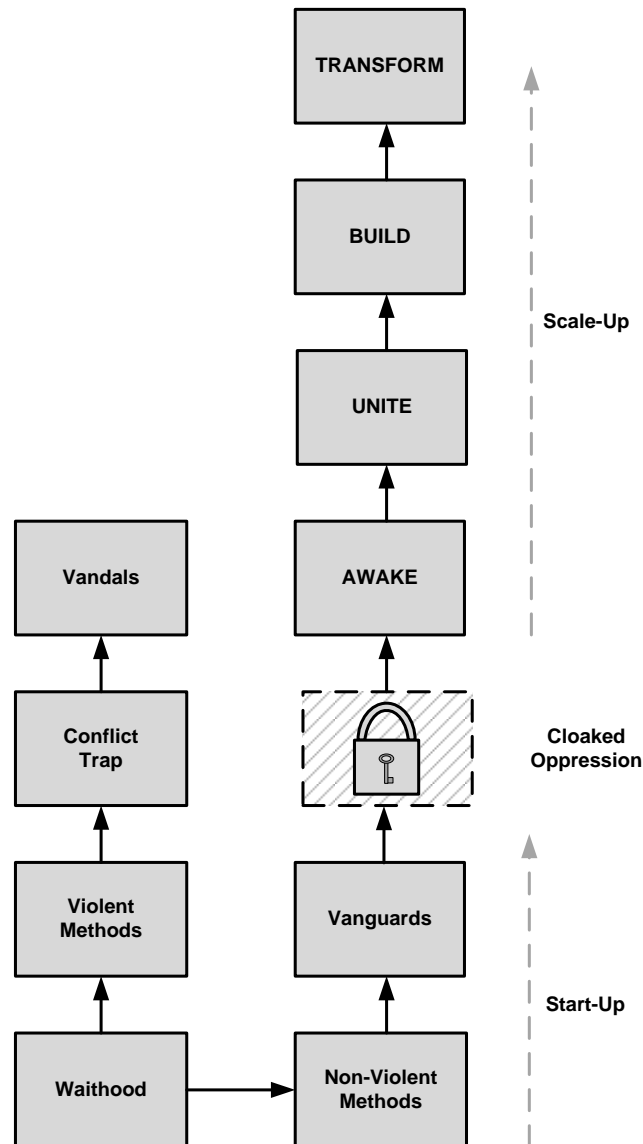
Figure 3: Vanguards are unable to up-scale their attempts to transform Uganda because of the locked situation maintained by 'cloaked oppression' enforced that uses an 'intelligence veil' to make sure there is no freedom after speech and culture of fear and distrust.

The situation in Uganda looks similar. The rural areas are actively under-developed, as the rural peasants are kept in the status quo through ignorance, intimidation and patronage. Political activity of opposition is illegal in these areas, and those who try are arrested immediately or harassed by security personnel (Kaija 2019). The current status quo is not the result of lack of development, but active under-development by those in power, who cloak their oppression to the outside world to maintain their external legitimacy.

Situation can lead to conflict

In the current status quo, youth are becoming increasingly desperate in their lack for prospects of employment and prosperity. As other youth explained, the government became the market and the market the government. Trade and production are controlled by monopolies, often in the hands of the inner circle of Museveni, which includes his relatives, friends and Bayankole (Mwenda 2005). People are impoverished, while taxes keep increasing. Instead of steady progress, Uganda seems moving backwards (Tangri 2013).

This does not correlate with the vision of the Netherlands (2014), who state in their multi-annual strategic plan of 2014 and 2017 that they support the steady progress and will help Uganda in becoming a middle-income country in 2040.

If no change will come, due to keeping the illegitimate regime in place by external support, the next window of opportunity for change, the 2021 elections, might lead to violence, especially when the situation of Uganda is placed in the indicators of the Conflict Trap. Valued by all parameters indicate a situation of violent outburst if no change is coming. Youth keeps still under the current situation, but the kettle is under pressure.

5. Conclusion

This thesis aims to answer the main research question:

"Why is youth in Uganda not able to transform their status quo with non-violent methods?"

Vanguard start-ups were located in Uganda in several contained or small-scale initiatives. They want to use peaceful means and use several methods to transform their society and political situation. However, upscaling these initiatives are prevented by the regime (Tangri 2013). The Ugandan population seems to be locked down under a system of cloaked oppression. The sophisticated dictatorship regime is using an intelligence veil to monitor the people and quickly suppress the spreading of ideas on transformation (Anderson 2016, Human Rights Watch 2018). Instead of Uganda being undeveloped, it is under-developed by those in power (Mwenda 2006). While the phase of enlightenment is contained, the darkness is maintained.

Legacy of Colonialism

The described situation is not new as could be observed in the historical study. The status quo of waithood and dictatorship have its roots in the colonial times. Even though Africa is a diverse continent, many of the 54 countries are bonded by their shared experience of colonial administration, installed to divide and control the large majority. It was colonialism that forced the highly diverse countries into a similar mold of despotism and rigid compartments such as the urban-rural divide and tribalism. Three major protest waves reflected the agency and defiance of the oppressed people, aiming to break the status quo of minority rule and return power to the majority. Since the population growth started at the time of the Second Protest Wave, the demographics of African nations have changed, and their populations are increasingly formed by youth. Due to the status quo of underdevelopment, these youth got stuck into a phase of waithood, often becoming vandals using violent methods for change or survival.

Do not seek ye political kingdom first

Most political movements in Africa since independence have been based upon the philosophy of Nkrumah, that first political power had to be captured before society could be transformed. This philosophy is again based upon communist example in the Soviet Union. Revolution is led by a vanguard party of enlightened individuals who either violently or non-violently wage a

struggle against their regime to capture power (Connell 2001). It is clear that in Africa, this strategy has not worked, and led to the continuation of the status quo.

Everything needs to change for anything to change

An alternative philosophy for decolonization is that of Fanon, who warned that if liberation was only political, the other forms of colonial domination such as society and economy would remain, as they were inevitably reintroducing political domination as well. Acemoglu (2013) claimed that for nations to gain lasting peace and prosperity, the 'vicious circle' has to be replaced with the 'virtuous circle', which is achieved through a breaking point that installs democratic institutions. First, society needs to be transformed, after which political change will follow. Instead of a vanguard party, a multitude of civil society organizations need to empower citizens and build democratic institutions. Three major non-violent methods suggested by the interviewed youth were 1. changing mindsets, 2. peaceful demonstrations and 3. talent workshops.

Cloaked Oppression

Currently, transformation is made impossible by some sort of cloaked oppression, using an intelligence veil to contain vanguard initiatives who are already trying to transform their communities and returning power to the people from government. Just as the iron curtain on communist areas, this informer's curtain must be abolished first, after which the people can awake, unite, build and finally transform.

The status quo is maintained by external legitimacy while trading countries remain ignorant of or choose to work with the cloaked oppression (Anderson 2016, Human Rights Watch 2018). Uganda is locked down by those who control the oppression cloak. However, youth are perfectly suited to become the key that opens the lock in order to achieve fundamental change in Uganda to escape their waithood and…

…Light up the Darkness

The alternative situation is youth remaining stuck within their waithood, who could use violent methods as a last desperate resort, remaining stuck in the Conflict Trap that has plagued the African continent since independence. With all Conflict Trap factors present in Uganda, it is plausible that conflict will return if no change occurs. A choice must be made, either to contain the Light and maintain the Darkness, or to Light up the Darkness.

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