Youth Participation in Climate Action in Kenya:

An analysis of the impact of enablers and disablers to youth engagement

Master thesis International Development Studies (July 2023)
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Abstract

Climate change is reshaping the world that young people are due to inherit and will bear the costs for in coming decades. Their activism and climate action activities are vital to the global community and the aspect of climate justice. Kenya is a country that is severely affected by climate change, especially its agricultural sector. With having a population with a large percentage of people below the age of 30, many of Kenya's youth are being involved in climate action nationally and internationally. They are met with having to overcome a variety of barrier to be able to participate in the first place and then continue to do so. Education, gender, and family influences are just some of the factors that have a great impact on the way of youth participation. However, young people are found to have a strong sense of responsibly which enables them to overcome some of the barrier in their path. Still, they are left to carry the burden of spreading the knowledge and Appling mitigation and adaptation actions that are not always met with understanding from their communities or families. Without support or recognition, young people fight for their future alone and use their own resources to do so. Further, youth from the global south have a history of not being equally included in international climate activates and academic research related to that. This study sets out to fill that gap by researching what influences the younger generation in Kenya when participating in climate action and how are these factors interrelated. By doing so, difference to the global north become apparent which are important to show that different support is needed in different regions to be able to support youth in their fight for a better future.

Acknowledgements

This research could not have been conducted without the support of several people, which I therefore would like to thank.

For the University of Utrecht, I would like to acknowledge the support given by my supervisor Bishawijt Mallick who continued to guide me through various research proposals until I committed to this topic. I want to say thank you for listening, giving advice, and believing in my abilities all throughout the thesis progress and beyond.

Next to that, this thesis would not have been possible without the support and work of the CARE Climate Justice Center and CARE Kenya. To the latter, I want to show my appreciation for getting to Kenya, hosting me, and offering an insight into your work in Kenya. For the Climate Justice Center, I want to mention my immense appreciation to getting to be your colleague and part of this great team. Thank you for further fueling my passion for development work and guidance throughout the whole process. Especially my supervisor Hayley Capp, you and your work has been a great inspiration for me, and I am beyond grateful that we have gotten to work together.

Lastly, I want to shed some light on the efforts of my family and partner who have been encouraging me and accompanied me on this journey. I appreciate not just your support but also the time you made to be there for me, especially on my fieldwork in Kenya.

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1. Introduction

Climate change is reshaping the world that young people are due to inherit and will bear the costs for in coming decades. The consequences of climate change are visible to everyone, and they have impacted the lives of billions of people worldwide and will especially do so in the following decades affecting the younger generations and the ones to follow. The climate crisis is being felt by everyone living on the planet, more by some inhabitants than by others. Depending on your area of living, people may have experienced droughts, floods, or other extreme weather events, increasingly so in the last decade. All lives have been impacted, some have been threatened and some have been taken by the ongoing and human made climate crisis. Some already visible consequences of the crisis are loss of biodiversity, food insecurity, spread of diseases, loss of livelihoods, displacement, and general increase in poverty. Those cannot be looked at separately from each other as each of them has an impact on another and so on. The example of food insecurity leads to a more unstable environmental system which further impacts food security, meaning less people can receive the necessary nutritious food and are forced to starve. The climate crisis can be seen as a negative feedback loop, one negative impact affects other factors and so on, with little to no hope to fully stop the chain reaction (Harris and Roach, 2007). One effect of climate change accelerates another environmental degradation process which in turn accelerates climate change. Those effects were felt early in the so-called global south, including regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania (Dados & Connell, 2012). However, the global north on the other hand, only including North America, Europe, and developed countries on the continent of Asia ("Global North", 2023) is and has been the main polluters but remains for now on the least affected side of the world, an unjust situation. The term climate justice was founded on social movements, mainly grassroots, which were influenced greatly by indigenous groups and people of color fighting for their rights regarding ongoing colonist structures (Grosse and Mark, 2020). Youth climate action is often found to strongly build on these values to protest and demand for a stronger focus on climate policies that are fair and just to everyone. To be able to try to slow down and adapt to the rapid climate change, it has become apparent that global solutions need to be found. Solutions include mainly policies to mitigate and adapt to current and future developments.

Climate movements like #FridaysforFuture, started by Greta Thunberg, shows just how engaged young people are when it comes to climate justice. It also shows how much impact the younger generation can have on political decision making if they come together. Climate advocacy activities like protests and demonstrations have spread across the globe and the engagement and agency of young people is a significant factor in this. The younger generations have been largely engaged in climate adaptation projects and initiatives to support their communities and countries in combating climate impacts.

The process of youth wanting to be involved and voice their issues, concerns and experiences has faced a variety of barriers which can still be recognized in many decision-making structures today. Youths or young people have been labeled as inexperienced and are therefore dismissed as not being able to participate in politics (Bessant, 2020). By framing the younger generations as being unable to engage in debates, their push for participation is continuously criticized and played down (Feldman, 2020). This is strongly related to the current and long-established power structures and the often top-down approaches when it comes to education and the political system. If young people can participate, they are often further stereotyped and seen as a homogeneous group (Feldman, 2022). However, when looking closer, it is clearly apparent that they are in fact not, not on a national and especially not on a global spectrum. As much as each continent, country and region has different needs and possibilities when it comes to climate adaptation and mitigation, youths worldwide have different aspects they fight for. Even though they are often fighting for global climate justice and by

coming together, they still differ in terms of heritage, needs and capabilities. Climate activists in the global north are more frequently found to be part of academic studies which can skew data and therefore derived knowledge that is thought to have.

Most countries have no choice but to adapt quickly as droughts, floods and rising temperatures make continuing their lives impossible. People's lives are not the same as they were before and for many people of the younger generation there will not be a status quo. The climate is changing, temperatures are rising, and lives are changing. Following that, in last year's COP27 conference in Egypt the focus was put particularly on Africa and the effect of climate change on the lives of the African peoples. African communities and its peoples have been emitting only around 2-3% of global emissions but are one of the most vulnerable regions worldwide (UNEP). Climate injustice is evident and further climate action is necessary to achieve balancing mechanisms like loss and damages funds. Next to that, the impact of climate change in African regions needs to be addressed with urgency.

One aspect that is necessary to combat and fight for climate justice is the mobilization of African youths, so they can raise their voice and share their experiences in various forms of climate action. Young people in the south are being affected earlier than other youths in the north but have less opportunity to speak up about it. Therefore, climate change still is not the main priority for many policy makers and international agreements. If we wait until the climate crisis has fully reached the northern parts of the planet, it will be too late. Being able to hear African youths and how their lives are being altered is what is needed to put climate change as a priority. Therefore, their engagement is a necessary enabler for climate justice and to empower young people to fight for their future. Their future is the one being discussed yet young people are often excluded from engaging in climate change adaptation decision-making activities. Their future is weighed against national and international, mainly economic, policies by politicians that will not experience climate change in the same ways as the current youths and all the following generations will. By amplifying their voices in getting more young people engaged in climate action all over the world, specifically in African countries like Kenya, they have a higher chance to make themselves heard.

Kenya and its economy and people are largely dependent on its agriculture, which is at the same time inseparable from the effects of climate change. Agriculture, being the source of livelihood for around 80% of the population, is vastly significant and the impact of climate change is irreversible (GOK 2018). With droughts came the loss in agricultural output and deaths of livestock, which brought food insecurity and other negative factors to Kenyan people. Many youth climate initiatives have tried, fought, and succeeded to find ways to adapt or educate others about the changing climate and its challenges. They further raised awareness due to advocacy activities which even made it possible for more young people to participate in COP discussions. Agency and engagement have shown themselves to be significant and need to be supported so that the voices and experiences of youths can be heard. This is why this research aims to find enabling and disabling factors for youths to participate and with that to find ways to better support them. Climate change affects the lives of all young people, regardless of their location, socio-economic status, or cultural background. So, it is up to academic research to try to better understand their activism and behavior so that climate action becomes more accessible for everyone, especially in the more vulnerable areas of the world.

The research question that derives from this is:

What impacts the participation of youth in climate action in Kenya and how?

To research this question, this thesis will first introduce the theoretical framework the research will be based on. Further, it will set up and lay out the methods and techniques that are used to conduct the study itself and the following analysis. To be able to understand the geographical context the study will be conducted in, the next chapter will aim to give an overview of the current and historical context of Kenya and youth activism and climate policies. The collected data and therefore empirical results will be presented in the following chapter which will also present analysis of the data in relation to the main research questions. To reach a conclusion, the discussion chapter will be examining the data regarding the theoretical framework and the geographical background. This will allow for a comprehensive analysis and reflection on the results and the current theoretical debates. The conclusion will act as a summary of the research which answers the research questions and reflects the particular findings and their general implications.

2.Literature review

Young people and their political engagement have long been a topic of research in academic literature. Especially in recent years, youth climate activism has brought attention to itself with protests, demonstrations and activities that connected young people all over the world. Political youth engagement is not particularly new, but due to the urgency of the climate crisis it has become a contemporary topic of debate again. Academic research has previously been focused on youth mobilization and engagement in general, but after the rise of youth engagement with the #Fridays For Future movement, many studies have looked further into climate action related participation. To be able to dive deeper into this topic, it is necessary to familiarize oneself with the ongoing debates encompassing youth in climate action and youth in the political playing field in general and dive into the various aspects of it. Through the literature review, a gap will be established which will enable the research question to be formed. Following this, this study will be able to set up and present its theoretical framework.

2.1 Youths in Climate Action

Young people in the climate action space are known for challenging established policies and pushing for change. It must be acknowledged that climate action is not only dominated by the younger generation but people from all different generations show initiative. Sometimes also, with whole families and older generations showing their discontent with ongoing climate discussions, young people are being supported in their fight for their future. Furthermore, many organizations, institutions and national governments have recognized their importance in regard to climate action. For example, the UN has the Youth Climate summit where youths from over 140 different nations come together. It also recently founded the Secretary-General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change, and the UNFCCC has formed YUONGO which is the official children and youth constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It has been found that by including younger individuals' legitimacy and the quality of policies is increased (Cahill & Dadvand, 2018). Next to the UN and various UN bodies, many international organizations that focus on climate change, adaptation and justice started to include young people in their frameworks and strategies.

Many youth-led organizations and movements were founded without external support and spread globally. One of the main known ones nowadays is the #Fridays For Future Movement, also known as the global climate strike led by school aged children and youths which started in August 2018. Since then, it is said to have reached over 7.500 cities, over 14.000.000 people and spread-out over-all continents (Fridays For Future, 2023). In addition, various climate activists have evolved and taken up roles of education on climate change and ongoing political endeavors. Recently, climate activist groups such as Extinction Rebellion and Last Generation have been in the news for "radical" steps to gain attention to climate issues. Their actions are found to be "non-violent" in nature but nevertheless disruptive to the public's daily lives (Richardson, 2020). These kinds of more disturbing actions have mainly been observed in the global north. On the other side of the world, the young people were found to rather raise awareness with protests and start their own climate adaptation or mitigation practices. It was further found that in these regions, climate activism is not necessarily a safe activity. Climate activists have reportedly been killed, intimidated, and their communities negatively affected (Cassegård & Thörn, 2018; Menton & Billon, 2021).

Furthermore, the demonstrations in southern regions were primarily supported by feelings of helplessness and apocalyptic feelings regarding climate change (Wallace-Wells, 2018). This is also supported by other studies as it was found that the proximity of serious climate impacts on the livelihoods plays a significant role (Sparks 2021). In the global south youths have a stronger sense of anxiety and feelings of anger to their current situation. On the other side, protests in Europe and Northern America are often following a narrative of hope and the future impact of climate change on their lives (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017). It is not surprising that people who are already strongly impacted by the climate crisis have a different narrative in their climate action than people who are still fortunate enough to have hope that it can be avoided. Despite those differences in youth climate action worldwide, youths are still often seen as a homogeneous group (Keatubg and Melis, 2017). By joining the diverse experiences and needs of the younger generation, it takes agency aways from youths and waters down varieties of engagement and experiences.

When comparing the opportunities and chances for young people globally, studies found that youth with a background in university level education and a certain level of privilege were overrepresented in the space (Cotgrove and Duff, 1980; Kriesi, 1989; Giugni and Grasso, 2015). This research was rather focused on environmental movements and not especially on climate justice movements but still shows the issues activists from the south currently face. To further explain the researched reality for many southern climate activists, the aspect of discrimination must be included. To add to previously discussed underrepresentation of youth experiences in the global south, the representation of black women activists is of even lower standard. It was stated that media reporting favored activists' stories from the global north (Gammage, 2015), also harsher measures and restrictions were put on less privileged female activists (Murombo & Valentine, 2011). Discrimination and with that the underrepresentation of marginalized groups in the climate action space is an issue that is deeply embedded into the climate justice movement. To be able to fight for climate justice, an equal representation of voices to be able to know the real situations, is needed. It further highlights the long road ahead of the climate justice movement and the obstacles that need to be overcome first.

2.2 Political engagement of youth

In general, youth activism or young people participating in political debates is surrounded by various streams of debate about how youth people and their participation is viewed. From being framed as not political enough to not being able to fully participate in political processes.

On the one hand, young people are often not taken seriously due to their age, which is often looked at as a lack of experience and knowledge. The main belief behind this way of thinking stems from the thought that younger people first have to learn how to engage correctly like adults do (Andersson 2015). Additionally, youth is often looked at from a viewpoint that focuses on how this period of life is becoming. "*becoming an adult, becoming a citizen, becoming independent, becoming autonomous, becoming mature and becoming responsible*" (Kelly, 2011, p. 48) and therefore not being ready for this kind of engagement.

This sets the adults behavior as the norm and necessary requirement to be able to be an equal member of debate. Sticking to this way of thinking can be harmful when it comes to looking for innovative and new ways that are needed to solve ongoing crises or issues affecting a variety of individuals and not just the older generations. Such challenges for youth engagement are described in the "Deficit model" developed by Osler & Starkey (2003). It describes how young people are being seen as less engaged than adults, also due to

stereotypes and requirements set by adults, and thus being treated as not full members of society (Osler and Starkey 2003; Putnam, 2000). As a consequence of engaging in ways that include volunteering and protesting for their beliefs, instead of keeping up with news or joining political parties' youth are wrongly seen as not "dutifully" (Dalton 2009) in their participation politically. Dalton further argued that political participation was simply changing their forms of initiatives. This was further developed as the "engaged citizenship module" (Shea & Harris, 2006) that explains the visible shift of political participation within the younger generations. For young people to participate in political decision making, they first must overcome stereotypes and prove themselves ready and mature enough. In addition, they must demonstrate their thoughts and ways of engagement are valid and valuable.

On the other hand, young people who are engaging in the political sphere have been considered as transformative citizens with the power to implement change in society (Alam, 2021). Over the last half century, youth engagement was the driving factor in many different social movements. Examples include but are not limited to the Free speech movement, the fight for desegregation and most recently the Black Lives Matter movement (Earl et al., 2017). This has gone as far as youth inclusion is nowadays considered to be a sign of quality for governmental policies and social movements (Cahill & Dadvand, 2018). When looking at the democratic system, it becomes apparent that the inclusion of all parts of society, especially marginalized groups, is necessary to have a strong and working democracy. There has been found to be a difference in western democracies in comparison to developing countries. In western countries, youth participation has been supported due to worries of youth radicalization (Harris & Roose, 2014) which is also in combination with the uprising of right-wing parties that often include anti -racial sentiments (Akbarzadeh & Roose, 2011). Therefore, youth engagement is hoped to be a solution to the upholding of western democratic values and structure. In the developing countries' situations, it is rather seen as a way to overcome and strengthen socio economic issues that have arisen and that are strongly intertwined with (sustainable) development goals set (Ansell, 2016).

Generally, by actively including younger generations it increases chances for social justice consequently strengthens the political democratic system and is found to be necessary for further prosperity of societies. Youth and their agency are the leading topic when it comes to this debate. The way youths and their engagement are framed has a great effect on their opportunities and power. Their own opinions, experiences and beliefs are seen as not as relevant as the ones of older members of society. This form of thinking challenges youth activism and makes it harder for younger people to engage in political decision-making processes.

2.2.1 Barriers to youth climate engagement

Next to this, youths have been found to experience many other barriers when it comes to their mobilization and political participation. However, research on the issue has increased in recent years as youths are being seen more and more making themselves heard on the streets and in general in political debates. Youth activism mobilization related to climate action is a relatively recent branch of research that is gaining more and more attention. Findings on factors that enable and disable youth participation have been found in various studies focusing on general political youth participation with only a few directly related to climate action. The focus on youth adaptation efforts and the power of youths acting as transformative citizens is significant for the concept of agency. Yet, multiple factors have been found that pose a challenge to this.

First, gender is a relevant enabler or disabler that was found to influence youth engagement, mainly in form of social hierarchies and power structures (Coe, 2013). Equally gendered power structures within the organizations can influence youth by making their participation more inclusive and diverse. In addition, gender inequality can create obstacles as women might feel less inclined to take up leadership roles and instead end up in more unofficial positions within the organizational structures (Robnett 1997). By being less aware of opportunities and chances established traditional roles are being taken over which led to less gender equality within the youth initiative.

Closely related to this and this research, gender and climate have been established to have a significant linkage, especially regarding adaptation practices. Women, as they are often in caretaker roles, are statistically more likely to be affected by the impacts of climate change (Björnberg and Hansson 2013). This increases women's vulnerability and shows the significance of gender mainstreaming in adaptation and mitigation planning. Youth engagement is not just influenced by gender but also by upbringing which impacts the political agency of youths. Meaning that the aspect of class background has a direct influence on education, economic circumstances and with that often is also related to political orientation (Gordon 2008). The opportunities are limited to youths if their socio-economic circumstances restrict their agency. Less privileged youths have less resources available to participate which can often be found to have a discouraging effect.

Next to the factor of class background, motivation and parental influence also play a significant role due to the shaping of the youths' options and opportunities (Ojala, 2012). A study looking at the risk perception and action in adults and the impact it has on their own children, found that parents' behavior knowingly or unknowingly plays a relevant role. It was concluded that if parents show signs of avoidance by knowing the risk but not acting upon it, their children were more likely to exhibit the same behavior and were less likely to seek climate related information (Mead et al., 2012). It goes further by parental figures hindering the climate action activists that their children want to engage in by actively setting rules like curfews. Therefore, the way parents engage with climate change matters for young people's own engagement as it clearly can be a disabler if the support is not present.

Another aspect is the location of where people have grown up, as this influences their perceived environmental threat level, which influences motivation and awareness. Youth groups in areas strongly impacted by climate change have been statistically more active and engaged in climate actions (Walgrave and Wouters, 2022). Meaning the stronger the impact on their lives and on their families and communities' livelihoods, the higher the chance that young people become active in climate action and adaptation projects. Additionally, location is strongly related to what access youths have regarding organized environmentalism in their communities and cities. If climate action initiatives are easily accessible, the barriers to participation are lowered (Haugestad et al 2021).

One relevant factor for this is related to transportation to and from the events and meetups. This aspect is also intertwined with parental influences as younger individuals often rely on their parents for getting to and from places which directly affects their ability to join such activities (Feldman, 2021; Stuart et al., 2018). A working and safe public transport system and general infrastructure can be a supporting aspect for youth in their aim to participate in events.

Next to that, a supporting factor to youth participation is their own network, particularly the participation norm in climate action within that network. The influence of friends and family that are engaging in similar projects or initiatives is found to be an enabler to youths getting active themselves (Prendergast et al in 2021, Walgrave and Wouters in 2022). This relates to the awareness of opportunities for participation in general. When friends are already active in climate action other youths are more likely to join them due to lowered barriers to overcome. In addition, a strong climate action network can open the opportunity for youths to start their own

projects and adaptation projects. In African countries and specifically Kenya there has been a strong trend towards youth founded climate entrepreneurships. For young people to be able to actively participate in climate action, certain enabling factors must be present, or their challenges must be overcome.

Bias in the existing research

Due to the new rise of youth in climate action related activities the volume of studies diving deeper into youth mobilization, participation, and action, is rather low. It further must be acknowledged that any studies, particularly focusing on the #FridaysForFurture movement, exhibit a strong urban and western bias. This can be explained due to the initiatives being more often found in larger cities and the surrounding areas due to aspects like population density. This leaves out the climate action carried out and their challenges for young people in rural areas.

Another criticism that has been getting louder is the western bias in the majority of the research on newer youth climate movements like #FridaysForFuture (Feldman, 2022). The question the criticism paper is asking is who is striking and who is not, meaning that it takes a certain level of resource availability to be able to join the school strikes. By acknowledging this, it is possible to put the studies conducted into perspective and move away from generalizations. As this topic of research is relatively new, scholars must be made aware of the blind spots to be able avoid these and work to fill in the gaps. Still, research was able to find various factors that have the potential to enhance and decrease youth mobilization and engagement. However, most studies, especially regarding climate action, have been quantitative in nature. Meaning that these factors were discovered through surveys, but it is missing out on the reasoning behind them. Most studies have not asked about youths' stories and personal experience but rather looked for statistical facts. Finding these factors lays the foundation for future qualitative research which tries to find ways to dissemble and understand these challenges faced.

2.3 Analytical framework

Youth mobilization for climate action is a complex topic with many enablers and disablers which, due to its research gaps, does not have many established frameworks. Certain frameworks for youth participation exist but are seen fitting to the aim of this research. For example, the "Ladder of participation" by Hart is being laid out for children and youth participation which due to the ages frame set for this study is incompatible (Hart, 1992). The framework developed by Treseder, which is a reworked model from Hart, looks at different degrees of participation rather than the needed factors impacting youth participation (Treseder, 1997). As a third option, "Pathways to participation" came closer by focusing on empowerment and the role of adults but with that moved into the direction of institutions and their impact (Shier, 2001). These youth participation frameworks are also not related to climate action or the aspect of protesting or newer ways of political engagement. There is one framework that looks specifically at youth climate participation around #FridaysForFuture Protests. Developed by Haugestad et al. in 2021 which can be seen in Figure 1. In this path module, many different factors that have the potential to impact future protest intentions are listed. In addition, other factors like Group efficacy and participative efficacy are listed as impacting the result. These, however, are not part of this study and do not support it in looking at how the various factors are influencing climate activism in the climate space. This framework is also developed for a mixed methods study which further makes it difficult to take over. Nevertheless, this framework can be seen as supporting this study due to its findings and particular set up.
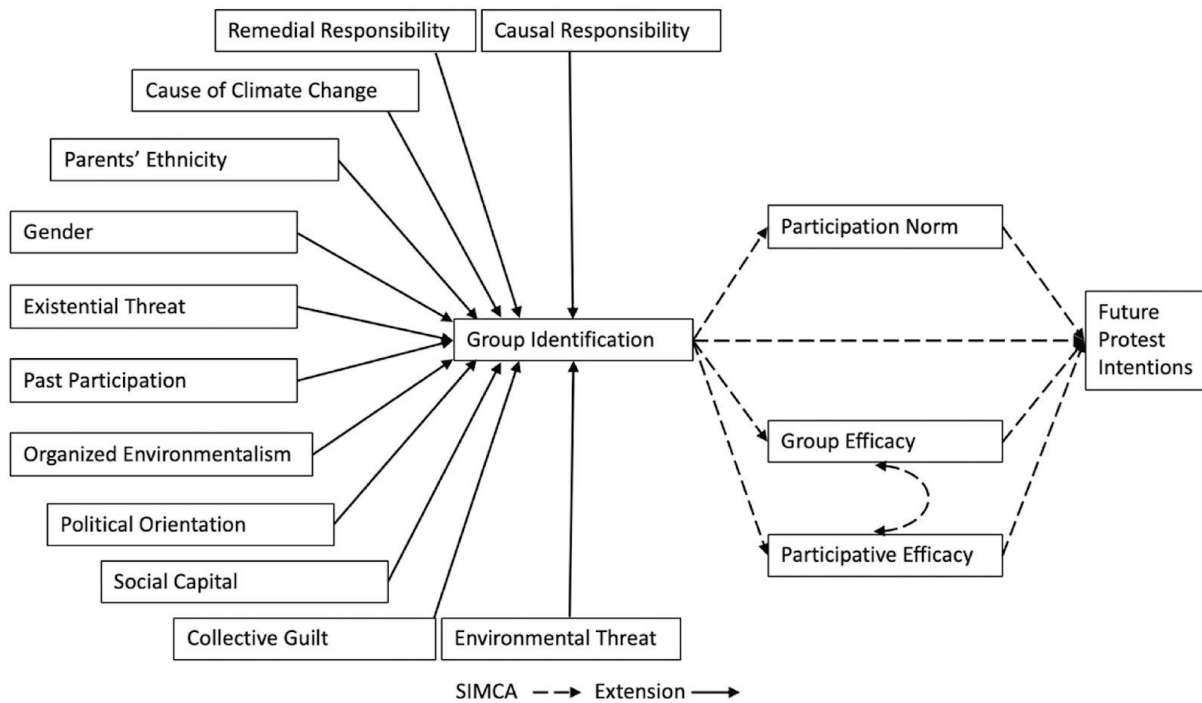
Figure 1: Hypothesized path model for future protest intentions (Source: Haugestad et al in 2021)

Thus, this research will put together its own framework which is greatly built upon the framework developed from Haugestad et al in 2021. They brought together a vast majority of factors that overlap with this literature review. However, the framework was developed rather in view of general protest groups, but most factors that influence group identification can also be seen as paths to youth participation. Due to the nature of factors and their being also established influences on youth participation, these have the ability to serve for this research aim.

The list of factors from that module that can be used for this research include: Cause of Climate Change, Gender, Past participation, Organized environmentalism, Political orientation, Environmental threat (Haugestad et al, 2021). The ones that are left out of that framework were not deemed relevant for this research as they have a stronger focus on group identification rather than looking at differentiating paths of mobilization. Next to that, there were some aspects that considering the presented literature needed to be included to get a better understanding of why youth start being active and how these factors influence their experience when engaging. Therefore, the factors of networking (influence of friends) are mentioned in research by Prendergast et al in 2021 and Walgrave and Wouters in 2022. Further, the aspect of responsibility and connecting feeling of guilt will be set as an additional factor. Those factors are mentioned in the Haugestad et al framework but for the aim of this research, they are being combined into "Feeling of Responsibility" to gain a stronger relevance for this research. The factor of parent's influence will be added and modified from "parents' ethnicity" from the Haugestad et al framework. Therefore, potential influence will include parents' impact on youth participation, regarding for example the setting of curfews and general support. The modification to existing frameworks will serve this research as a foundation and due to them, it will include the most recent findings to ensure relevancy and accuracy.

To be able to have a clearer understanding of these factors regarding the theoretical framework, the selected factors will be grouped into various categories, namely "Ability to Participate" and "Willingness to Participate". Further, the category "Willingness to Participate" is separated into "Identify" and "Beliefs about Climate Action". "Ability to participate" has the subcategory" Physical Factors". Within these subcategories, the previously established factors can be found (see figure 2).
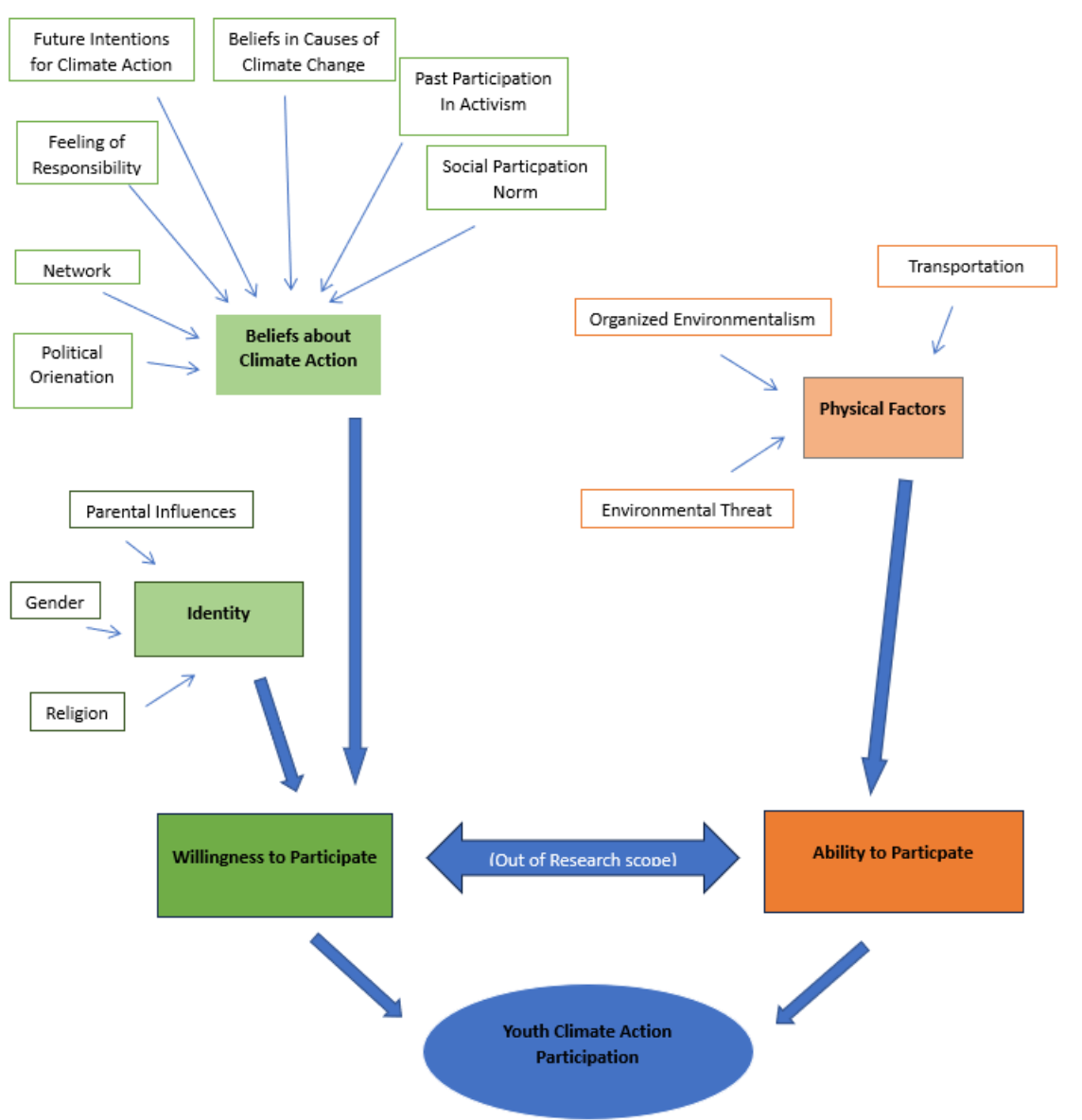

Figure 2. Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 Conceptualization and Operationalization of Factors

Conceptualization

Climate action participation
The independent variable of climate action is defined by the UN Sustainable Development Goals as "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts" (UN, 2015) which is taken over as a definition for this research.
Participation is seen in forms of climate activism, including but are not limited by: climate advocacy on social media or in forms of protesting and educational activities, engaging in local or national environmental groups, being part of a climate adaptation initiative or climate adaptation entrepreneurship.

Youth participation
As the dependent variable in this research, youth participation will be focused on. This is a variable that has two main components, youth, and participation.
Youth is determined as a particular age group, which in this case is set from 15-30 years old. The age frame was chosen due to it including youth ranging from school age up to young workers and entrepreneurs which will increase the variety of possible climate activities that can be included. The UN has defined youths as a group that is between 15- 24 years old (UN, 2013). However, the African Union Youth Charter takes a different approach which is deemed more context and regional appropriate by increasing the range and including ages 15-35 (African Youth Charter, 2006). As this study will be based in Kenya, the age will be set according to the African Union frame.

Factors of youth participation
As mentioned in the theoretical framework, various factors were adopted from the existing framework (see Figure 1) and were added from the literature review previously. These factors have been found to have an influence on youth participation. This research aims to find the reasons behind why they have an impact on youth engagement. To do so, these factors will be researched regarding what the participants have experienced.

Operationalization of factors for youth participation

Belief in Cause of Climate Change
The participants were asked about their key beliefs of the causes of climate change and how they believe this has shaped their experience and motivation towards their participation in climate action.

Ethnicity
For this, the participants were asked in what ways they believe their ethnicity and race has affected their participation in climate action. To do so, they are asked if they want to share their ethnicity if they believe it to be important, during the interview.

Gender
For this the influences gender has had on their engagement and on their path to participation on climate action was looked at. They were also asked about the gender they are identifying with, during the interview process.

Past participation in civil society organizations
Past participation is looked at regarding how participants experienced their earlier (non-climate related) participation in other forms of youth initiatives, like in for example volunteer positions. In addition, the relationship between the past participation is considered and they are asked if they believe their prior experience had an influence on their current activities.

Organized environmentalism
Organized environmentalism was researched regarding the experiences and awareness of the participants when it comes to climate action initiatives around them. The barrier they experienced when starting or participating in organized climate action was inquired about during the interviews.

Political orientation
For political orientation, participants were asked about how they think their political orientation has influenced their engagement with climate action. Further, their experience with governmental institutions and thoughts about climate policies from their government was inquired about.

Environmental threat
For this, their experience about how they perceive the current environmental threat for themselves, their community and the world was inquired. Their own personal understanding on perception on risk perception was asked about, as well as how climate change has affected their, their families and communities' lives.

Future intentions in climate action
By asking questions about how they believe their future in climate action initiatives will look, this research gained understanding on how these are connected. Focus was put specifically on the reasoning and experiences that shape these answers.

Network
For networking, the experiences of the participants about how and specifically through whom they have gotten their information about the climate action they are participating in was discussed. In addition, the spread through the network of friends, family and colleagues was put into focus.

Social participation norm
Social participation norm was looked at in terms of how common engagement and specifically climate action participation in their social environment is. More specifically, how do the experiences of the typical participation in climate action and other initiatives influenced their own participation.

Feeling of responsibility

For feeling of responsibility, the feelings of the participants looking at guilt and accountability in connection with their engagement were looked at. For example, how do their feelings towards their own obligation towards climate change impact their participation and affect their involvement.

Parental influence

The experience of the participants on how their parents have affected their climate action participation was inquired by asking questions about support or barrier set up by them. This further was expanded by asking about parents' beliefs about climate change and how that affected their own actions.

The factors identified above were used as a foundation of the research and the analysis process. Meaning, these served as probes in the interview guide and were the main topics of discussion. Further in the process, these were analyzed with the method of coding (more details about this can be found in the Data collection process subchapter) by systematically looking at the main codes that come up from the data. Following that, these separate codes were analyzed for patterns, narratives, and differences to be able to compare and interpret the findings.

To add to filling the presented gap, this thesis will concern itself with the topic of youth empowerment through youth participation and influences on youth in the climate action space in Kenya. Hence, the study will strive to answer the following question:

What impacts the participation of youth in climate action in Kenya and how?

Following sub questions derive from this:
1) What factors can be identified as enablers and disablers of youth participation in climate action activities in Kenya?
2) How do these factors influence youths participating in climate action?

By not only adding to the research in the field of youth mobilization of youth climate initiatives but bringing this focus on heavily climate change impacted areas like Kenya, the study connects those issues. The hypothesis will be derived from literature reviews showing various factors of enablers of youth participation in climate action. These factors will be set as a hypothesis and will be further researched in the interviews to see if and how they affect Kenyan youths.

3. Methodology

The methodological chapter will lay out the methods and techniques used for this study. It further will conceptualize and define the factors this research will use to conduct the study. First, the various variables in this research will be discussed regarding their operationalization.

3.1 Data Collection

Participant selection

Participants will be selected based on their age, location, and engagement. Meaning that they must fit within the established age frame of 15-35 years old at the time the study is conducted. They further, must be living in a location within Kenya. In addition, they need to hold Kenyan citizenship to ensure that they can be counted as Kenyan youths. Lastly, they must be engaged in climate action activities as defined previously. If all criteria are fulfilled, youths could participate in the research.

Qualitative data methods

Qualitative data selection aims to understand, explain phenomena, and get the meaning behind processes (Ryan et al 2009). One-on-one interviews are a common method that is used to gather information on attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of participants on a particular research topic (Lambert and Loiselle 2007). By using interviews as the main form of data collection, it will allow the research to gather information and data on the differences and similarities of their path to participation and engagement in climate action. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted as it allows for the youth to feel comfortable and creates space for them to share their experiences and stories. It also makes space for the individuals to share their personal perspective and their experiences that influenced the process. By learning about common or different impacts, patterns can be made visible and those then can be considered for future research. It also needs to be acknowledged that interviewees might decide to hold back certain information, or it can be found that their presented self-image does not reflect the "truth" (Fielding 1994). However, this will open space for interpretation of the collected data from the researcher. Meaning that the potential reasonings for withholding reality need to be looked at.

The data produced by these interviews are texts which will serve as the basis of analysis for the rest of this research. These texts will be specific and detailed, laying in the scope of the research due to the questions asked by the researcher. This makes them a proper data set to draw conclusions from in the analysis.

Coding

After the interviews, the method of coding was applied to analyze the responses. For this, the conversations were recorded with the consent of the participants. The method of coding will allow the data to be organized and interpreted to be able to look at it in a reflexive and critical manner to come to conclusions (Linneberg et al 2019). It further gives the opportunity to be able to analyze the collected date and to come to relevant theories.

The forms of coding that was used in this analysis is a combination of deductive and inductive methods which is used frequently in empirical research and is often referred to as a blended approach (Graebner, Martin, and

Roundy 2012). There will be two rounds of coding in which the first one is deductive in nature and the second one inductive. The first round uses predetermined codes that are derived from the theoretical chapter, more specifically the previously set up theoretical framework. Meaning that the first codes applied is descriptive to point out the phrases and data that talks about a specific factor that was looked at and researched in the interviews.

The second round focuses further on the analyses of the codes and can subcategories and zoom in further on connections between the descriptive codes. In this approach, the code's relationships and impacts can be interpreted to find common themes and develop concepts and potential theories.
This allows for research that stays close to the collected data and limits the personal interpretation of the researcher. For this, it is of significant value that simultaneous coding is applied to code one sentence or paragraph with multiple codes in case the interviewee mentioned multiple topics in that piece of data.
As the first round is based on the existing theoretical framework, it opens the way for theory testing but also frees up space in the second round for developing new theories and filling the research gap identified previously. By choosing this way of coding, the transparency and accountability of the interpretations of the researcher can be improved as it gives way for readers to understand and follow the choices made (cf. Guba and Lincoln 1994, Elo et al. 2014). For the coding process, the program NVIVO will be utilized, next to manual coding processes.

Positionality of the researcher

As a researcher, it is acknowledged that personal positions may affect the research itself. Therefore, the private interests in the topic of climate adaptation and climate justice of the researcher need to be considered. Further, multiple preconditions also state a certain insider status and at the same time an outsider status.
Due to their experience in the green initiatives and projects the researchers are knowledgeable in the field of adaptation strategies. Additionally, the researcher herself has been involved in climate justice initiatives which possibly has an influence on the conduction of the study.
The researcher can be identified as a white German woman coming from a middle-class family, which brings certain preconditions into the research which qualifies themselves as an outsider. By growing up in Germany and later studying in the Netherlands, the researcher can be considered an outsider to Kenyan culture and traditions. This position needs to be considered regarding the willingness of the participants to get involved and share their beliefs and experiences.
Next to that, when working at the Climate Justice Center the contact with youth climate initiatives has already been established in the forms of emails, written interviews and collecting information about their work. This possibly led to the position of the researcher that is influenced by their work with the organization CARE. Meaning that the researcher might not be seen entirely as an individual but rather as an extension of the previous work with CARE. This may have an impact on the interviews and the information that is being brought forward from the participants whether they have worked with CARE or are currently involved with CARE projects.

4. Regional thematic framework

Approximately 53 million inhabitants are living in Kenya as of 2023. It is important to note, that the vast majority of 78% of Kenya's Inhabitants are below 30 years old (Save the children 2022). The Kenyans are a young population, but also a population that is affected greatly by economic issues, which are frequently related to the effects of the ongoing climate crisis. According to the chronic poverty advisory network, circa 80% of Kenyans live close to or below the poverty, with regional differences (Diwakar and Shepherd, 2018). This number has been increasing over the last years due to the main economic component, namely the agricultural sector, having been strongly impacted by climate change in Kenya.

Kenya gained independence in the year 1963 from Britan and is still feeling the effects of (de)colonialism today, as many other African countries as well. Then president Kenyatta, emphasized the concept of "Harambee" (all pull together) which focuses on all people working together for the Kenyan nation and is seen as a national symbol of integration (Thomas, 1985). Meaning, community supporting themselves, people supporting their communities, strong family ties and cooperation have been coring cultural values in Kenya. This also affects the ways Kenya is dealing with the challenges that arise from climate change.

4.1 Impact of Climate Change

in Kenya have been greatly affected by the consequences of climate change which include but are not limited by floods and droughts, landslides, and increased temperatures (Government of Kenya 2021). Floods have had a devastating effect on Kenya, more so in some regions than others (Map 2). With unpredictable weather conditions that have mainly affect farmers due to rain fed agricultural practices over Kenya, which affect over half the workforce (Nechifor et al. 2021).

Next to that, with temperatures rising, droughts are becoming more frequent, meaning a further increase in food insecurity. West Africa is known for its high temperatures and large dry landmass. The so-called drylands are predicted to increase 16-54% in the coming decade and with that, loss in biodiversity due to land degradation (*Haile et al. 2020).* Due to death of livestock and loss of crops, less food can be produced which has a strong impact on food security in Kenya. The outlook on the rise in temperatures can

Map of total seasonal rainfall from March to April
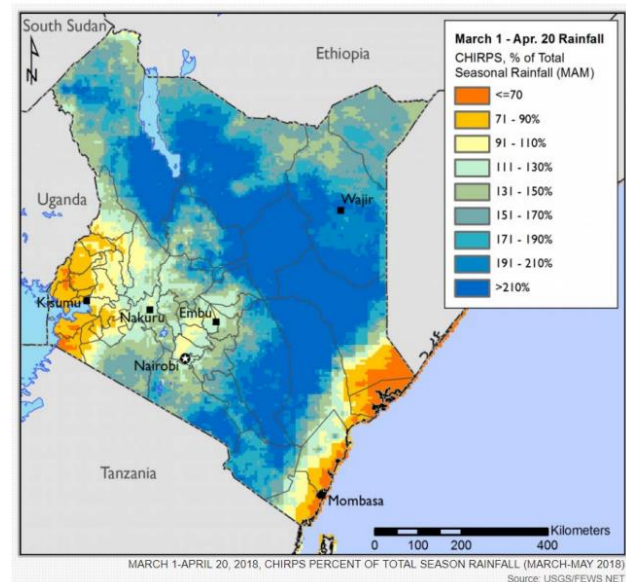
Map 1 – Map of total seasonal rainfall from March to April (Source: FEWS NET 01/05/2018)
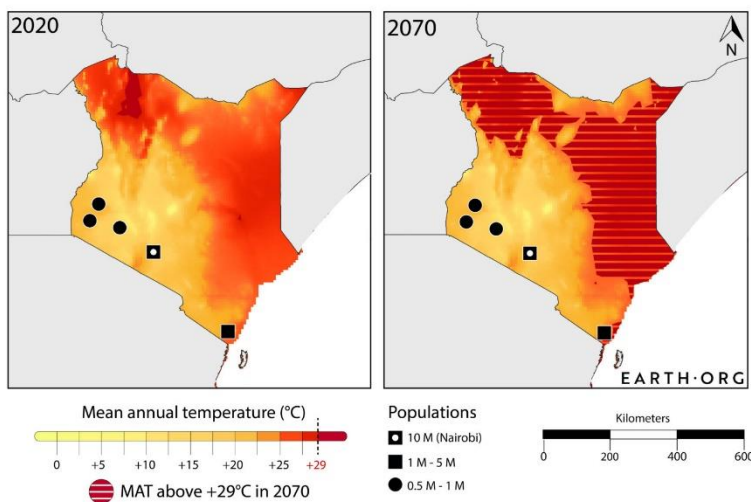
Map 2- Mean Annual Temperature Kenya 2020 2070 (Source: Mulhern 2020)

be seen in Map 3 and shows that the current problems will become worse in the decades to come. As Kenya's economy is vastly dependent on agriculture and agriculture is one of the main industries affected by climate change, Kenya must find a way to deal with its current and upcoming challenges. The Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) Index from 2020 identified Kenya as the 38th least ready and the 49th most vulnerable country globally. With the national poverty rate being at 36,1% in 2022 (REF), over a third of the population simply cannot afford to adjust their lives to the changing climate. One of the consequences is people taking children out of school early to help with household tasks or in some cases if their livelihood gets strongly impacted by climate change, parents can often not afford to pay for education (World Bank 2022). Due to this, Kenya needs to adapt to give its younger generations a future. Kenya has seen an increase in youth activism especially in recent years. Youth climate initiatives that focus on technological and community climate adaptation on a local and national level, can be found in various parts of the country. Governmental and non-governmental organizations have increased their climate adaptation aims in the region and are more and more also connecting gender aspects and putting youths in the center of it.

4.2 Kenyan Government Policies

In recent years, the Kenyan government has published multiple "Kenya National Development Youth Policies' which is specifically looking at how young people can be empowered for sustainable development. Its main points related to climate action are looking at how climate change has affected young people, especially in the agricultural sector. It describes the impact youths can have at the SDGs as "disruptive critical thinkers; creative change agents; innovators; communicators; educators; and leaders" (Kenyan National Youth Policies, 2019).

With a focus of young people in the agricultural sector, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Irrigation describes the main challenges to include: young people not having the skills necessary, a lack of knowledge and information, policies that are not in support of young people in the agricultural sector and the impacts of climate change in combination with a low environmental governance (Kenya Youth Agribusiness Strategy 2018 - 2022). To further address these issues and the engagement of young people, the Ministry of Environment and forestry proposed various ways to move forwards in their National Climate Change Action Plan 2018-2022. They look at capacity building within the government and relevant parties, a greater focus on monitoring and reporting, and furthering climate finance to be able to implement projects and activities more smoothly. The government has recognized challenges for young people and the natural environment for its country and can further be seen to officially propose ways to work on solutions.

5.Research Findings

This chapter is dedicated to presenting the findings in accordance with the main research questions. All findings are based on the data gathered during the fieldwork period taking place between February 21 to April 9th in Kenya. Overall, 31 interviews were conducted of which 30 were deemed of high enough quality to be included in this research. Out of these 30 interviews one interview was not recorded but will still be a part of the analysis because enough notes were taken. In the following, the demographic data of the interviews will be presented to gain a deeper understanding of the participants and the data gathered about them will be displayed. Further, an overview of the climate action activities of the interviewed participants will be discussed. This will allow for the findings to be seen in their cultural and local context.

5.1 Demographic data of research and participants

During the interviews, the participants were asked about general personal data, to be able to fully analyze the data but remain participant confidentiality and anonymously. These were gender, age, location, and ethnicity. In the following paragraph these demographic data findings are presented.

The participants' gender identities were aimed to be equal to ensure an appropriate and comparable data set. The questions regarding the gender of the participant were kept open for people to decide themselves rather than having to choose from options, meaning that other genders besides female and male were accepted. An equal gender distribution was achieved with 16 female identifying participants and 15 male identifying participants interviewed. One person identified as a trans female and will therefore be counted towards the female identifying participants.

Next to this, the previously determined age frame for this research was set for 15 years until 35 years old. This was estimated to be a range that would include youths that are in their last years of high school, university and young people who started working. During the fieldwork, all interviewed participants for this research were between 20 years and 33 years old. Meaning that the age frame between 15 years old and 19 years old and the frame of 34 to 35 was not present.

Another aspect are the locations the participants were from, which came to a total of around 21 different cities. Meaning that over 20 different locations that people were living in spread over most of the country were recorded. These are mostly in the urban areas of Kenya but reach from the West side over to the Eastern coast of Kenya.

5.2 Kenyan Youths in Climate Action

5.2.1 Beginning of climate action activities

During the research, three main paths were discovered for how young people first engaged within climate action. For this, the participants were asked what they considered their first climate action activity to be and how they got involved in it.

Tree planting

Most of the young people started being engaged with climate action at a young age by planting trees. The exact age was mostly not remembered, however people indicated that it was around pre or primary school age. Tree planting was mostly introduced by family or community members as was rather seen as a normal activity to support the community and plan. It was mentioned that planting trees was not necessarily perceived as directly related to climate change but when looking back, it was often seen as the starting point. The majority of youths who fit into this category, later further got involved in environmental clubs or organizations in high school or university and are also still continuing to plant trees today.

Environmental clubs

The second main path can be identified as young people getting active by joining environmental clubs in high school or university. For this, the participants were usually between teenage years up until their early- mid-twenties when engaging in them. This was found to also be related to the school offering participation in not just environmental clubs but also access to climate conferences, conservation associations or wildlife clubs. This often led to youths to be engaged within various directions of climate actions due to the environmental clubs. It was found that this engagement was often continued within NGO´s which were often youth led.

NGO`s

As a last path, many older participants that join in their early to late twenties started their involvement by getting active in an NGO. These were often international organizations which were often focused on climate action, conservation, or the sustainable development goals.

5.2.2 Climate action activities

The youth that were interviewed for this study were all currently engaged in climate action. When deeper engaging with the data, the different areas of engagement of the participants became clear. The main forms of involvement in climate action will be laid out and discussed in the following paragraphs.

Educational activities

The majority of the youth activities revolve around the area of education and awareness in their or general local communities. It consists mainly of raising awareness about climate change, its effects and the outlook in the communities and Kenya. While educating other youths and communities this often also spilled over into adaptation activities like tree planting, mangrove restoration and smart agricultural activities.

Advocacy activities

Often connected to educational activities but not in complete overlap is advocacy. While those two engagements are often carried out by the same participants, there is a group of people who only participate in advocacy related actions. These often include protesting, attending national and or international conferences, and amplifying affected rural, indigenous and community voices. A few of these activities are also acted out in combination with local and international NGOs.

Creative activities

A few of the participants are engaging in climate action in creative and artistic ways. This includes environmental poetry, climate change related storytelling through a podcast and or blogging.

5.3 Factors and their influences on youth climate action participation

In the following paragraph, the findings in relation to the factors of youth climate action will be presented. For this, the results of the coding process will be the main source and will serve as the foundation of these findings. All found codes will be laid out and their factors will be analyzed, with the support of quotes. The two sub questions will be answered in the following analytical chapters. These findings will later on be discussed in relation to the research context, the theoretical framework, and the positionality of the researcher in the discussion chapter.

5.3.1 Ability to participate - Physical Factors

➢ **Resources**

Sources of Resources

Receiving support was in the experiences of young people, not something that can be expected or taken for granted. Only a few described situations in which they were able to get support for resources that supported their climate action activities. If participating in secondary or university clubs or activities related to climate, they were given aid to go to conferences, have a meeting place or do activities that were in line with the aim of the club. It was also experienced that the Kenyan forestry organization was willing to hand out plants, trees, and seeds for tree planting events. Next to that, parents were a source of support, financially and in terms of networking. However, this was rather an exception as most shared to not be reviving any support from their parents. This was either due to the financial situation of the family or the lack of support for their climate action activities.

Transport

The issues of transportation to and from climate action projects or communities were experienced by most of the participants. It was often mentioned in connection to a general lack of financial resources and impacted the location participants were nowadays conducting their actions. A few interviewees are using the public transport system and express that infrastructure has gotten better over the last years, but the situation is not yet satisfactory. If transportation was available, other factors like security would be left disregarded in the process.

Barrier

Resources mobilization is mainly left in the hands of the young people who volunteer their time and own resources to be able to participate. By not being able to earn money from their activities, they shared having to use their own savings, empty them or balance money they received for food and accommodation with costs of engagement. Voices were loud that they believe that climate action should not be volunteer based but rather give financial incentives for young people to participate. This was connected to them sharing that this barrier impacted not only them but also friends or others who wanted to engage but could not afford to do so. A few youths started to try to find ways to get resources via social media, GoFundMe websites or turn their climate activities into an income generating source. Generally, it was shared that frustration was felt that climate action was not rewarded, and barriers were set up that actively held youths back from being able to involve themselves. Young people had to miss participating in national conferences, international conferences like the COP27 or rural based projects they wanted to join. In addition, one experience describes a situation where friends were unable to afford to apply for a passport and had to stay home from the international climate event. Another barrier was the lack of support from the government, religious institutions, and NGOs to support already planned or prepared projects after research had been done on what the communities needed according to the young people.

Interview 18- (...) Sometimes I will miss some of these, uh, climate conferences due to lack of transport, uh, except for the few that were facilitated for by the organizers. So I missed a lot of them. But then as a young person, I try to, you know, always. My little savings and use them. Sometimes you'll sacrifice whatever you have done for the little shopping and go to those conferences because they're important to you. Yeah. Okay.

➢ **Impact of Climate Change**

Environmental threat was renamed to Impact of Climate Change as the threat level was not the primary concern of the participants but rather the effects climate change already had on their lives.

Food security

The vast majority of the interviewees shared that climate change has led to food insecurity for them personally, their families and communities. Hunger and skipping meals were a predominant narrative that was brought up during the interview. To survive, a few of them that were interviewed only ate a maximum of two meals a day. It was further shared that in their hometowns, they know that parents especially sometimes go without a proper meal for a day or two to be able to feed their children. Also, not being sure if they or their families can still afford the same number of groceries while the prices are constantly inflating plays a strong role in that behavior. Participants' perception was that Inflation and food insecurity are interconnected but with the interplay of climate change it has gotten worse with no end in sight.

Interview 4- oh as we speak now, there's a lot of hunger too, so I, we, weq find that I work here, but I spend everything, I send everything home, but they can buy food. (..) You see where we are? And that is 2023. So what will happen in the next 10? Next 50 years. So sometimes if you try to look at, if you try to focus ahead, you'll find that it's terrible. Just terrible. Then I know people that also from, even from where I come from, but have died because of hunger. I personally lost my, my dad in 2017 cause of that.

Water

Next to that, water related issues like unsafe drinking water, water flooding houses and general water access were especially an issue in the more rural area the participants were from. A few participants mentioned sleeping with high water in their family houses, having to buy more water as the normal drinking water was not safe anymore or having to walk further to reach safe water access. This amounted to higher costs, more time spent on household tasks, especially for women and fear of having to leave their homes. It was acknowledged that this issue was more manageable in urban areas but still prominent even there.

Farming

In farming areas, youths have shared various stories of how it has affected their families and communities and with that also them. One of the main impacts of climate change on farming was found was loss of livelihoods due to death of livestock, floods, or droughts. Displacement due to loss of income or due to destroyed family homes was a common story shared which moved family further ways. Further, youths mentioned that especially the loss of family income combined with farming investments that fell through, created a need for them to step in and help financially support them. One example that multiple participant experienced was that their educational fund was now used to support impacted family members and the youth had to postpone or quit their university education. A few people who were affected by this shared that they are frustrated by government substitutions for farmers as their family lost the investment that resulted from this incentive. Especially animal deaths due to drought or fish dying in lakes in lake regions were said to strongly affect livelihoods therefore also the young people who have to deal with the consequences.

Interview M - Whether there's rain, you'll die, whether there is no rain, you still die because yeah, you, because when there is no rain for them, you don't get food. You'll get water. So the animals, the plants die. When there is rain, it's too much. Sweeps away everything again. So (...), it's a weird parallel

Health and Behavior

Next to the impact of climate change on farming, water and food security on young people's lives, their physical well-being was also said to be affected. Headaches, heat strokes and diseases were a common narrative that youths experienced due to the increased influences of global warming. In deep rural areas, they noticed that people's skin started cracking which was seen as a sign of how bad the situation has gotten. They also went as far as stating that the current situation affects them mentally. Feelings of anxiety, fear and depression were found while talking about how it has affected them personally.

Related to that was the perception that people have gotten meaner, and the feeling of community was fading as were fighting for themselves. The topic of bandits and their activities to secure pasture was brought up. One participant's friend was killed by bandits while another described being afraid to leave women home alone due to the increased possibility of being attacked by them. Bandits were also described as possible climate refugees who lost their livelihoods and resorted to violence.

Interview 2- (...) He was shot by the bandits and yeah, my, his soul resting peace, peace and yeah. And the banditry came in as a result of climate change because these guys are fighting for a small piece of land. Uh, near cap where like this pasture and like different communities are fighting for that pasture. If climate change was, was not there, I feel like yeah, my guy was, would still be alive.

- ➢ **Network**

Enlarged Network
Most of the participants experienced that their network grew bigger after entering the climate action space. Getting to know other projects and events all over the country and beyond was mentioned to be possible due to the network build up. Sharing ideas, experiences and climate change realities was perceived to be an enabler to how young people could engage in climate action. Due to prior engagements in other projects or environmental clubs, young people mentioned that they were able to use and benefit from these connections later. These connections provided resources, knowledge and contacts which opened further opportunities for their own engagement. Youths also shared that they are trying to do the same to others who are new to space or want to be engaged further.

Prior Network
Just about the majority of the interviewees stated that they knew others who were active in climate action, previous to their own initiative. It was often friends who connected or invited them to projects, activities, or shared information with them to lead to the participant feeling more willing to engage too. This previous network also included colleagues from work, or siblings who like friends engaged the youths in discussions and conversation surrounding climate change. People who did not know anyone before starting either followed climate activities online and shared feelings of being inspired by them, or just joined independently.

Online
Social media was a commonly named source of networking and a way to get aware of climate action projects in the area or country. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn were named where young people stay in contact about their projects and events. Next to that, Instagram postings were a source of getting aware of climate action. Especially, when following youth climate activists on social media, they expressed feeling inspired and wanting to follow their lead in.

- ➢ **Organized Environmentalism**

Projects
One of the main findings for where and how projects or other organized climate action was the urban vs rural divide. Young people who lived primarily in urban environments, mainly Nairobi, shared that it was rather easy for them to find and join climate actions. In more rural areas, people were less aware of projects around them, or they were farther away which brought issues of transportation with it. In areas that were seen to be particularly strongly impacted by climate change, youth mentioned the increase in NGOs at that location, which brought more opportunities for them to get active. In addition, it was young people's experience that working with NGOs made their involvement easier due to the NGOs having more resources, being organized, and having researched the project well. Regarding awareness, it was shared that Kenyan youth organizations are not always findable on google but are rather shared within a network or on social media accounts.
Starting their own projects, initiative or organization was a common narrative among the interviewed youths. By organizing the initiatives, themselves, participants were looking to best fit their and the thought of project needs and abilities and also invited others to join in. It was also shared that individual action often turned into collective action where projects were combined, or experiences were exchanged within the network.

Protests
Youths who previously attended or organized protests experiences were mainly seen as a barrier to their own engagement. A general fear to attend the protest due to the previous use of tear gas or other forms of violence. Some stories were shared of (illegal) arrests, threats which made the person not leave their house for over two weeks and dial back their climate action involvement, and general injuries. This was often mentioned to be the result of opposing politicians or policies. Following this, a few NGOs started to have lawyers involved so their participants would be safer, have resources and support. This was not widespread as others brought up not being allowed to protest by their families as they were worried, they could be targeted too or are too poor to get their children out of jail.
Next to this, a few participants of the study discussed feeling inspired by others, nationally and internationally, for their acts of protesting.

Interview 13 – (…) Being able to protest because ideally the, in many global south countries, being able to protest is not, uh, is not a protest, is not a right, it's a privilege. Um, it, it's very hard to protest and, um, that kind of thing. Like even during

Interview 7- You know, they, they're hit with tear guns and then, some end up in jail.

Online environmentalism
If young people were not able to participate in person or wanted to take a safe route to still engage, social media and general online activism came into play. This was a way for individual and group engagement as posts could be made to raise awareness, but also online discussions and meetings could be held. It was seen as a safer way of being in climate action as a few young people shared that they remain anonymous online to protect themselves and their families. It was also mentioned that due to internet connection issues and lack of access to a laptop or a phone, this way of engaging also had its barriers that had to be overcome.

> **International Climate Action space**

Over half of the participants mentioned having experience in the international climate action space. Those experiences have often been negativing in nature and include aspects of underrepresentation, decolonization and racial discrimination.
Participants mainly have been involved in international conferences like COP or conferences led by the UN. Most of these experiences were related to the most recent COP 27. This can be related to the focus of the COP27 being on Africa and its location being in an African country, namely Egypt. Therefore, the barrier to physically reach the conference was lowered and due to its attention on African communities there was an increased importance to attend. In general, it also must be kept in mind that participants have pointed out the lack of resources that are available for them to get involved in international climate action activities.
This is closely related to the aspect the youths raised, feeling underrepresented and not listened to. Also, participants who have not been able to participate internationally, raised their concern for their voices not being heard and Kenya´s issues not making it onto the agenda. Especially, the percentage of young

people and vulnerable communities are felt to be getting less speaking time. Participants felt that Kenya or other vulnerable countries were "victimized" but at the same time colonial structures were still intact. This was discussed primarily when talking about Kenya's dependency on the other countries for climate finance and the need for everyone to work together.

Discrimination in the international Action space
Participants who participated in the international climate action space did share experiences of discrimination from other people. Starting with the participation at the COP or other conferences, visa issues were a barrier that young people were not always able to overcome. It was mentioned that visas have been denied due to their nationality and NGOs discontinued their support and visa sponsorship.
Further, participants stated direct discrimination from other members of the community, especially in the online environment. This included acts of not giving an equal speaking time to Kenyan participants or making their engagement more difficult. A few participants shared that when speaking at an international zoom event, they received mean messages in the comments or subtitles were put on during only their speaking time. Another one shared further encounter with racism which in this case in forms of being cut out of photos, which received pushback from the climate action community.

Interview 28 –"So when it comes to, uh, the meetings that we had, he would always say, oh, the Africans have nothing to say. I, I don't think it that. Not just as a lady, but you know, putting, putting that, um, that nationality stuff that I don't have anything to say just because I'm an, I'm an African, yet I've been involved in the climate space and you feel like you are, you are better off already. You are more superior. I think that was not nice."

5.3.2 Willingness to Participate – Identity

➢ **Family Influences**

Besides parents influencing climate action for the participants, other family members were also brought up. This happened especially when parents were no longer an active part in the life of young people. However, it became apparent that family structures and relationships differ from the ones in previous western studies. Therefore, all experiences were included in the analysis by renaming this factor to family influences.

Support
Most of the interviewees shared that they feel supported about their climate action activities by their families. In a few cases, this was related to family members or parents being environmentally friendly or even active in the field themselves. It was shared that brothers, parents and cousins got the youths curious about climate actions or environmental projects. However, the way to support was not in all cases straightforward and the young people had to talk and educate them about what they are doing and why, before they acted in a supportive manner. Especially if family members were affected by climate change, they wanted to know more about the activities and how to assist was felt to be higher. Stories were shared of parents that reached out to teachers for more opportunities for them or parents that gave them a piece of land to pursue their climate

action activities there. If parents were supportive, young people were worried about financial or other resources and often shared how their families network helped them to participate more.

Barriers

The vast majority also experience the family impact as a barrier to climate action. While nowadays most feel supported by them, the beginning of the journey was often different. Next to questioning their faith, restricted movement and worries about the participants' future, many experienced a general misunderstanding of their actions. These were often believed to be rooted in a lack of education and awareness of climate related topics. It was mentioned that parents were often hesitant about their children going to meetings or protests and therefore set curves or forbade them from going. Especially during the COVID 19 pandemic or after violent protests, families were worried and kept them at home. In a few cases, this did not hold the participants back from sneaking out of the house or skipping school to still attend. This resulted in people not sharing their activities and keeping them from their guardians.

A fear of families that was a shared narrative, was the worry that students would not finish their study in a family approved field and waste their money and time on climate action. In this case, family members felt more comfortable about their involvement if they saw official certifications for climate related training, climate action related to trusted institutions or a paying job. Generally, it was felt that after the young people moved out of their families' homes, they were freer to engage and had less barriers that needed to be overcome.

Interview 18- I didn't tell them an ac, I'm an activist. I didn't tell them I'm an environmentalist. (..) If I was to say I'm doing it out of passion, they wouldn't understand. And they were like, that has never happened in this family. We don't understand. And I can't blame them because, uh, most of them, they're not educated. They don't understand. And you know, that thing has never happened in my community. So it was, it wasn't easy. But with time, um, I think it took me like four years for them to come to understand what I'm really into and after. (..) And that is one now when they came to know I'm making a big impact outside there and right now I can even tell my dad, dad, I'm going for a conference. And he's kind of supportive though. It took like time.

➢ **<u>Gender</u>**

Experiences of men

When male participants were sharing their experiences with how their gender and how gender in general has an impact on climate action participation, answers varied. A few men mentioned that they do not believe that their participation had any impact on their participation and declared that all genders take up the same roles in the field. Others disagreed with that as the majority felt gender to be a relevant factor for youth engagement and that more men are found in the climate action spaces. This was mainly referred to in regard to stereotypes of men and women and the cultural hindrances. Male individuals shared their image of men to be connected to men being about the challenge, being providers and executors, and more dominant in nature. These characteristics were said to be an enabling factor in climate action as they made it easier to reach more people and more trust was put into them from local communities. Especially, when it comes to the more rural areas, men were aware that elders were not listening to female climate activists, and they had the upper hand when it came to knowledge sharing. In addition, these cultural nuances were linked by a few men sharing that women were tasked with more household chores which gave them less time to participate.

When it comes to gender-based discrimination that was experienced by these groups of individuals, the vast majority had not experienced it. A few men shared that they felt not included in female led organizations or they had to give up their space for a woman in international events.

Generally, most participants discussed that they are working towards an increase in gender equality in the climate action spaces but did not mention a specific plan on how to do so. It was interesting to see that it was mentioned multiple times that they were aware that women are more affected by climate change than men. These varying experiences can be related to the different parental and or location based and show the diversity of the participants.

Experiences of women

Female experiences showed a great overlap with the male ones especially regarding the perception that the climate action space is male dominated, and women are not at an equal position compared to men. Like with the male observations, a few women felt that their gender does not have an influence on their involvement. However, these women also mentioned that they came from a supportive environment, had little experiences in the area or acknowledged the existence of different roles being taken up. The majority of female participants shared the feeling of not being listened to, having to be more resilient and being held back due to cultural stereotypes. For example, an individual was hindered in their participation due to being born out of wedlock and with that not having the right to own property which did not allow her to plant trees. Many women brought up the perception that more men are being given the space, by other men, to speak at panels or conferences and women being more active in climate action but were not invited to share their stories.

Generally, the experiences that women are the cares of the environment was shared which was also brought up by male participants. Meaning that women are more often found to do small scale activities like conservation in their community and are less often involved in bigger scale projects. This was supported by the stories told that the spaces are male dominated and if women are invited, they are given organizational tasks in contrast to leadership or public facing positions. One person shared that they realized that they were invited to join a project and later realized that she was only there so a woman would appear on the posters. Further discrimination was found when it came to the decision-making process where women were often excluded from. They further often experienced not being taken seriously even if they had the same or a better qualification as their male counterparts.

Interview 17- Uh, again, coming from a very male, uh, dominated, uh, communities and, uh, that, you know, uphold these cultures, you try and, uh, you know, do advocacy and speak. Um, sometimes people ask, you're just a woman, what are you telling us? What do you know? You don't know, such things.

Interview 22- It's so difficult for us to be engaged in decision making processes, and I've seen it in my community. Like most of the times when people come to start project, it's always about the men having the say at the end of the day. And women are usually catered the at, at, you know, they're, they're not given the opportunity to actually participate in this decision-making processes, which I feel that's something that we really need to work.

LGBTQ+ experiences

This factor and its influence must be put into perspective as only 16 out of the 30 interviews included questions about this particular topic. Due to it being brought up by one of the participants, it was taken into the interview guide to dive deeper and see how much of an impact it has.

When being asked about their experiences with LGBTQ+ community members in the climate action space, most people did not have direct encounters. A few people had shared second hand the stories of their close friends. The common theme through second and firsthand experiences was the fear of officially identifying as a member of this group and therefore being excluded from activities. The majority's perception was dominated by the barriers focusing on a lack of awareness and acceptance by society. It could also be observed that in relation to this, many think that they might have met a LGBTQ+ person but they didn't openly identify as such. A firsthand experience shared stories of their discrimination concerns being dismissed and going as far as feeling left traumatized after experiences in the climate action space. Another point that was relevant for this factor was that a participant stated that they believe that LGBTQ+ is a western concept and "just not our way".

➤ **Religion**

Generally, most of the interviewees were Christian, a small number identified as Muslim with just a few who did not see themselves as religious. As most experiences were coming from the Christian community, most of the findings are related to that. However, there was no clear distinction in encounters between young Muslims and Christians. The impact of religion was found to be strongly related to feeling responsible for the care of the plant, the activities executed by the religious institutions and the continuing struggle between scientific knowledge and religious beliefs. The majority of the participants had no or little experience with the religious institutions supporting climate action. When discussing the actions taken, it was mentioned that it was either related to tree planting activities they initiated or were successfully invited too. On the other side, a few preachers were independently talking about climate change or gave permission to the youth to talk about it. These were exceptions rather than the norm as derived from the youths' experiences.

Praying against climate change

The lack of climate actions supported or initiated from the religions institutions was also met with the influence of churches in the competing frames of science vs religious beliefs. Youths shared incidents where they witnessed prayers for rain being initiated by religious leaders and even the president. Participants shared the feeling of frustration as they experienced push back when trying to connect the lack of rainfall with climate change. Their faith is being questioned by their family which makes it harder for youth to share their knowledge about adaptation and mitigation practices. This can especially be seen by an example that was shared by a few participants, namely the correct way to plant a tree. They mentioned that often trees are not planted in a way that they can successfully grow but religious leaders tell them and their communities to pray for them to grow. If it does not manage to grow, it is considered bad luck which again brings conflicts within the families about faith.

Interview 25 - Religion, how to deal with climate, I'd rather like practical things. Do practical things like plant a tree, not pray for rain because you have to plant a tree and pray. After planting and taking care of the tree, watering it. Pray to grow, then pray. Cuz you cannot depend on prayers only. Yeah.

The responsibility to care of the planet

Around half of the participants referred their feeling to having to protect the environment back to the book of Genesis in the bible. This part refers to the domination of humans over nature and puts the responsibility to take care of it on them. The impact religion has on their engagement is directly connected to the overarching theme of feeling dutiful about caring for the environment.

Interview 21 - Okay. And they were, everyone read an excerpt from their creation story. Interestingly, it also did the same, like the instruction was, you know, they've been given the mandate to conserve and protect the environment, which for me, as a Christian in, in Genesis. So when I was able. Connect that it made so much sense that, you know, as human beings we are the custodians of nature basically.

5.3.3 Willingness to Participate- Beliefs about Climate Action

➢ **Beliefs about Causes of Climate Change**

This factor was only found in about one third of the interviews. If asked, participants talked about the impact of Climate change, their education, or the government's policies. The main themes that came up when talking about causes of climate change were colonial structure, the just energy transition, and frustrations about climate finance.

The youths shared a common narrative that revolved around how causes were in the global north, but the global south is feeling the effects more strongly. To that, came a feeling of an injustice in the energy transition, especially with the mining of resources and displacement of indigenous communities. Looking at the past and the perceived colonial structures that youths still felt today, the global north's efforts to fight the climate crisis were seen as too little and too inefficient. Especially when it comes to supporting the global south, youths felt that financial support was not fair to translate into climate debts for the affected countries. Generally, it was expressed that a few youths hope that Kenya or Africa will not follow in the footsteps of the global north and rather find a way to a greener industrial revolution.

➢ **Perception of other youths in the climate action space**

The social participation norm factor was deemed to better be phrased as perception on youths in the analytical part of the research. As this study focused on the age group of young people, it was relevant to include the social participation norm within youths which is best reflected in other perception on youths. This allows the research to include a greater variety of experiences under this factor which gives better overview of the situation in Kenya.

Youth's abilities

It was a recurring narrative that the younger generation(s) have the power and if they come together, they can have a say in what the future is going to look like. With this strong sense of community, it was also mentioned that education and awareness are missing to mobilize other young people. Youths were generally described as having a deep interest in climate, active and vocal in the field of climate action. It was also shared that many know of people from their generation who work with climate adaptation and climate action in general but do

not perceive it as such or know about the impact of climate change. Examples were given of just how motivated youths are. Stories were shared of friends who were willing to walk to the COP27 conference in Egypt as they were lacking resources to get there but wanted to participate. Resources was a general concern that was brought up to hinder involvement as climate action is mostly voluntary. The wish for more support and climate action to be turned into an income generating activity to increase their capabilities.

Social participation norm

A theme shared by most of the interviewees was the feeling of not being heard. Especially not by the government, national or international, which leaves them with only themselves to work with. When asked about whether they believe youth climate participation was a common thing to do, the answers varied. A few perceive other young people who are not active as lazy, ignorant, and selfish. These words were related to them feeling like everyone should be active as without, they cannot be heard. They also acknowledged that there are barriers to overcome but emphasized the need to work together as one.

Interview 21- I don't think it's normal. Okay. I feel like it takes a sense of commitment and passion. Because if it was easy, maybe everyone would be doing it. But it, cause there's so many challenges of course that comes with it. So I wouldn't say it's normal. It takes like a, you have to be very passionate to stick with it.

➢ **Feeling of Responsibility**

Educating and Mobilizing

All youths shared the feeling of being the responsible person to educate their family and friends. This became apparent due to the participants bringing up that they must enlighten, inform, and generally bring their knowledge to others who do not have it yet. In connection with this, beliefs were discussed of if people have the knowledge, they will join and act too. This influenced youths by motivating them to continuously work with their communities and educate them about the impact of climate change on their livelihoods. Especially young people not active in climate action were said to be wanted to recruit and together, be agents of change.

Obligation

Youths who are active in the climate action space had a common narrative. The idea that they are the ones the future depends on, which is why they need to continue to act and involve more people. A few people shared that they often feel guilty for not giving more of their time to climate action, but that their income bringing jobs held them back from engaging more. Feelings of enlightenment and urgency came up during the interviews, with interviewees looking out for the next generations and their communities whom they feel to be serving. This influenced participants to take risks, break curfews or go against family advice to rather focus on school or to spend their time differently. Instead, they saw this as a challenge and they must explain why it is so important to them and why they feel like this is a non-negotiable task they have taken up.

Future intentions

All the people that were interviewed have strong intentions and clear goals of what their future in climate action should look like. More advocacy, more activism and never giving up on raising their voices and trying to be heard. From becoming a climate expert to going into the field of diplomacy, youths were constantly thinking of new and different ways to engage and support communities and the planet.

➢ **Past participation in civil society organizations**

Community support
The main way in which young people were previously engaged is related to community support. For this, most of the participants volunteered in children's homes or orphanages, youth centers, and community projects. These included working in elderly homes, with people who have a disability and or sexual health projects. The participants shared feeling empowered, increased resilience to push back and a general better understanding of community needs. By knowing what a community needs, they were able to transfer this knowledge and ability onto climate related projects. Further, they mentioned that working with others in the community gave them hope and taught them how to be heard by outsiders.

Interview 14 - Uh, climate change and climate action, it's not easy. So, um, during my volunteering journey, building that resilience has enabled me to like having a cushion. Yes, for whatever comes. There's a lot. Um, pushback from people. There's a lot of pushback from the government. There's a lot of pushback if and when you want to go to conferences, so that makes you keep pushing.

Environmental Care
Another form was by taking care of the environment, by for example picking up waste, community clean ups and wildlife conservation efforts. Participants stated that they did not see a direct connection to climate change in the beginning and only did so after starting in climate action and learning more about climate change. Their past participation was in most cases connected to taking care of their environment and they were often told to take responsibility for the upkeep of surrounding nature. This feeling of responsibility was then transported into taking further climate action.

Science and culture clubs
Another form of prior engagement was the engagement in science clubs at school or at cultural festivals. Youths who participated in science clubs reported that they gained relevant knowledge on the use of technology which they can apply in their climate action activities.
The participants who engaged with drama and cultural related activities, felt like their prior engagement increased their confidence and social skills in general.

➢ **Climate Change Education**

When talking about education related to climate change most of the youth expressed a strong lack of knowledge in that area which often served as a barrier to their participation. Participants mentioned that they had to do their own research to catch up and be able to fully participate in the space. They further talked about a strong feeling of responsibility when it comes to sharing the knowledge with their communities or sharing the community knowledge. Generally, the school education was regarded as not enough and hindering their ability to get involved or engage others.

School education on climate change
Most of the interviewees shared that they got introduced to the topic of climate and environmental studies during high school, with a few only at university level. However, at a secondary education level, the knowledge shared was mainly about weather, different climates and general environmental studies. The vast majority

shared that they felt like their education did not include climate change or conservation related information. If schools had an environmental club or sent their students to conferences, the students were more likely to receive climate change education. This was in all cases considered to be broad and not specific information and was not felt to close the knowledge gap. University students commonly discussed that their knowledge of climate change strongly increased after the start of their studies, yet a low percentage of the youths were enrolled in tertiary educational institutions. A few university students discussed that they felt like the information received was Eurocentric which still left them with having to do their own research.

Own research
The vast majority of the participants stated that they had to teach themselves about climate change, its impacts and consequences. For this most researched online, talked to other more knowledgeable people or used social media to keep updated and gain a better understanding of what is going on. A few people shared that the moment they started to understand climate change better, they also started to feel scared about the future. Others mentioned that when they started their climate action involvement, they had little to no knowledge, which was a barrier to their participation. Fueled by the willingness to learn, they started reading academic articles online, followed climate activities on social media and talked to their peers. This helped them to understand the situation but also to motivate them to try to prevent the same lack of knowledge for others.

Sharing the knowledge
All participants stated that when they learned more about climate change, they felt the responsibility to bring that knowledge to their families and communities. It was brought up that when participants started, the topic was not talked about a lot in Kenya. In addition, due to the lack of education and religious beliefs, and language barrier in education material on climate change, other people were hesitant to listen. Participants who were involved in indigenous communities shared that they realized that these communities had more to share with them than they had with the communities which led them to work on amplifying their voices. Others experienced pushbacks which were easier to overcome with family members than community members.

Interview 9- After educating them about climate change crisis and also them experience firsthand climate crisis now they believe climate change is real

➤ **Political Influence**

Political Orientation was renamed as Political Influences as this way it covered the variety of experiences of the youths when it came to political structures and beliefs.

The experiences youths have made with the Kenyan government, their policies and actions can be summarized by a lack of trust and frustration with the political officials. All participants of the research shared the narrative of not being able to rely on the government to work on the climate action they felt to be necessary. Connected with this was also a feeling of having to step up and needing to fill the gaps left behind by the political system. The main aspects that came up and show the political influence will be discussed in the following paragraph.

Good policies but lack in implementation
Most of the interviewees described the climate policies as good in theory but not in practice. This was related to the feeling that politics talked about climate action and its importance, but it was felt that this was connected

to their own personal gain rather than their actual beliefs. For example, it was a shared experience that when elections came closer or when talking in front of an international audience, many promises were made to appeal to voters or the international community, but no actions were taken afterwards.

Profits over people

Another common narrative was profits over people as most of the participants felt that the government was mostly concerned about how the policies can benefit them. For this, the topics of greenwashing, fraud and giving wrong information came up. The wrong information was mainly related to the government ensuring its people that prayers will bring rain and farming will be profitable. A few of the people interviewed shared that this made them feel frustrated as with their knowledge about climate change, they feel like relying on farming is not a long-term strategy and their communities are being lied too. It was mentioned that it was felt that these strategies supported the government's interests which are thought to be strongly related to private interests and profits. There were a few people who had strong negative feelings about the Kenyan government and a few who declared that they are not interested as they don't have a reason to do so. The disparities were related to their experiences but showed a general disregard for the political climate actions.

Community level

Further, they mentioned that their rural communities were being left alone by not being included in the already seen as weak policies. A few participants brought up that they felt like the climate policies implementation could mainly be observed in the urban areas, specifically Nairobi and less so at the rural level. It was shared that policies were not taking perspectives or needs of more local communities into account which left the people, especially the youths, in charge to step in. Resulting from a lack of trust in the government, many young people take up the challenge themselves to find adaptation and mitigation solutions for the rural areas. Next to that, a few people mentioned that they saw more NGOs implementing climate related projects than there were coming from the Kenyan government.

Interview 8- I'll just be honest. Not unless we do it by ourselves, but if we wait for the government to do it, it's going to take ages. And because of their interests, they, we, we have a different political interest of leaders and, uh, now our political game is changing to interest.

Engaging youths

The consensus of youths' experiences also included a frustration of not being included in the policy making process or holding back from trying to engage. It was shared that while feeling responsible to act, neither resources, inclusion nor other kind of support was given. A few experienced the government providing training or youth service, but the majority felt left alone and even used. This resulted from the government inviting young people for a pre COP27 meeting especially for young people to contribute but their contributions and thoughts were felt to never be considered or to be disregarded.

Interview 10- But I think we use force to get to that place. Because the future is about us. It's not about Kenyan government. The future is about our kids. It's not about the Kenyan government.

6. Discussion of Findings

This chapter will dive deeper into the presented findings by analysis and discussion. It further reflects on the existing literature and on how this studies findings further extent and contribute. Next to that, the analytical framework, its tools, and methods, especially its limitations and constraints are reviewed. This part of the thesis aims to position the results within the literature, reflecting on the study and the positionality of the researcher itself.

6.1 Reflections on the existing theories related to climate action and youth involvement

Academic debates where this research and its findings are in line with will be the start of this discussion. Following that, contributions to the existing literature derived from the results will be reflected upon.

When looking at existing theories related to climate action and youth involvement, there is a lot of overlap with previous theories.

One very clear aspect that was found to be in line with the theory was the correlation between climate change impact and climate action activities mentioned by Sparks (2021).

The interviewed youths shared that after seeing changes in their environment, especially after learning of the connection to climate change, they felt a responsibility to act. When talking about how climate change has not only affected their lives but also their families and communities, they also directly mentioned how they want to bring change and knowledge by being active in climate action. Mainly focusing on raising awareness and other sharing knowledge activities, these findings were reflected positively on the research by Richardson (2020). The climate actions conducted were what was expected, but it was additionally found, that youths mainly focus on empowering and educating other youths instead of general awareness raising.

Related to that, is the feeling surrounding climate change as discussed by (Wallace-Wells, 2018). The literature discussed feelings of anxiety, helplessness, and anger towards the situation. In these studies findings, feelings of anxiety and anger were present, mainly when sharing stories of feeling not heard or listened to by their communities or political institutions. While the feeling of helplessness was not primarily present, and if brought up, met with a strong desire to act now and in the future. Anxiety was rather an aspect of fearing about the future of their situation and not knowing how they or their families will deal with even worse conditions. It was also found when sharing their experience about learning about climate change and its consequences. Feelings of anger were either related to national or international political climate actions. Frustration was shared about how protests youth inclusion is being handled nationally and how their ability is limited by lack of resources. It can be said that the younger generation is challenging current Kenyan policies set up by politicians. Especially in that context, participants' narratives partly reflected the theory of the deficit model but were more in line with the further developed engaged citizen's model.

The deficit model states that adults set the standards for behavior and therefore youth engagement is seen as not complete and valuable (Osler and Starkey 2003; Putnam, 2000). As mentioned, this was partly found as youth engagement was not perceived as not valuable enough to include from the perspective of the youths. As described by Dalton (2009), youths' activities were constituted of volunteering and protesting for what they stand for. In Kenya, this was further expanded with other activities in which

further prove the change in political engagement between different generations. To be able to fully discuss these theories, more research would be needed from the perspective of non-youths. With these findings, it was possible to say that youths are perceived as doing things differently as only youths were reported to participate in climate action protests or events. When looking at the aspect of why youths are being included by government according to Cahill & Dadvand (2018), this study found that other than stated in the theory, youths felt to be included for legitimacy reasons rather than the expected reason to overcome socio-economic issues. This outcome can be explained by the small number of youths who previously worked together with political institutions which potentially influenced the findings of this study. Generally, there was a greater focus on working on own projects or NGO projects than on working with government projects. With the presented lack trust in their government to implement change, let them execute their right to demonstrate peacefully and support their climate actions.

Youths interviewed were engaged citizens who challenged current structures and that not just on a national level. Due to this and their shared achievements in bringing change, they can also be considered transformative citizens as defined by Alam in 2021. Internationally, it was felt that young people and especially people from the global south were underrepresented and discriminated against. This was also found in previous studies by, for example by the scholar Gammage (2015). Another aspect found in previously presented research is focused on the limitations of opportunities and resources in comparison to the global north as discussed by multiple studies (Cotgrove and Duff, 1980; Kriesi, 1989; Giugni and Grasso, 2015). With participants sharing stories of having to spend their own money and resources to be able to participate in addition to what they felt to be a more difficult time to participate in international events, this became apparent. A few of the participants also stated that they lost interest in engaging internationally as they felt they were just invited to fill a quota and rather feel that their activities have an impact. This finding is comparable to young people engaging with their government as similar narratives were shared of their action having little to no impact on the climate and they decided to work independently.

6.2 Reflections to the analytical approach

Generally, the framework was deemed to be a relevant fit for the purpose of the research. Besides the reframing or renaming of the factors, the findings can be well related and fitted into the framework. Especially the data collection process, namely interviews, gave a unique perspective into the participants lives and their experiences with climate action. The young people interviewed were mostly very open to sharing their stories and eager to participate in the research. Their passion for the topic also meant that they were independently sharing and reaching out to their network to join the study themselves. Due to this, the research was able to exceed expectations for the number of interviews held.   In the analytical process, the method of coding enabled the previously established factors to be found but also to discover new ones. When looking at them together and at each of them separately, it allowed to get a comprehensive understanding of the influences on youth climate participation in Kenya.

Factors of the analytical framework

When it comes to the specific enablers and disablers that were discussed in the literature review and were taken over into the analytical framework as factors, it became apparent that they often could not fully be

applied to the situation in Kenya. By being researched and developed in the global north, they could only be utilized in this context to an extent. Factors were found to mean and function differently than should be expected based on the literature. This enabled this study to find differences and similarities when it comes to youth engagement. It can further report new factors and refine previously established ones. To reflect on these findings, this paragraph will look at each aspect of the analytical framework and its factors separately.

Willingness to Participate – Identity

For Parental Influence, it was noticeable that participants often seen other members of their family as more or on a similar level of influence than their parents. Due to described close family relations including youths living with not just their parents or having to live with other family members due to the parents' situations, differences became clear. Therefore, the factor was renamed into family influences to better fit the circumstances in the regional context. Generally, for parents and family influences, the findings were not according to findings from previous studies. In contrast to Mead et al (2012) theory, stating that if parents risk level for climate change is low, it would affect their children by them not seeking information about it or engaging with the issues, young people were found to rather influence to their family members. While it a few cases, cousins or siblings were an enabling factor to connecting the participant with climate initiatives, young people mainly had to work to gain support from their families. As mentioned by Mead et al (2012) curfews and household rules set by caregivers were a barrier, but it was a common narrative that these did not hold them back from engaging after all.

Further, findings on gender were divided in terms of being in line with the literature concerning the effects of gender on youth participations. On the one hand, as expected from the literature by Coe (2013) organizational structures and stereotypes had a disabler function, especially for female identifying participants. They experienced discrimination in form of not being seen as equals and having the same capabilities than compared to men. It is important to note that this was more often the case within the communities the climate action activity was implemented than within the organization itself, which differs from the original theory. This could be explained by more fieldwork and contact with affected communities than young people have in the global north. It was described that due to this and the attributes that are connected to female activists, more seen as caregivers of the environment, women were less often found in leadership position, which is according to the literature review (Robnett 1997). It was however found that considering this, more only female led groups emerge which had the effect that now men felt left out of these groups. The aspect of LGBTQ+ communities within climate action spaces, was a new, not previously research factor that was added due to participants sharing their experiences with it when talking about gender discrimination. Not all people who were interviewed shared their stories about this, due to it being added later to the interview guide or them not wanting to talk about it. It became clear that this topic, as political opinions, and views on LGBTQ+ members predict, was sensitive to talk about. Youths who had previously had experiences with it, named this factor to have a negatives influence on their involvements as they were not able to be themselves and often worried about others finding out about their sexuality or gender affiliation.

Religion was a factor added in due to the high percentage of religious inhabitants of the country. Due to the missing literature on this factor and its influence on youth climate action, this research's findings will be discussed in relation to parental influence and the origin of their feeling of responsibility. Here, it became clear that the religion of the parents had the main impact in being a barrier for young people to bring climate related information closer to their families. By believing in the power of prayers and God, a struggle occurred between scientific knowledge and religious believes. This then had the effect of parents setting stricter household rules and fearing about the level of faith their children are exhibiting, which led to a less open way of communicating between parties. Additionally, religion was named as a factor that enables taking initiative due to passages in the bible quoting that humans dominate the earth and needing to take care of it.

Willingness to Participate – Beliefs about Climate Action

Theory stated that political orientation and beliefs were a byproduct of their upbringings, including class background. The interview pool for this study was diverse in nature but besides differences in resource availability, class background was not mentioned as a factor they believed to be of importance for their engagement. The view on politics and its influences was commonly seen in the same way. Due to a lack of trust that was laid on a foundation of frustration and not feeling heard or included, most participants moved away from political institutions in their efforts to engage in climate action. Rather, protesting the government's actions and policies became the chosen way to interact with politics. The disappointment in the government was rather contradictory with how the government described youth and set out to be a supporting entity for youth in climate action, especially in the agricultural aspect. By framing young people as bringing new ideas and being able to reorganize traditional ways of thinking (Kenyan National Youth Policies, 2019), questions arise on why youths perceive the government to not just standing in their way but as working against engagement.

This was further connected in the way education about climate change is being handled nationally. Young people expressed that their lack of knowledge in that field was a disabling factor as they first had to study by themselves to be able to engage in climate action. Due to this and not knowing where to get climate change information in the beginning, it slowed down their process of becoming active. By having to rely on themselves or other people who were already active in climate action, it formed a strong community of youth as they share information on social media and generally are trying to share the knowledge once, they have it. This formed their belief in cases in Climate Change, which was a factor discussed in the literature review but for the sake of this research was combined with education as an overarching factor. It was interesting to see that the focus was rather on what can be done now than on what the causes of climate change are, causes were mainly a topic of concern when engaging in the international climate action space.

Knowing that gaining knowledge on this topic comes with its barriers, young people shared a great feeling of responsibility to spread the information by focusing on other youth and their own communities. Being left alone to fight for awareness of the climate crisis, after having little to no governmental support and having to inform themselves, it is felt that it is up to them to bring the change.

Connected with this are the future intentions of participation in climate action. Due to young people feeling like they are the bearers of responsibility for their country and its people, participants were strongly committed to continue their activities. The findings by Haugenstad et al (2021) point to this being connected to group identification, political orientation, and the environmental threat level. Findings of this study can only confirm the link between the impact of climate change on their lives. Political influences like added barriers to protest and a frustration with the climate policies had a greater impact than just political orientation regarding conversative or liberal. When it comes to attending protests or other potentially dangerous climate action activities in Kenya, participants showed signs of being hesitant if they cannot guarantee their or their family's safety. However, instead of decreasing their involvement, they were striving to find other, safer, ways to engage, which were mainly connected to online activism. Especially women stated that they were forbitten or it was strongly suggested to not join the demonstrations as in comparison to men, their safety was harder to secure. This contribution to the theory on past participation is relevant as it shows why other paths are being chosen and that the issues of gender inequality is dominant.

When looking at past participation, the findings were in line with previous studies. It was stated that past participation is an enabling factor due to it forming personal values and forms of social identities (Haugenstad et al, 2021). During the interviews, it became clear that spending their time to support communities was seen as a normal thing to do which points to common cultural values between the participants. Their social identity strongly suggested that young people hold a responsibility for the well being of their families and fellow Kenyans. In addition to the theory, the aspect of learning from previous experiences was deemed to be of equal relevance. Resilience building and networking were the main skills that were said to be learned due to previous participation.

For the factor Perception on youths was closely connected to the factor of network as knowing other people in the climate action space, greatly affected how other young people were looked at. As mentioned by Sarason (1974) a feeling of belonging in a specific community can strongly impact the social participation norm, this is also in accordance with these findings. However, pollical activism was not perceived by the young people as a common activity, especially not outside urban areas. Rather by engaging in climate action, they had to explain their initiatives was met with confusion or lack of understanding from family members but also friends. Due to the strong sense of responsibility, most youth shared that they either convinced their friends to join or are still trying to do so. Therefore, it needs a young person to be active in climate action to change the perception of youths on participation. This can be explained by the many participants sharing that they were the first or one of the first person out of their community, to become active.

Feeling responsible was the main factor that enabled young people to participate in climate action in Kenya. This factor was found to be interconnected with most other factors and can therefore be seen as the driving force of their participation. Therefore, the overcoming of barriers, the strong intentions to continue their engagement, in combination with wanting to share the knowledge and empower more young people is consistent with the studies findings.

Ability to Participate – Physical Factors

Organized environmentalism was deemed to be an overarching factor that was strongly connected to the factor of network due to the way experiences related to each other. Network has been found to be an enabling factor if present due to the awareness of climate change information and activities it has be

power to exchange. According to the literature, this was to be expected as other young people had experienced similar narratives (Prendergast et al in 2021, Walgrave and Wouters in 2022). It was particularly relevant that in addition to the theory established on network, youths also shared stories of how they are actively recruiting and extending their network to young people who have not yet engaged in climate action. Most exhibited a strong feeling of responsibility to educate as many people as they could on climate change and its impacts as they, also in context of religion, wanted to protect their environment and communities. Location also played a relevant role, as participants from more rural areas shared difficulty finding projects or organizations that they can join to get active. This usually then resulted in their own activities being set up and were rather based on community needs. As mentioned previously, especially in rural communities, gender stereotypes and a lack of climate change knowledge prevailed. Therefore, living in a non-urban environment was a disabling factor for getting involved in climate action.

Due to frequent, climate-change induced events, they were not just focusing on what could potentially be a threat but rather shared stories of how they are dealing with the current situation. This included preparation for coming climate events, it included the original factor but to be able to include a wider variety of experiences, the choice to extent the factor was made. This results in this factor being able to fit into the category of ability to participate, mainly regarding resources but also in willingness to participate. As discussed earlier in the discussion chapter (Sparks 2021), participants stated that due to their high proximity to climate change related events, such as droughts and floods, they felt a high responsibility to engage in climate action activities. This was especially the case after they learned about climate change itself and gained a deeper understanding of adaptation and mitigation.

If families were affected by climate change, financial help was needed which in some cases needed to be supplemented with money saved in educational funds of the participants. This is a special disabler as it directly affects the ability to participate in climate action. As mentioned in the findings, young people often finance their own activities, including transportation and other necessities. Public Transportation had, according to the interviews, the possibility to be an enabler, but due to safety and time constraints was rather a disabler. This puts one of the main aspects of the theory developed by (Feldman, 2021; Stuart et al., 2018) in line with the study findings. However, as parents were not named as a source of transportation, possibly due to a lack of support exhibited by them, financial or time constraints.

Additionally, inflation was mentioned as a resource draining factor as even less money is available for them to spend on their own climate actions. A few of the young people already must choose between their engagement and three full meals a day. It can be expected that in the following years the effects of climate change, which include inflation due to food insecurity, will increase steadily. Meaning that participating in climate action will only get harder for people living in the global south. Without support from the government or other external sources, especially young people will not be able to engage which would also include the aspects of representation nationally, internationally and the spread of information about climate change from youths to other parts of the population. The importance of supporting the younger generation can no longer be dismissed if climate justice is to be achieved.

6.2.1 Reflection and Outlook

Reflection on positionality of the researcher

When reflecting onto the position of the researcher as an insider to the topic of the study and being a participant of climate action themselves, it was helpful to the outcomes of the study that the researcher and the participants were able to connect over shared engagement in climate action. Participants felt quickly comfortable sharing their stories, but some also saw this as an opportunity to network with the researcher. This was also a result of the connection between the researcher and the partner organization CARE. It was open for participants to come to the office for the interview, which was met with enthusiasm if it was possible to meet there. Due to the affiliation to the organization, it was indeed felt that more trust was accounted to the research which was also seen by youth sharing the research within their network or directly connected the researcher further. This led in a very few cases to participants asking for support with their projects or for opportunities for them personally. In these situations, it was explained that the researcher cannot promise any benefits as it was stated in the information and consent form.

The outsider position that derived from growing up in Europe was supportive as the main literature review for this study was from the global north and therefore relatable. This led to the researcher being able to quickly spot differences and similarities between the ways of engagement and the influencing factors. However, this positionality, especially also as a white person, also hindered some young people from becoming participants. It was communicated that people that were asked to do this study by their friends or other people within their network, were fearful of being alone with a white person in a room. Multiple possibilities and accommodation were offered but, in these cases, they were not sufficient, and it was decided not to join the study.

Limitations and constraints

By understanding the limitations and constraints of this conducted study, the findings can further be seen in the research context.

One limitation of the research was due to the locations of the initiatives. Most of the initiative known is based in Nairobi and others are in cities in a two-to-three-hour radius. Due to this the research might have an urban bias and due to the position of the initiatives limited to the specific areas of Kenya. This gives possible risks of generalizing statements for the whole of Kenya as not all areas would be covered. The research puts a emphasis on having a strong diversity not just in regards to gender but also in regions. Even with 21 different locations, some regions, especially more rural ones, were not included. The available infrastructure put a constraint on the possibility to reach all regions of the country which made it not possible for the researcher to reach an even wider variety of youths backgrounds and locations.

Regarding the participants, methods are set up so that only active youth will be interviewed. This leaves out the experiences of youth that did not become active in climate action and youths who are active but whose activities were only on a very small-scale level and therefore did not reach the researcher. As this research will focus on why people became active this selection can be seen as justified but it still must be acknowledged that this selection limits the research. The same counts for projects that the study was not able to hear about due to size, communication, or network.

Future research opportunities

Future research opportunities that derived from the findings of this study are mainly based on needing a stronger focus on youth and climate action within Kenya, the African context, and the international context as well. In general, it became clear that more research is needed to get a fuller picture of African (Kenyan) youths and their experiences, to implement strategies to support and empower all youths. In addition, not just the youths and their activities need more academic attention but especially the knowledge sharing strategies between generations and with communities is a relevant field.

First of all, looking at the Kenyan context, this study is able to lay the foundation for further studies that focus on closing the gap between generational conflicts focusing on sharing climate change knowledge within families or communities. By diving deeper into different viewpoints and perceptions, research could serve to better understand knowledge exchange and propose ways to increase communication. Second, to be able to see this study in an Africa context, it would be necessary to conduct research in a similar manner in multiple African countries. For this, working together with regional organizations and communities would be greatly beneficial. With this approach, the countries experiences could be compared which would open the way for better understanding the African youths and their capacities regarding climate action. A third research opportunity is based on the experiences of Kenyan youths in the international climate action space. To be able to find ways to work towards more equal representation and a decrease in discrimination, research needs to be conducted in perception between youths from different regions of the world. By doing so, differences and similarities can be discovered which can be used to encourage further collaboration within climate action spaces.

Reflection on the results in relation to the field of Development Studies

The relevance to the field of international development studies is two-fold. Firstly, youth activism, especially in the global south, has until recently received very little coverage in academic literature. The main studies in this field of study have been conducted in European countries which affect the way the factors are framed and what behavior is expected from young people. Therefore, the ways in which young Kenyan people who are engaged in climate action are experiencing barriers remains left behind, which greatly affects the way those youth are supported from the global north. By researching the factors developed in the north, in a global south country, this study aimed to fill gaps and refine the barriers that are present. As a second aspect, this research contributes to the way the relationship between the younger generation and climate change is perceived. Due to the experiences shared, the impact it has on their lives, families and communities paints a strong picture of why climate action is a field that needs to be explored further in academic literature.

7. Conclusion

Young people are the ones who will have to live the longest with the consequences of the changing climate, all throughout their lives. Their engagement and fight to influence policies and put climate justice on the top of the agendas is strong and necessary to make sure everyone's voices are being heard. Climate action in Kenya and the younger generation are closely linked, with the youth taking up a large amount of activities for climate action. They are organizing demonstrations, spreading knowledge and awareness about climate change, and continue to stand up for what they believe in. However, young people are often not seen as equals in their political engagement due to their age, lack of experience and the different ways they involve themselves. Next to that, this study aimed to lay open factors that influence this participation in climate action and the ways they impact youth engagement. By looking at previously established factors, mainly researched in the global north, it focused on finding disablers and enablers that fit the regional context, by doing so differences can be compared.

The findings of this research point to various multiple disablers and enablers that affected young people in Kenya in their efforts to fight the climate crisis. For this, it must be acknowledged that every factor has the ability to be both an enabler and disabler.

First of all, for enabling factors, the feeling of responsibility was the main one was found. It was the underlying factor for many other driving forces that motivated young people to engage in climate action. After learning about the effect climate change has on them, their families, and the country, they felt that it was on them to spread the message and act. Further, this influenced their intentions for future activities in climate action and their perception on other young people. It can be said that once responsibly was taken up, youth did not feel like they could give it up again, also due to their feeling of fighting this fight alone or even against others. It enabled young people to attend protests even if they are known to turn violent and not regarded as something young people, especially women should do. Next to that, is the factor of past participation which enabled young people to further care for their communities and employ their previously learned skills. Due to the experience, young people felt more comfortable to engage in climate action and could also use and enlarge their network further. Generally, networks, if present, supported young people to gain awareness about climate action activities and gain knowledge from others. Knowledge about what is happening to their environment greatly enabled young people as knowing what caused distress to their communities motivated them to start acting immediately. In addition, feeling the effects of climate change and how it affects their livelihoods enabled young people to search for more information. Climate change related education was once received a great enabler. However, if not, it was a strong disabler to youth climate action engagement.

Without knowing what is happening, youth were not able to understand the importance of climate action, or they felt like they could not engage due to the lack of knowledge, which set a barrier for their involvement. It was shared that before they could start getting involved, they had to catch up on information which slowed them down. It was interesting that this then inspired them to reach out to other not sufficiently educated young people and share their knowledge with them. Young people also reached out to their families and communities to spread their newly learned information about the effects of climate change. Unfortunately, the influence of families also posed as a disabler due to the curfews or household rules being set to hold their children back from going to meetings or activities. In addition, it served as a disabler as families were reported to not in all cases be open to learning more about the topic,

often to religious beliefs. Youth saw religion as hindering their climate action activities due to the conflict between religious beliefs and the scientific facts they were trying to share. This was heightened by families questioning young people's faith if they tried discussing the conflict with them, leading to a decrease in intergenerational communication and support coming from them and the communities. Therefore, no, or less (financial) support was provided, which was met with them using their own money and thereby decreasing their in most cases, limited budget. The general factor of resources, including transportation, set a barrier due to young people not being able to reach or afford to join climate action activities. Due to rising inflation, this challenge will only increase over time, further disabling young people in their activism. As a last factor that falls into this category, gender stereotypes in Kenya decreased the capabilities of the younger generation, especially for women. With women not feeling like they can be part of decision-making process, less voices and stories can be heard which is necessary for a sustainable adaptation and mitigation process. This also translates to youths in the global south as they are still feeling underrepresented, discriminated against, and not listened to in the international climate action space. More awareness is needed to reflect the importance of including all different voices, experiences, and regions of the world. By not seeing all youth globally in the same way but recognizing their differences climate justice can be brought forward.

All in all, Kenyan youth are strongly engaged with climate action as it is their country, they want to support in the fight against climate change, their families' livelihoods they are hoping to support and save from floods and droughts, and their futures they are trying to protect. With a strong commitment to themselves and their future is what keeps them going even after having to overcome disabling factors again and again. In addition, they are trying to use the power of the large young population to gain acknowledgement in front of the national and international governments. Young people cannot be seen as one and the same everywhere as this research found the previous findings not to be fully fitting in the global southern context. This study showed the necessity for further research on youth activism in global south countries so it can be better understood and supported. This research showed that young people in Kenya are having to face various hindrances to be able to participate and to be able to continue to do so. Due to their strong sense of responsibility as the effects of climate change are increasing in severance and occurrence, youth in Kenya are fighting for actions that could support their country and communities. Without proper resource allocation, education given, or youth being included in decision making processes, young people will have to continue to bear the burden alone.

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Annex

Codebook

Belief in Cause of Climate Change	The participants expressed their key beliefs of the causes of climate change and how they believe this has shaped their experience and motivation towards their participation in climate action	"It is not always way for humans because we are selfish in that way. I think that's why capitalism has excel, cause it is only us and us"
Global South vs Global North	The participant mentioned the global north or the global south when talking about their beliefs in cause of climate change	"So, um, of course, um, Kenyas had the least responsibility in causing the climate crisis, yet they're bearing the brunt of it."
Climate action activities	Participants shared their activities related to climate action	"So I'm in the first cohort of volunteers at Are Co Africa, Kenya."
Current Climate action activities	Participants talk about the activities they are doing now	"Uh, currently I'm involved in climate smart agriculture. Mm-hmm. Because I feel most of the agricultural activities you've been doing"
Start of Climate action activities	Participants talk about how they started being active in climate action and what their first activities were	"So the first time was when I was in uni. Um, like I said, the, the course was really new. I also didn't really understand it until I got to, like the second year. Then I started understanding, talking to my, uh, lecturers, my professors to tell me more about the course and the opportunities that I will get after."
Climate change Education	Participants mentioned how they perceived their climate education that they had received and their own climate education activities	"Kenyan education system. Uh, or actually what was taught is it was quite different. What environment? Environment is. Any living, living thing around one. But you don't get to that information whereby you're taught why should you conserve the environment? "

Family Influences	The participants shared how their family has influenced their climate action participation	"So my mom's seeing me, this space actually fighting for, for, for, for us as a family, also fighting for my community. It's very encouraging to, to have, and also my brother, I often encouraged my brother also my have twin brother. Mm-hmm. So, and he's actually interested in being part of this climate."
Parental influence	Participants mention their experience on how their parents have affected their climate action participation	"Um, with my mom, my mom is actually a social worker, so, uh, she used to tell me, yeah. Uh, a friend of mine, cause she used to network a lot, and, uh, her friend's organization was in doing environmental initiatives and she told me like, you should join them for like, uh, certain cleanups."
Feeling of responsibility	The participants share their feelings of responsibility, guilt and accountability in connection with their engagement	"I keep, I keep going on it remission because if I stop that, I'll become like a lose. And, uh, I, uh, I hate to, I hate to lose, so I keep going on with, uh, in fact, I get motivated. I keep pushing, so I keep engaging more community, more people"
Future intentions in climate action	Participants talk about how they believe their future in climate action initiatives will look and what specific plan they have	"My goal is to actually impact, um, my community to actually disasters and actually bring more youth on board to actually be people, the, the participation and also, um, add other. And to actually, um, make my community be resilient"
Gender	Participants mention the influences they believe gender has had on their engagement and on their path to participation on climate action	"I believe that I have a lot of information. So, and apart from that, you see, okay, I'm sorry to say this, but there's a way at which our societies, African, African societies still look down upon the female gender, simple sense"

Discrimination Gender	Participant mentions feelings of discrimination due to their gender in climate action	"Uh, again, coming from a very male, uh, dominated, uh, communities and, uh, that, you know, uphold these cultures, you try and, uh, you know, do advocacy and speak. Um, sometimes people ask, you're just a woman, what are you telling us? What do you know?"
Experiences as men	Male participant talks about his experience as a man in the climate action space	"For them, man, in Kenya, it's, it's very easy for you to be included. Uh, yeah. So for me, no, no. Yes for men, it's a bit easy"
Experiences as women	Female participant talks about her experience as a woman in the climate action space	"I, I feel like that gender inequality is like too big. Uh, we have a lot of young women. We have a lot of other women who are in that space, but you don't see them in those seats."
LGBTQ+	Participant shares their experience with the LGBTQ+ community in the climate action space in Kenya	"Well, most spaces in Kenya are not queer inclusive, to be honest. So, um, that might explain why maybe many Kenyas don't identify as openly queer in climate spaces."
Impact of Climate Change	The participant mentions their experience regarding how they perceive the current impact of climate change for themselves, their community, and the world	"You see, by the time that, that, that the cannot get that maze in supply, then they know there's danger. So as we speak now, there's a lot of hunger to, so I, we, we find that I work here, but I spend everything, I send everything home, but they can buy food"
Consequences for participant directly	The participant talks directly about how climate change has affected them	"And how are the farmers appreciated? So, personally, do you see, we have food crisis, so it pushes me as an individual to minimize the amount of food that I take in a day"
International Climate Action space	Participants mentions their experience about the international	"I've been in like the local space, the gra at the grassroot level, the national space, and the international

	climate action space like conferences	space, and there's a, and there's a huge gap between the international all the way to the grassroot level"
Discrimination in International Space	Participants shared feelings of discrimination and underrepresentation in the international climate space	"But in, in, in terms of feeling discriminated, maybe just feeling like you are, you've been invited to, for example, I went for this conference and you know, you've been invited as a contributor, but then a lot of the conversations revolve around Europe's."
Network	Participant mentions the experiences regarding how and specifically through whom they have gotten their information about the climate action they are participating in. Also, how their network has impacted their climate action activities	"I did actually. I was introduced, my friend just. And, uh, when, when I go to, to it, the first place, I didn't understand what this was, but I always see the passion of how they were doing it and, uh, how they trying to reach about to, to other people about it."
Friends	Participants directly mention the impact of their friends regarding their network	"So, so actually my friend actually, those were not my friends are actually giving me, um, motivation and telling me, yeah, you have to continue doing that. "
Organized Environmentalism	Participants mention their experiences and awareness of the when it comes to climate action initiatives around them and how they are set up	"I wanted to start a climate fellowship or now climate justice, like climate justice fellowship. Um, yeah, I'm just thinking the. To start as, yeah. But I did want to start a fellowship to kind of like connect the principles to offer this education to people. "
Barriers to Organized Environmentalism	Participants talks about direct barriers they faced when involved with organised environmentalism	"Oh, so it, it actually took me a, a, a longer time. So I think that for me, actually it was a barrier because I actually didn't know a lot on the climate change depart. So for me, not knowing a lot Yeah. Was actually a, a, a barrier. "

Past Participation in Civil Society	Participants mention how they experienced their earlier participation in other forms of initiatives, like in for example volunteer positions, and how they believe the relationship between the past participation plays a role	"Uh, like other community services, uh, and also leadership courses, things to do with, uh, going children's home and sharing a moment of love with them."
Political Influence	Participants mention national political institutions, the Kenyan government, or international political institutions	"I done. Okay. To be honest, what happens without like political class, they're. So everybody looks forward to eat with their families. They don't care about, uh, the common people. "
Impact of Politics on Climate action	Participants share how they believe that politics have an influence on their participation in climate action	"It's very bad. So, because this big actually make the decisions for us down here and, um, they don't recruit the youth. So it's very, it's a very tough thing for us, the young people in Kenya"
Political Orientation	Participants talk about how they think their political orientation has influenced their engagement with climate action	"My political viewpoints already is bit vague, but I'm always on the side of, I want to get the facts right first. I aal judgment. Cause the politics is always about the game of what you say again, is what I'm saying"
Religion	The participants mention their religious viewpoints	"I'm a Christian, I'm a Catholic"
Impact of religion on Climate Action	Participants share how they believe their religion has an impact on their climate participation	"Totally. Mm-hmm. Like a hundred percent around from the book of Genesis, you know? Mm-hmm. God created that, he gave it to us, and, uh, he left it under our care, you know"
Resources	The participants talk about resources regarding their climate action activities	"And the organizations could give you maybe, uh, reimbursement sometimes. Sometimes I could, uh, offer accommodations and food only and transportation if you're going for these voluntary services"

Transportation	Participants mention how transportation played a role in their activities regarding resources	"I can say it's more of like commuting to a place that's, that, that's kind of a challenge because of the economic struggles that happening. But guys are willing, and that's why spaces like these are to, we need to have, uh, provides, uh, transport for the youth to come and to be trained"
Youth in Climate Action	The participants share their views connected to how the perceive other young people in the climate action space	"Um, more youths being involved in, in this participation and, um, it has actually changed the, the future of Kenya because we actually need more wonderful, uh, of this climate, um, participation."
Social Participation Norm	Participants talk about how common engagement and specifically climate action participation in their social environment is	"Few years ago it was not common because I live in village where people were thinking climate change is cursed until I started slowly to educate them about climate change crisis and including other youths in the initiative have running so right now they are well understood climate change"

Interview guides
First version of the Interview Guide

Theme	Probe(s)	Questions	Alternatives or options	Comments

Icebreaker	<u>Creating a comfortable environment for the interview</u>	What did you have for breakfast/ Lunch today? What is your favorite place in the city? How would you describe yourself in three words?		Describe that this will serve to get to know them further
Introduction	<u>Getting to know each other, Gaining personal information</u> Level of education, Interests	What do you like to do in your free time? Are you currently enrolled in school or university, or do you work? If yes what do you do?	What is your highest educational level?	

Path to participation	Getting to know the development and timeline of the participation			
		What kinds of climate action projects do you know of? - In your area/ in Kenya		What do you consider to be climate action?
	Organized Environmentalism			
	Location/ Network	How and where did you first hear about climate action projects?		
	Reasoning Threat of Climate Change /Environmental threat/ Feeling of responsibility	Can you tell me about the first time you participated in climate action projects? when/ where was that?		
	Location/ Organised Environmentalism	How did you get to the meeting places? - To what extent, was getting to the meeting place challenging for you?	Was that far away from your home? Did your parents have to drive you?	

	Past participation	Did you participate in other projects beforehand? (any voluntary projects - do not have to be climate related) -And could you describe them to me?		
	Feelings (of responsibility)	How did you feel when you first started participating in climate action projects?		

Current Initiative general information	Getting to know the way they participate in Climate action			
		How would you describe the climate Initiative/ action that you are active in?		
	Threat of Climate Change	What is your role in climate action?		
	/Environmental threat			
		What is the most important aspect for you when participating in climate action?		
	Threat of Climate Change			
	/Environmental threat/ Feeling of responsibility	Was there anything in particular that inspired you to participate in this?		
		How do you feel about Kenya's current climate situation?		
		How is Kenya's current climate situation affection you, your family and friends?		
		Can you give some examples?		

Involvement	Getting an overview of the participation process	Did you know other people that were involved in this/ or other climate action projects as well?		
	Networking	How did your (other) friends react to your participation		
		Are they active too?		
		How common would you say it is participating in climate action in your community?		
	Parental influence	How did your parents react when you participated?		
		Are they active too?		
		Do you feel like your household rules ever held you back from participating in climate events that you wanted to go to?		
		How does your family/ parents view the current state of Kenya's Climate?		
		To what extent do you think that other youths		

	Political orientation	that are active in climate action share your political viewpoints?	May I ask about your political viewpoints?	
		To what extent do you feel that differences in political orientation have had an impact on your participation?	or	
	Religion	Do you think that you being a ____ has impacted your climate engagement?	What is important to you in regard to politics?	
		To what extent do you think that other youths that are active in climate action share your religious viewpoints?	May I ask about your religion?	Religions?

Challenges with Gender	<u>Learning about possible Disablers and challenges faced</u>	Can you think of any aspects that originally held you back from participation		
	Gender	How would you describe the impact of you being a woman/man when thinking about participating?	What kind of worries did you have before you started being active?	If other challenges are named, dive deeper into them
		Do you feel like both Women and Men are active in the same way in climate action?	Do they take different roles in climate action?	
		In what ways do you think that you being a Women/ Men influenced your participation in general?		
		Did you ever feel discriminated against because of your ethnicity, gender or other personal aspects?		
		If so, could you describe this to me?		

Learnings of involvement	Changed views/ goals/ norms			
	General leanings over time and their influences	What are the main things that you have learned since you started participating in Climate action?		
		How did your participation impact you and your life?		
	Environmental threat	How did it change your outlook on Kenya's Future and Climate?		
	Advice for others on how to overcome disablers	What advice would you give other youths who are thinking of starting in climate action?		
		How would you design a climate action project to engage as many youths as possible?		

Outlook into the Future plans and goals	<u>The impact of their current experience on future plans</u>	What do you have planned for the initiative in the near future? What are your general goals for your climate action involvement in the near future? What changes or improvements are you planning on making to work towards these goals?		

Round up	Any other aspects	Is there anything that you would like to add to your statements?		
	Rethink questions	Would you like to make any changes or additions to the statements that you have given?		
Thank you for participating!				

Second version of the interview guide

Theme	Probe(s)	Questions	Alternatives or options	Comments
Icebreaker	Creating a comfortable environment for the interview	What did you have for breakfast/ Lunch today? What is your favourite place in the city? How would you describe yourself in three words?		Describe that this will serve to get to know them further

Introduction	<u>Getting to know each other, Gaining personal information</u>	What do you like to do in your free time?		
	Level of education, Interests	Are you currently enrolled in school or university, or do you work? If yes what do you do?	What is your highest educational level	

Path to participation	Getting to know the development and timeline of the participation	What kinds of climate action projects do you know of? Would you say that there are a lot? In your area now / where you grew up in?		What do you consider to be climate action?
	Organized Environmentalism			
	Location/ Network/	How and where did you first hear about climate action projects?		
	Reasoning Threat of Climate Change /Environmental threat/ Feeling of responsibility	Can you tell me about the first time you participated in climate action projects? when/ where was that?	Was that far away from your home?	
	Location/ Organised Environmentalism	To what extent, was getting to the meeting place challenging for you in terms of transportation?		
			Did your parents have to drive you?	
		Did you participate in other non climate related projects beforehand?		

	Past participation	-How do you think that your past participation has impacted your current climate engagement?		
		How did you feel when you first started participating in climate action projects?		
	Feelings (of responsibility)		Did you have any particular worries before starting?	

Current Initiative general information	Getting to know the way they participate in Climate action		
		How would you describe the climate Initiative/ action that you are active in?	
	Threat of Climate Change		
	/Environmental threat	What is the most important aspect for you when participating in climate action?	
		Was there anything in particular that inspired you to participate in this?	
	Threat of Climate Change		
	/Environmental threat/ Feeling of responsibilit	How do you feel about Kenya's current climate situation?	
		How is Kenya's current climate situation affection you, your family and friends?	
		Can you give some examples?	

Involvement	Getting an overview of the participation process	Did you know other people that were involved in this/ or other climate action projects as well?		
	Networking			
		How did your (other) friends react to your participation?		
		-		
		Are they active too?		
		How common would you say it is participating in climate action in your community?		
	Education			
		Do you think that the climate education you received in school was sufficient?		
		Where do you get your own climate information?		
			Do you feel supported by your family?	
		How did your parents react when you participated?		
		-		
		Are they active too?		

	Parental influence		
		Do you feel like your household rules ever held you back from participating in climate events that you wanted to go to?		
	Political orientation	To what extent do you think that other youths that are active in climate action share your political viewpoints?		
			May I ask about your political viewpoints?	
		To what extent do you feel that differences in political orientation have had an impact on your participation?	or	
		Do you think that you being a ____ has impacted your climate engagement?	What is important to you in regard to politics?	
	Religion	To what extent do you think that other youths that are active in climate action share your religious viewpoints?		
			May I ask about your religion?	

Challenges with Gender	Learning about possible Disablers and challenges faced	Can you think of any aspects that originally held you back from participating?		
			What kind of worries did you have before you started being active?	If other challenges are named, dive deeper into them
	Gender	Do you feel like both Women and Men are active in the same way in climate action?		
		In what ways do you think that you being a Women/ Men influenced your participation in general?		
	LGBTQ+		Do they take different roles in climate action?	
		Do you feel that LGBTQ+ people are welcome in climate action spaces?		
		Have you made experiences with this?	Possible sensitive topic!	
		Did you ever feel discriminated against		

		because of your ethnicity, gender or other personal aspects? - If so, could you describe this to me?		

Learnings of involvement	Changed views/ goals/ norms			
	General leanings over time and their influences	What are the main things that you have learned since you started participating in Climate action?		
		How did your participation impact you and your life?		
	Environmental threat	How did it change your outlook on Kenya's Future and Climate?		
	Advice for others on how to overcome disablers	What advice would you give other youths who are thinking of starting in climate action?		
		How would you design a climate action project to engage as many youths as possible?		

Outlook into the Future plans and goals	<u>The impact of their current experience on future plans</u>	What are your general goals and plans for your climate action involvement in the near future?		
Round up	<u>Any other aspects</u>	Is there anything that you would like to add to your statements?		
	Rethink questions	Would you like to make any changes or additions to the statements that you have given?		
Thank you for participating!				

Quotes overview

To protect the participants, the identifying feature will be kept to a minimum which is why only their gender, and their age will be shared.

Interview Quote (Listed in Order)	Age	Gender
Interview 18	20	Female
Interview 4	30	Male
Interview M		
Interview 13	20	Female
Interview 7	30	Male
Interview 28	26	Male
Interview 18-	20	Female
Interview 17	33	Female
Interview 22	29	Male
Interview 25	26	Male
Interview 21	24	Female
Interview 21		
Interview 14	27	Female
Interview 9	26	Male
Interview 8	26	Male
Interview 10	28	Female