

Multiparty Activism in Uganda: The Experience of National Resistance Movement and National Unity Platform

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ABSTRACT

Different involvement motivations drive people into political actions. This study aimed to understand what, how, and why party members were motivated into political party activism. The focus was on the involvement motivations of the members of the new political party named National Unity Platform (NUP) and the incumbent ruling National Resistance (NRM) party. The study used a qualitative literature research strategy where qualitative secondary and primary data were collected. The secondary data involved a review of several relevant peer-reviewed journal articles, chapters in books, newspaper reports, and other documents reflecting the concept of party activism. We collected field data from twenty-four respondents using in-depth interviews. The field notes were transcribed and thematically analyzed using content analysis methods. The purposive sampling technique was used to select eighteen respondents and six respondents were identified and selected using the snowball sampling technique. The study found that party activism emerged out of various incentives, such as political events, slogans, ideology, political rivalry, and family exposure was important in the construction of civic competence. These findings suggest that political parties should involve and expose their members to different political experiences. Based on the analysis of these findings, the study concluded that many factors serve as incentives for political party activism.

KEYWORDS: Uganda, Party Activists, Party activism incentives, NRM-NUP party.

Globally, for many decades, electoral political party politics have declined due to increasing changes in technology and communication development (Bennet et al., 2018; Biezen & Poguntke, 2014; Haute et al., 2013; Haute & Kernalegenn, 2021; Nolas et al., 2017; Nonnemacher & Spier, 2019). This has reduced citizen loyalty and commitment to political party politics because of ideological differences and the fact that for one to be an active political activist originates from his or her civic competence. This has also made selfish political party activists “switch” from one political party to another, especially when they feel that their current party does not consider their contribution (Okello & Kabasa, 2016). However, there is rich literature revealing that there is an increasing interest in political party activism, especially in the process of struggle for power (Jones, 2020; Hed & Grasso, 2020; Herrnson & Campbell, 2008). Political parties in this context are a critical tool that engages citizens in party activism and plays a fundamental role in the sustenance of vibrant democratic systems (Bob-Milliar, 2019). Individuals who are recruited into political parties are oriented toward becoming active party activists to constructively defend the interests of

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the party and take part in governance and democratic processes such as elections (Gherghina, 2021). It has been observed that there is an eminent connection between the democratic election process and political activists among citizens (Weber, 2017). Political activism refers to an individual political action aimed at pursuing political objectives such as lobbying for policy formulation, policy support, contributing to political campaigns, mobilizing others for a common cause, and voting among others (Jones, 2020). From this definition, political party activism covers several political activities, and commitment to them increased partisan, which promotes party activism (Klein, 2021; Venkatesh, 2020).

Within the context of the definitions given above, it is argued that factors such as political ideology, political events, and citizens' daily social experiences act as political incentives for individual political activism (Nolas et.al. 2017; Caprara et.al. 2017). Relatedly, an increase in individual socio-economic resources facilitates participation in politics (Petrovic & Stanojevic, 2020). It is argued that political parties encourage political activism and this leads to the development and functioning of democracy in the country (Han, 2016). Dwyer et.al (2019) emphasizes the role of political party slogan in the construction of collective political activism. These writers stress that the 2016 American presidential election figures such as Bill Clinton used slogans Like "I am with her" in his campaign to appeal to and motivate supporters. While Koo (2021) linked political activism to party membership and policy. He argued that election-related activities were driven by these two factors.

In Uganda, the 2021 general election gave birth to the new young generation of political party activists led by Hon. Kyagulanyi Sentamu Robert aka Bobi Wine. In 2017, he was elected a Member of Parliament for Kyadondo East Constituency in the parliamentary by-election (Kiggundu, 2017). This political event opened political space for him to participate in politics. He introduced the "People Power our Power" slogan to mobilize people and champion the pressure group's political movement activities. Chanting this slogan galvanized excitement among the youth in the country to gather more courage to challenge the incumbent National Resistance Movement (NRM) government. Further, the slogan made Kyagulanyi and the National Unity Platform (NUP) popular among young people, and the party used it to market its candidates. The slogan was used to persuade people to become active politicians and invest much of their time engaging in their party campaign. NUP showed distinct motivation as they voted out almost all the NRM Members of Parliament (MPs) in the central region winning majority seats in the 2021 election (Okello et al., 2021).

There are 26 registered active political parties in Uganda (Uganda Electoral Commission, 2021). And most studies on these political parties have focused on multi-party dynamics politics and the role of political parties (Bale et al., 2018; Kakuba, 2010; Makara, 2009; Santo et al., 2018). This proposes that there were scanty or no studies on the involvement motivations of members of political parties into political party activism in Uganda, particularly in the NRM and NUP cases. Yet these parties' activism was worth studying because they presented unique variations in terms of their existence in the political space. NRM has stayed in power for more than thirty years uninterrupted, while NUP was barely about two years in existence (Uganda Electoral Commission, 2020). Interestingly, there was a significant interest of many people joining NUP including some members of the old political parties such as the Democratic Party (DP), and Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) among others, which had traditionally challenged the NRM party in elections. The leader of NRM Yoweri Kaguta Tibuhaburwa Museveni is quoted as saying that "I will capture Kyagulanyi's group, you wait; I work underground, but I will finish them; as you are up shouting hooray, I am working underground" (Mafumba, 2021: 1). To say the least, political parties were considered ineffective to challenge NRM through the democratic process because the state apparatus frustrated their activities (Makara, 2010). Against this background, the pertinent question

raised and answered here was: did people willingly decide to engage in NRM and NUP party activism? The aim was to understand the involvement motivations of members of NRM and NUP into political activism with consideration of their participation in the 2021 general election processes in which NRM garnered 58.38% and NUP got 35.08% respectively (Kiiza, 2021). Therefore, I will argue how members of NRM and NUP were overzealously motivated in their party activities in the election period 2020-2021 and politics generally.

The NRM-NUP Contention

Since Uganda transitioned into multi-party democracy in 2006, members of different political parties have actively participated in the democratic processes. In the current democratic dispensation, party activism has served as the centerpiece for political parties' member's political acts. To this effect, different political parties established party structures from national to grassroots levels to mobilize and recruit party members who were assets in their party activism. During elections, candidates use these structures to market their party manifestoes to potential electorates to win their support. To appropriately answer the above-stated question, this study examined the how factors and why that influenced individual political party members of NRM and NUP over their active involvement in their respective party activities. These parties were chosen as a case study because of their political contestation. The high politicization of the 2021 general election, caused sharp political activism among the members of both parties with the latter fighting to dislodge the former from power, while the former was struggling to maintain the status quo. Therefore, this study is unique in the sense that it contrasts the ruling NRM that has been in power for three decades and the remarkable emergence of NUP, a party predominantly youth and led by a young pop star with less experience in politics, demonstrated a boom of newly mobilized party-political activists.

In fact, since the emergence of the Kyagulanyi factor in the politics of Uganda, political party activism has been different, encouraging citizens to vote against the NRM (Mafumba, 2021). In this context, Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Tibuharwa Museveni and his NRM party built its political party activism on its political ideology, which is understood as Pan-Africanism, socio-economic transformation, democracy, and nationalism. While NUP excited its supporters into political activism using the slogan "People Power our Power." This created sharp controversy between the NRM and the NUP activists and supporters taking popular political space. The nucleus of the NRM-NUP contention in the country, especially among their staunch supporters, is over NUP as a youth-led party fighting to take over political leadership from the NRM regime, which has been in power for over three decades with the claim to establish a new Uganda with the young leader. However, NRM fighting to keep the status quo to consolidate the achievements it had registered in the past 35 years. Arguably the most important issue that made NUP win support is that since 1986, most of the youth in Uganda have never witnessed a democratic transfer of power from one leader to another (Mafumba, 2021). Second, when NRM came, it promised Ugandans a fundamental change, which was to be anchored onto the ten-point programmes. These were

- (1) Democracy,
- (2) security
- (3) consolidation of national security and the elimination of all forms of sectarianism
- (4) defending and consolidating national independence
- (5) building an independent, integrated and self-sustaining national economy
- (6) restoration and improvement of social services and the rehabilitation of the war-ravaged areas

- (7) elimination of corruption and misuse of power
- (8) redressing errors that had resulted in the dislocation of sections of the population and improvement of others
- (9) co-operation with other African countries in defending the human and democratic rights of our brothers in other parts of Africa and
- (10) following an economic strategy of a mixed economy (Hitchen, 2016).

The purpose of these ten-point programmes was to help the NRM government to restore popular democracy and improve service delivery, which had declined in the country. Indeed, NRM made remarkable achievements in the socio-economic and political field and became a darling of the international donor community. But over time, NRM has flawed its original mission, which had ushered in a fundamental change and abandoned the ten-point programme, and steadily engaging in authoritarian tendencies (Muhumuza, 2009). Besides, the NRM government had failed to appropriately fight corruption and provide a clear roadmap for a democratic political transition in the country, despite multiple anti-corruption measures and democratic institutions put in place respectively (Amundsen, 2006; Kakumba, 2021). This has resulted in institutional decline as the regime struggles to remain in power (Helle & Raknar, 2016) Therefore, they felt they needed to see a change in state leadership.

Perhaps interesting to know is that NUP, which is hardly two years since it took over National Unity Reconciliation and Development Party (NURDP) and changed its name to NUP, had never been in power. NRM was tussling off with opposition parties NUP, DP, and FDC, including independent candidates to retain state power. However, opposition parties, including NUP, considered that intimidation, harassment, arrest, and detention of its supporters were stage-managed by NRM to weaken them. With such experience, the NUP leader and his supporters pursued its mission, and this perpetually created rival tension between NRM and NUP supporters, with NUP demanding change and determined to bring an end to the longest-serving government in Uganda since independence. The leader of NUP concentrated on socializing his supporters into believing and developing the perception that NRM since it ascended to power, has been using tactical manipulation to remain in power. Markedly, NUP supporters had been harassed, intimidated, arrested, and detained, and others arraigned in courts of law and remanded (Wandera, 2020).

It is worth noting that the transition to electoral democracy occurred in 1996 after the NRM had been in power for a decade and that it has dominated political power for more than three decades. However, the restoration of multi-party democracy saw the revival of old political parties and the registration of new political parties, including the party that gave birth to NUP, which unexpectedly drew the support of many Ugandans, particularly the youth. This threatened NRM as NUP appealed and attracted the loyalty of the young people to widen its popularity and influence to challenge its power. While on his campaign trail, the Artist turned a politician Kyagulanyi Sentamu Robert was arrested in Luuka district on account that he had contravened Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) imposed by the government to prevent the spread of Coronavirus (Covid-19). These SOPs restricted the holding of political rallies and other social gatherings like congregation prayers and weddings, among others that attracted big crowds of people. While in police custody, his supporters organized a protest in major towns opposing military and police brutality and other political violence against the opposition; this protest left many dead, beaten, and arrested (Epstein, 2020). There was notably perceived unfairness, which NUP translated as an NRM effort to constrain its ability to effectively conduct its political campaigns and other party activities. In this context, NUP was forced to seek international community support from whom the NRM depended heavily to run the country with the hope of mounting pressure on NRM to

allow a leveled political field (Mafumba, 2021). NUP leadership perceived the treatment received from NRM in their interaction in the democratic process as a failure to live up to the promises it made when it came to power. Finally, NUP leadership was perceived and referred to by NRM as incompetent to be entrusted with state power to run the government. The President General (Gen.) Yoweri Kaguta Tibuhaburwa Museveni is quoted to have said, "politics is not singing music where you go to a club and entertain people, the leader of NUP should concentrate on music but not politics" (Mafumba, 2021: 1). But, such a comment did not threaten the 38-year-old NUP leader, Hon. Kyagulanyi Robert rather mounted a serious challenge against the incumbent regime. The year before the general election, he conducted campaigns urging the youth who had attained 18 years and above to register and get national identity cards to enable them to participate in the 2021 general election. Interesting about the 76-year-old Gen. Museveni is that he is the longest-serving President compared to previous ones. In 1980, he formed a political party (Uganda Patriotic Movement [UPM]), which participated in the general election held in the same year, but he rejected the results that it had been rigged. In 1981, he launched a guerrilla war against Obote's democratically elected government, but the army led by Tito Okello overthrew Obote. This did not stop Gen. Museveni's liberation war struggle, even though there was an initiative for peace talks to end the war (Balam, 1987). On January 26, 1986, he ousted the military government that had overthrown Obote in 1985 after leading a five-year guerrilla war (Nabudere, 1987). The NRM-NUP leadership politicking shaped the perception between NRM and NUP supporters in the country.

Literature Review

Political party activism has been widely studied from several perspectives, and some of these studies were examined to determine the extent to which they relate to this study. What dominates the existing literature on party activism is the question of what motivates people to participate in political activities and how they count on their political behavior and party activism. Therefore, this study reviewed the existing body of knowledge from the perspective of how Ugandans were socialized and how this motivated political party activism. Heaney (2020) in the study he conducted in America points out that three factors, that is, media communication decentralization, political polarization, and institutional illegitimacy motivated citizens into political activism. Besides, it was found that slogans were a strong force that shaped the individual identity and encouraged them to engage in political party activism (Dwyer et.al 2019). Hassan (2012) examined the impact of political events, which proved useful in the study of political activism because he found that, it influenced people's creativity and innovation in politics. Bale et al. (2018: 667) in their work found that issues such as "expressive incentives, people's efficacy, and selective process helped people to express their political party's ideology to achieve their political goals. Similarly, Webb et al. (2020) in their revealed that networks were extremely relevant in bringing people with the same political ideology to work together in their political party. They stressed that creating networks was built on common values, norms, and goals. The interaction based on these aspects leads to a strong voluntary commitment to political participation.

Internal party politics, make some party members who actively played key roles in their party activities leave and join other political parties, where they are recruited and recognized as members (Nonnenmacher & Spier, 2019; Santo et al., 2018). They further indicated that political parties engaged in politics based on ideology addressed issues such as economic freedom, the state taking a central role in socio-economic progress, and the freedom of their people. Their study also revealed that party members are ever out to contribute veritably by securing the ideals of their party at any cost. For example, Nonnemancher and Spier (2019) stated that when political parties

demonstrate to be an effective representative of the citizen's social-structural dynamics, significantly motivated them to be part of the political party activism. In their study on party activism in Austria, Abdou and Rosenberg (2019) revealed that the implementation of party policy was central in motivating party members into party activism. Other studies, such as Diaz and Valji (2019) emphasized that people got obsessed with party activism because of their party's policy inclination to issues such as gender and racial relations. They argued that once individuals internalize that their party agenda serves their socio-economic and political interests, it is easier for them to frame their line of support and action for the party activities to pursue their interests. In the same vein, Lockwood and Kronke (2018); Vecchione et.al. (2015) in their studies emphasized demographic factors such as age, income, education, and gender, and performance of the government as being important in arousing citizen political activism. They argued that education was instrumental in empowering people with the cognitive ability to actively participate in political activities. These signify that party members are motivated, for instance, either to vote or vote out leaders to reward and punish them, respectively. These studies clearly show that political parties must teach their members the values and ideals of their party so that they can stand and defend them and they should strive to perform to the expectations of party supporters.

Quintelier and Hooghe (2011) and Mills (2019) found that political ideology is a springboard that brings together political actors sharing similar political ideals and motivates them into shared political action. This explains that it acts as a point of reference for the political actors to work together. Mentoring individuals in politics helps them to develop political skills and knowledge that motivates them in political activism (Finnemore & Jurkovich, 2020). If members of political parties do not have a strong attachment to specific political ideology and their party membership, hardly engage in party activism (Wagner, 2016), suggesting that political party ideology is a key that kick-starts party members' political activism. Studies such as Giugni and Grasso (2021), Haute and Kernalegenn (2021), and Caldeira et al. (1990) emphasized citizens' link to their political parties inspires them to participate in different political activities such as voting and protest among others. Similarly, political parties in Uganda strive to ensure that their members actively get involved in the electoral processes to express their opinion and take political decisions on matters that affect them. Therefore, I argue that party activism can be determined by the intensity of understanding and the more feeling of attachment to a political party ideology.

Neundorf and Smets (2017) and Weiss (2020) in their study findings revealed that young people learn and get motivated into politics because of their exposure to it by their families. They stressed that children were likely to take on their parents' political label and behavior and even become more active in politics than were their parents. This suggests that a family plays an important role in exposing its members, especially children, to politics. This demonstrates that the learning of political attitudes, beliefs, and values from parents was passed down to their children. However, the study of Finnemore and Jurkovich, (2020; Malafaia et.al. 2021) reported that knowledge and skills obtained from educational institutions enable individuals to gain political participation ability and interest in politics. In earlier studies, many authors stressed that education is crucial, and it matters a lot in shaping young persons' attitudes toward participation in politics (Weiss, 2020; Fuentes-Moreno et.al. 2020; Huckenstein et.al 2018; Agerberg, 2019). This is instructive that educational institution produces not only a human resource for the labor market, but they act as a training ground for students' political activism. It could be stated with little fear that educational institutions offer knowledge and services that motivate people to have a strong feeling that their involvement in political activities contributes to the development and effectiveness of the democratic political process. Namasinga and Skare (2020) in their study found that political activism was more driven by dissatisfaction expressed by the opposition coming from the presidential election, which motivated them to engage in "walk to work" protests.

Other studies like Anderson et al. (2018) underscored the role of media, especially social media, that it was a toolkit used to create awareness among people, who in turn, whetted their enthusiasm for political activism. Similarly, Lobera and Portos (2021) found that political party information disseminated through social media increased its visibility to mobilize support. Their study further revealed that political events such as political rallies, protests, and participation in boycotts were significant in influencing both off and online citizen political activism. On the contrary, Wike and Castillo (2018) in their study found that freedom of expression and speech, police misconduct, poverty, and government corruption were central factors that motivated citizens into political activism. However, despite the vast literature theorizing about various political socialization agents being responsible for shaping political activism, this body of knowledge shows under-appreciation from the Ugandan perspective, which the researcher believed was necessary to exploit. But the fact is that several scholars have attended to how individual citizens are motivated into party activism. Therefore, I argue in this study that greater party activism thrives on diverse important insights derived from the exposure to political information, events, political discussions, and the political environment. These can be sufficient forces to push members of political parties to get involved in political activities.

Theoretical Framework for Analysis

The purpose of this study was to gain an insight into what brought about robust political activism between NRM and NUP during the 2021 election processes. Two theoretical approaches advanced by Eurocentric scholars were found suitable as the framework of analysis of this study. This part of the study examines how the variables identified using the two approaches influence individual political actions. Civic Voluntarism and General Incentives Theories present that individual political activism initiative is influenced by multiple factors. The former assumes that for a party member to engage in party activism, one should have a certain level of motivation that makes him or her want to do so (Uhlener, 2015). Based on this assumption, involvement in political activities occurs in response to different socio-economic-political incentives. Verba et al. (1995) argue that individual member political party activism is not only driven by socio-economic resources, effective recruitment, and psychological engagement but also the level of attachment to political party values and policies. Furthermore, it stresses that people participate in politics not because they have adequate financial resources to contribute, but because of three major factors, that is, time to participate in political activities, finance, and civic competence. Every political activity requires time to accomplish it. In the same way, party members use the money to facilitate their party activities. Therefore, a combination of these resources matters a lot in influencing people to become political party activists (Bob-Milliar, 2011). It further mentions that political efficacy among people is built on political knowledge, the level of interest in politics, understanding of political developments, and the ability to influence politics (Hu, 2016). Also, Civic Voluntarism maintains that social networks such as the workplace, social gatherings, voluntary self-help activities, political parties, families, and peer groups are important factors that stimulate and mobilize people into action. Therefore, resources are important factors in influencing individual participation in political activities to achieve desired political objectives. It is within this lens that this study explored whether the same factors were central in influencing the NRM-NUP political activism.

The latter theory as presented by Gallagher et al. (2002) argues that before people engage in political action, they conduct a cost-benefit analysis in terms of non-materials and materials aspects, which spur political activism. It looks beyond dividends or outcome incentives derived from political activism and factors raised by the former perspective. The focus is on the

psychological satisfaction feeling of the people got from political participation. For instance, political participation processes provide the fertile ground from which people learn values and behavior patterns appropriate for the functioning of the political system. Thus, the general society values, which lead to the development of political attitudes that make people active in politics. The party vision and ideology are considered among the factors that motivate people into political activities. People with political party ideology are excited to actively provide expression of their party’s ideas and associate with those with whom they share their ideology, beliefs, and political feelings (Freeden, 2001; Lewis et al., 2021; Pickup et al., 2021). This process inculcates political values, and relevant political information, which promotes interaction of the members of the political parties. This also creates an active involvement in political party activities as party loyalists anticipate gains and become full-time experts in party politics. Therefore, they associate themselves with the party ideology, which aligns with their own socio-economic and political interests. In this regard, a political party provides a platform for its members to articulate their political issues. In turn, they are expected to adhere to the beliefs, values, and norms of their party as their cardinal role to develop and maintain group solidarity (Boggild et al., 2021). That aside, General Incentives Theory further maintains that emotional political party attachment contributes to the building of party activism among political party members (Bohm, 2015). The conceptual framework derived from the above theatrical underpinnings is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework

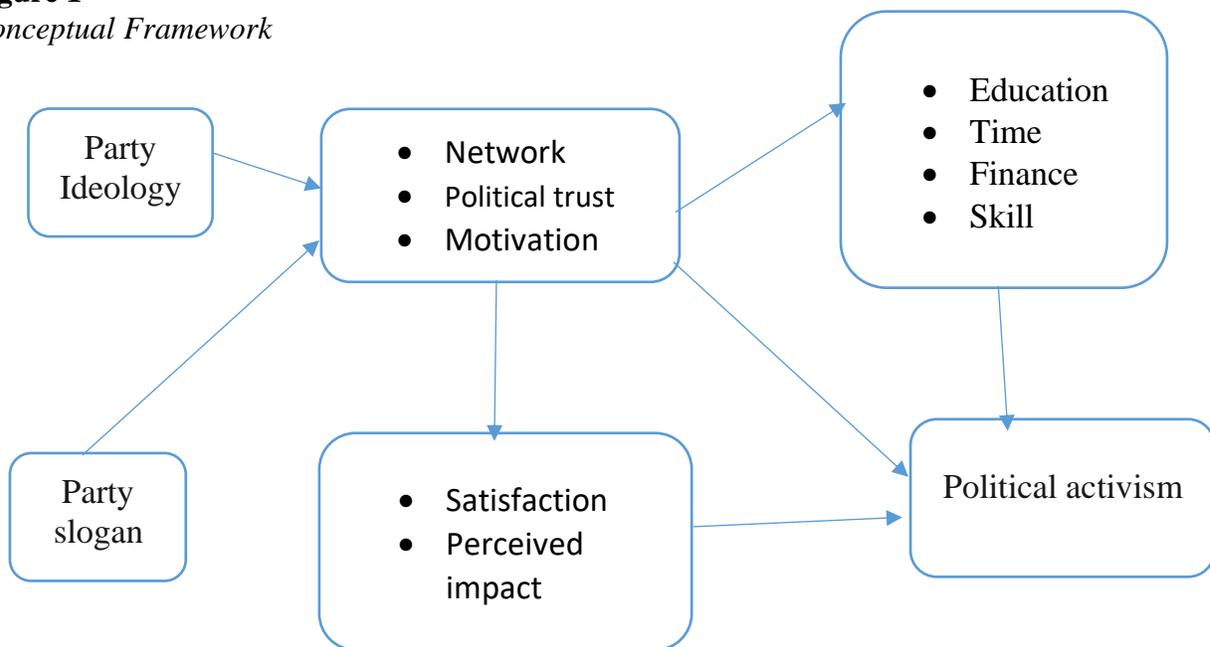


Figure 1 presents conceptual mapping, party ideology, and slogans were considered assets that a political party can use to build networks, political trust, and motivation which in turn creates satisfaction, and perceived impact to cause party activism among its members. The wide network relations, political trust, and motivation created among the members enable them to engage in party activities. These forces help them acquire relevant political skills and knowledge that they use to champion their political interests and their party goals. Therefore, NRM-NUP motivation and capacity for their active participation in political processes were hypothesized to have been shaped

by their individual early life experience at family, institutional, and workplace levels. I assumed that these socializing agents provided opportunities for developing their physical and psychological involvement in party politics. Therefore, I argue that party activism results from individual citizen exposure to political information that creates their interest and ability to identify with political activism.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative literature research strategy to further discuss and take forward the development and enrichment of the current body of knowledge that explains party activism. Several relevant peer-reviewed journal articles, chapters in books, newspaper reports, and other documents reflecting the concept of party activism were reviewed. These were accessed using the Google search engine with the help of a combination of phrases, that is, “party activism,” “political socialization,” and “engagement in political party activities.” Meanwhile, the interview guide was designed based on the theories that were adopted in this study to generate the data. The purpose was to better understand how party members were motivated to get involved in their party activism. Thus, secondary and primary data were collected. The aim was to understand how members of NRM and NUP’ were socialized into political activism and what incited their willingness to get involved in their party activities. The primary data were collected between September 2020 through February 2021 a period before, during, and the aftermath of the 2021 general elections. This period was considered because political activism increases and gains a peak during the election period (Bob-Milliar, 2019).

Although the initial target was to interview fifty party activists split into equal numbers between the two parties, the intention was to have a sufficiently representative sample that would be considered robust enough for qualitative research (Malterud et al., 2016). But only twenty-four were selected and interviewed. Purposive sampling as recommended by Benoot et al. (2016) was used to choose eighteen respondents from the respective parties, while six respondents equally split between the two parties were selected using the snowball sampling technique. The snowball was used to identify the initial participant who nominated other eligible respondents to participate in the study (Thomas et al., 2014). I asked a willing participant to identify respondents to participate in the study. Participants in the study were selected because they were knowledgeable front-liners party activists. They were also considered because they strongly identified with the respective parties and had rich quality experience in active electoral party politics. Besides, while using the purposive sampling technique, I placed my primary emphasis on ensuring that the participants chosen would provide representative information to reflect views on the population from which participants were selected. To ensure the quality of the study and reduce subjectivity sampling, I applied the saturation concept where I had to stop sampling and interviewing after noticing that answers were becoming repetitive (Guest et al., 2020; Sebele-Mpofu, 2020).

The data collection method used in this study was an interview. This involved an interaction between the Researcher and the sampled participants (Flick, 2018). This instrument was used to get an in-depth insight into why respondents became political party activists. Perhaps important to know is that the qualitative method was used because of the complexity of human behavior to respond to and understand different social-political issues that affect them (Bryman, 2015). After interviewing the first respondent, this respondent was if he had a friend doing a similar job who was willing to participate in the study. In that regard, other participants were contacted through the initial respondents. This process became useful in reaching out to potential respondents with insightful information that was required for the study. One-on-one interviews were conducted with eighteen and the remaining four were contacted through mobile telephone calls. Before engaging

the respondents in a biased interview, they were briefed about the purposes of the study for the interview and how relevant their views were to it (Robinson, 2014). The in-depth, face-to-face interview lasted for 1.30-1.45 hours. Some interviews were held in 2020, particularly during campaigns, while others were conducted after January 14, 2021, general election at either the respondents' homes or offices as they so suggested.

Furthermore, questions asked were guided by variables that emerged in the theoretical framework and literature review discussions to seek respondents' perceptions and opinions on their involvement motivations to engage in party activism. This covered their past political experiences, individual perceived reasons why they became party activists, and how were important to them. Before any analysis was done, data were classified and categorized into a set of codes using selective coding after which data were transcribed and analyzed into relevant themes based on the interview field notes and literature review (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). For easy analysis and logical presentation of the data, themes and codes were deductively and inductively derived from theoretical and practical aspects based on civic voluntarism and general incentives theories.

The coding of data was guided by what the two theories adopted to inform this study proposed to be the main involvement motivation factors of the individual citizen to participate in politics. This coding process led to the adoption of five themes, that is, the role of political events, political ideology/party slogan, political party, the first family exposure experience, and educational institutions in steering involvement motivations of citizens into political activism. Similarities and differences collected from the respondents regarding their perception of how these socialization agents motivated and socialized individual citizens were written. The study was conducted in Kampala, the biggest city and the capital of Uganda, which is both a center of commercial and political activities in the country from September 2020 through February 2021, where the respondents were residents. This was a period when Uganda was preparing for the general election and members of different political parties were expected to engage in vibrant party activism, as Bob-Milliar (2019) noted that levels of political activism increased during the election period.

However, there are important points to note here. First, unlike quantitative research, which allows generalization from a representative sample, this study, being qualitative research, does undraw the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, the results discussed in the paper should not be considered to be generalized representative of the entire NRM or NUP party members' views. Second, the fact that the study drew participants from Kampala, the capital and biggest city of Uganda. The study would probably be different if participants were also drawn from both urban and rural areas. But to guarantee the analytical quality process, a triangulation of data was used since the aim was to predict NRM-NUP members' political behavior (Provost, 2011). Additionally, the researcher also used direct self-reported quotes as voiced by the respondents to detach himself to present a clear unbiased explanation of the data. All respondents whose views are directly quoted are referred to by the pseudonym in the text. Nonetheless, the findings of this study provide a deeper understanding of the formation of party activism in Uganda. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing body of literature within the field of Political Science particularly electoral democratic politics: the ideals individual citizens experience in their lifelong learning to form a basis of their active involvement in political activities (Neundorf & Smets, 2017).

Study Findings and Discussion

Table 1 presents the demographic profiles of the respondents.

Table 1*Demographic Profiles of the Respondents*

Gender	NRM	NUP	%
Male	8	9	70.8
Female	4	3	29.2
Young Persons	4	8	50
Older persons	8	4	50
Higher education	12	12	100
Teacher	5	4	37.5
Lawyer	4	3	29.2
Journalism	2	1	12.5
Social Worker	1	4	20.8

Note. Field survey.

Table 1 reveals that the demographic profile composition analysis of the respondents of the two parties, the majority (70.8%) of the total respondents were male, while, the remaining 29.2% were female. Respondents were on average 39 years old. An important point to note is that NUP respondents were majorly young persons while the NRM respondents were old. The educational background showed that the respondents were university graduates. This implies that participants were mainly from the party elite class. But notable findings on profession revealed that there was a diversification of participants, the majority (37.5%) of whom were teachers, 29.2% were lawyers, 12.5% were journalists and 20.8% were social workers. Although the demographic profiles of the respondents were noted, they were not taken into consideration since the focus was not to link the information provided by the respondents with their demographic profiles. But the interest was to establish NRM-NUP members' involvement motivations in political party activism, respectively. Due to time constraints to conduct a comprehensive field survey to cover a wider geographical scope as well as difficulties associated with COVID-19 SOPs adherence.

Political Events

Political process theorists argue that the dynamic participation of political parties in democratic processes contributes to personal and community change (Quintelier & Hooghe, 2011). In preparation for January 14, 2021, general elections, different political divides in Uganda started campaigns, including the incumbent NRM government, which was striving to renew its mandate with the people for the sixth term in office. NRM presented itself as a government that was out to secure a future for Ugandans and NUP was promising to liberate Ugandans from NRM's dictatorial regime and lead them into a new Uganda, respectively. To win support, each party strived to organize political events before and during the election period to shape the attitude of its supporters to become activists for their party. This study extended its scope to include political events occurrences, party ideology, and slogans. It was within these themes that respondents were asked if these variables incited into political actions. The focus was on but not limited to voting, wearing party colors, lobbying or opposing for policies of opponents, attending party meetings, financial contribution, attending political rallies, and the campaign against socio-economic and political corruption. Respondents affirmatively responded that they actively participated in these activities. This suggests that how people experience political events and interpret political activities shapes how they perceive them. Gen. Museveni's dissatisfaction in the 1980 general election acted as a catalyst for him to mobilize a few Ugandans to wage war against the democratically elected government. His discontent expression in the questionable democratic process at the time spurred

the people to join him in the struggle he launched against the Amin and Obote regime. Not only did Gen. Museveni's political action win the sympathy of many Ugandans who were demanding change at the time, but he also gained support from the international community more significantly from Tanzania. One respondent specifically stated that:

I was a strong NRA/M supporter since the 1980s. Members of my family are all NRM supporters. I participated actively in the bush war struggle in Luwero, which was known as the NRM war host stronghold, I actively participated in this bush war struggle. I have attended party meetings, campaigns, and programs aimed at building Uganda. Stability and peace in Uganda have been achieved through the NRM effort. I do not support NUP. I hate it and I tell you, when I hear members of NUP addressing people, I leave the place. I cannot bear their useless political gossip, I cannot bear seeing people without clear leadership orientation background coming to power. These NUP people have no clear manifesto to take our country to a better future. I cannot interact with NUP supporters, we would end up fighting. My political stand and safety are strongly better with NRM in power. I assure you, even when President Museveni will be out of power, I will still be with NRM. Ugandans' future was secure under NRM. (M.K)

The perception and feeling of the respondent corroborate with Bale et al. (2018); Lu et al., (2016) study, which found that the occurrence of political events and involvement in political activities affects individuals' cognition. Respondents reported that it was far-fetched to see NUP's formidable ability taking over power from NRM in 2021. It was argued that though there was excitement among NUP supporters that they were determined to bring to an end to NRM domination control of state power, it lacked formal structures. The task ahead of NUP was to articulate its policies to the people as an alternative to the NRM regime and how they were viable in answering citizens' demands.

I am a supporter of NRM since its initial stage. It is no harm if I admired NUP for its ambition to compete for the most top position in the country, but when NUP failed to establish structures at the grassroots, it had no chance of winning the 2021 general election. It could not manage the state. I began gradually to become active in NRM activities after seeing that NRM had established its struggle on a well-defined political ideology that appealed to citizens' interest and welfare, and demonstrated worth to manage the country. NUP disappointed me in its conduct toward NRM, which had served Ugandans for more than three decades. NRM has better agenda that acts in the interest of the masses compared to NUP. (B.S)
If we are to address our socio-economic and political problems in our country, we the people should awaken our understanding that NRM was out to exploit Ugandans. We are being manipulated with rhetoric deceits that NRM is fully out for socio-economic transformation, democracy, Pan-Africanism, and nationalism, yet a few government officials were benefiting from the national resources. The people with whom it has social contract were neck-deep in poverty. Multiple tear-gassing of our NUP leaders, arrest, and denial to freely conduct his campaigns, motivated our smart

mobilization against NRM. We are in a struggle that presents Uganda to grant benefits for all Ugandans. Our presidential candidate could not freely consult the people for his presidential bid participation in democratic governance should not be a total liberal democracy, but it should allow others to come in to participate. Many people voted in presidential and parliamentary elections, but the biometric voting machines, those policing elections were partisan, NUP polling agents were intimidated, and others were compromised. (V.A)

Notably, the occurrence of political events in whatever perspective leaves a significant mark on the cognition of those persons who experience it, which can generate political support. The 1980 general election in which Gen. Museveni, the leader of NRM, was dissatisfied with, and the poor governance at the time, partly explains why many supporters of NRM became politically active.

Similarly, the researcher found that NUP leadership and supporters expressed the same sentiment toward NRM, citing bad governance. Respondents had a feeling that Ugandans were blindfolded to believe in the dictates of NRM and that it no longer could design appropriate solutions to address the critical issues that presently confronted the people. The cry and feeling of NUP respondents were that the political field was not leveled to advantage them in the democratic process, especially election. This significantly undermined the fact elections are the biggest platform where people express themselves through their voting decision.

Party Ideology

The knowledge and beliefs of people about politics and their active involvement are a result of early exposure to the basics of politics through peer groups, friends, workplace (Weber, 2017). Therefore, it was important to establish why people have gained interest to invest their scarce resources like time and effort in political activities. Marked differences among party members are visible in differences in political party ideologies. In a multi-party democracy politics, every political party has its party value system or belief system, which makes up the party ideology. This shapes the attitude and behavior of political party members how they view the world. Political party members are socialized into party ideology, such as nationalism, conservatism, and liberalism, to shape their political attitudes. Party political ideology appeals to the desire and interest of the people and attracts them into having shared political values. Therefore, it allows us to confirm an earlier study that found that party ideology inspires political party members into party activism (Mills, 2019). In this regard, the emotional attachment to the political party defines the position and loyalty party member. It can be argued in this line that political party ideology drove party members into party activism.

The NRM Ideology

It was noted from the respondents, that their loyalty and a firm belief in their party ideology were exceptionally robust. All NRM respondents stated that their party's ideology fascinated them. They stressed that indeed the NRM appropriately ideology catered for all socio-economic and political rights of Ugandans. The conviction of these respondents was that their ideology upheld the aspect of freedom for human dignity.

Uganda is on steady socio-economic progress because of NRM. Since it came to power, different sectors in the country have developed and clear leadership of NRM. Even though Uganda, has many and different ethnic groups, NRM believes in nationalism. It is inclusive and protects the rights of every Ugandan. Uganda will soon attain middle-income status under the stewardship of NRM. (R.K)

Notably, what can be understood from the above information obtained from the NRM respondents suggested that members of NRM were happy with their party because they felt that it had lived to its promises since it came to power. The perception and feeling of these respondents were that NRM had strongly socialized Ugandans into nationalism, urging Ugandans to shun the politics of tribal identity and religion. Secondly, NRM believed in Uganda under the leadership with the will of the people, which protects their rights. This line of thought agrees with the previous study finding that NRM hanged on political power to preserve the party hegemony, capitalizing on the mistakes of the past governments and weakness of the opposition (Tangri & Mwenda, 2010). In that regard, Ugandans were frequently reminded that NRM victories in the subsequent general election since Uganda transited into electoral democracy were a result of its vision to transform the country. It is perhaps worth noting that NRM used intimidation and harassment to weaken and create fear among any party that rose to challenge it. NRM continued to enjoy super support from rural people. Interestingly, respondents expressed that there was no point in voting NRM out of power because it was striving to develop the country to benefit all Ugandans.

Many people have benefited from NRM government programs. They were given starting capital through various programs like “emyooga,” Saving and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs), Operation Wealth Creation (OWC). As a member of NRM, I knew how grateful many Ugandans were toward the NRM government and its programme. Who dares to embezzle public funds meant to empower people to improve their household income, could face prosecution because of that. Many people were supported to start a small business by providing them with startup capital. This has changed the lives of many Ugandans. (L.G)

Probing respondents on their understanding of NRM’s ideology, they said:

NRM liberated Ugandans from bad governance and fought for the restoration of democracy. Also, NRM fought, economically and socially, to empower the Ugandans. NRM respects all Ugandans but urges them to support programmes it initiates to change the lives of Ugandans. NRM is a mass party. Prosperity for all is the central struggle of NRM. As long as NRM is in power, Ugandans’ future would be secured. (L.G)

The dominant opinion and feeling among the respondents were that NRM came into power as a liberator. They strongly argued that NRM was a people-centered party. One respondent preferred to call it a mass party. They expressed that their party had worked tirelessly to develop the country, unlike the past governments. It protected the sovereignty of Uganda, guaranteed freedom of worship, and other fundamental human rights. NRM was viewed extremely as a better government that was working to ensure that all Ugandans have equal access to national resources. They commended NRM for the opportunities created in the country, such as Universal Primary

Education (UPE), Universal Secondary Education (USE), affirmative action, and different poverty reduction programmes. Respondents mentioned that NRM had fought and defeated insurgency in the country that had stalled economic progress in the country. They added that NRM influences foreign policies, for instance, NRM played a significant role in bringing peace in South Sudan and Somalia. This way, it built confidence among Ugandans that it has the capacity and ability to safeguard the country.

Uganda has curved a position in the international arena, particularly in East Africa as a regional power because of its contribution to international security, and because of this, it is well-respected not only by East African states but even other states beyond. If there is an outbreak of conflict in the region, everybody knows Uganda can contribute to its de-escalation. They recognize Uganda for the credible roles it has played in neighboring countries like South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to restore peace in their respective countries. We should be proud of that. President Gen. Museveni has maintained friendly neighborhood foreign policy and ensured that Uganda joins other countries such as the USA to fight against terrorism. Exceedingly important, NRM does not want to cause a confrontation with any sovereign state. All these contributions speak a lot about how NRM is strategically performing in governance. (E.A.I)

Over three decades, Ugandans have been made to understand that NRM came to power to restore power to the people and that it is in power to protect Ugandans and their properties. Therefore, Ugandans in lieu were to fulfill their obligation to the state. Respondents revealed that NRM was concerned about increasing corruption and the mismanagement of the country's scarce resources. In that regard, when further probed into what NRM was doing to curb the vice, they responded that anti-corruption institutions such as IGG fought against the vice. One respondent mentioned that:

What is important to me is for Uganda to have a government that serves the people without discrimination on any account. This is what NRM is doing, so there is no need to entrust power to inexperienced NUP. NRM deserves to stay in power because it has managed state affairs well and, as long as it continues to place people's interests as its priority. An effort is being made to fight the many faces of corruption, which sometimes involve government officials, something that weakens the NRM government. Indeed, what matters is the prosperity of the people. NRM is interested and committed to the enforcement of the law to all political parties. Unfortunately, opposition parties do not want to stick to that. (P.T)

This opinion was not any different from all NRM respondents interviewed. They expressed similar views that understanding NRM in this perspective had been an effective tool for it in power for decades.

The NUP Slogan “People Power our Power”

Unlike its NRM counterparts who were fighting to consolidate and hang on to power, NUP respondents expressed that they were committed to their political struggle to remove NRM from power using its slogan it coined as “People Power our Power.” It was observed that since its inception, NUP steadily mobilized and called people to register and vote against the NRM government during the January 2021 general elections to have what it called “new Uganda.” The principal aim of the NUP struggle was to attain state power and remove the NRM government was accused of usurping people’s power, corruption, and being insensitive to the interests of majority Ugandans. The view of respondents interacted with held political convictions that were like NUP ambition.

I joined NUP since its inception; we mobilized the people of Uganda to join the struggle, and we already knew that only it had the trust of the people. NUP wanted to deliver people to new change after being under the same government for more than three decades. We, the young people we want to see the new leader taking Uganda to another level. I wonder why NRM would not want to democratically hand over power. It claims to have restored democratic governance in the country, but it has become a threat to the democracy it restored in the country. I wonder why NRM does not want to listen to the will of the people. People have renewed their social contract with NRM five times, but it had turned out to be disappointing, so to say. It has relied heavily on the military to strengthen its longevity in power. This undermines the mandate of the people entrenched in the constitution article 1, which states that power belongs to the people. So, NUP mobilized to put in place a formidable force to change government using the democratic process. We urged people “bebereremu” meaning people themselves should actively participate in the election process to change the government. (H.S)

What can be derived from the line of thought above is that the party slogan helped them to mobilize support for NUP. It carried a message, which reminded Ugandans of Article one of the constitutions, which states that power belongs to people. Therefore, it was their constitutional mandate to rise against NRM, which claimed had turned authoritarian. Respondents seemed determined in popularizing their slogan among the people. Arguably, the NUP slogan is inconsonant with citizen political rights and this could have shaped their understanding of the slogan that NUP wanted Ugandan to use in their struggle against NRM. One can be preempted to say that the NUP slogan synthesized the symbiosis between NRM-NUP political parties’ electoral politics in the 2021 general elections. Also, it can be noted that respondents believed that their political activism with NUP was their fundamental constitutional mandate to contribute toward the democratic process to determine leaders who were to run the affairs of the state for the next five years (2021-2026).

Casting vote against is a simple action but a powerful democratic tool that can provide the citizen with leaders of their choice if an election is free, fair, and transparent. This was NUP's call to Ugandans to participate in the 2021 general elections while demanding the impartiality of the independent Electoral Commission. This was to bring to an end to NRM

domination state power. We need a country, Uganda, where leaders were accountable to the people, where all Ugandans had equal opportunity to access national resources, freedom of association, assembly, and worship. Chapter four of the 1995 constitution specifically article 29 provides for freedom of association. All these were fundamental pillars to running democratic governance. In Uganda, however, it was only freedom of worship that had not been constrained. But our political party activities have been constrained. (J.F)

What arises from the above view, is that NUP framed its slogan based on fundamental issues linked to the power of the people to attract their attention and arouse them into political actions. Perhaps in this context that probably this attracted the youth support who were yearning for a change in government. Issues such as youth unemployment, closure of economic activities like the entertainment industry because of lockdown instituted by the government to prevent the spread of COVID-19, which were providing economic livelihood to the youth, were interpreted as government failure. NUP marketing the belief that “People Power our Power” was the solution. NUP party encouraged people to actively involve themselves in the election to vote NRM out of power. As they were promised and assured that their vote was an important rational weapon to help them remove NRM from power rather than waiting for God’s intervention. It can be argued with an increasing amount of confidence that the strategy of the People Power our Power movement to turn into a political party provided it with a party label. This did not only help it mobilize its supporters into party activism but also attracted international sympathy and support, which NRM contested. NUP leadership appealed to its supporters to embrace a peaceful approach to popularize their slogan for people to understand it and use it to reach their destiny. Evidence from data collected during interviews supports the view that NUP successfully attracted many supporters joining the party and becoming party activists using the party slogan. In regards, respondents stated that:

NUP has become the most closet to the people, especially the youth in the country. It is here to serve Ugandans, and it is consistent with its struggle to remove NRM from power. NUP has pulled the support of the young people in the country. Many people feel aggrieved when NRM leaders in power do not stick to their promises. This leaves poor service delivery, and they had also realized that they knew what struggle they were committing themselves to encourage Ugandans to join hands for the NUP political struggle. Our cardinal intention is to see Ugandans returning to themselves, their power usurped by NRM. (B.M.K)

The struggle to capture state power through a democratic electoral process is a fundamental right; hence, casting a vote for a political party in a country that adheres to constitutionalism is a fundamental right. Therefore, remarkably, NUP's active involvement in its party activism was because of an accusation against NRM for failing to declare a democratic transition plan, but instead manipulating election processes to keep itself in power with Museveni as a life President. NUP considered its participation in politics as a contribution toward liberating Ugandans against NRM authoritarian regime.

The problem with NRM is that it has outlived its usefulness. Every general election presents the same candidate (Gen. Tibuhaburwa Museveni) who has made Uganda look like it is his personal property. He has never allowed any member of NRM to challenge or stand against him for the positions of the chairperson of the party and president. Uganda is bigger than anyone and it will exist beyond everyone, but NRM has dominated the country and had reached a point that it applies law selectively and it favours laws and policies that should protect its political power and limit democratic processes on the country. The political substance is now missing, some Ugandans are no longer enjoying some of their fundamental rights. NRM has used the public order management law to restrict political gatherings because political actors must seek Inspector General of Police (IGP) formal approval to hold any political meeting. NUP supporters have been arrested and detained without being produced in courts of law. NRM is ever out to oppress and suppress using different tactics. Despite NRM's tactical strategies to prevent NUP from competing in elections using the law, NUP circumvented it and we were not yet to relent from our mission because the 2021 general election was a mockery of democracy. NRM used violence to return itself to power. In the due course, many innocent Ugandans lost their lives because of excessive force used by security forces against NUP. There is a fusion of Police and Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF), which is unconstitutional. The two have different mandates. NRM has done what Iddi Amin and Obote did to Ugandans. During Amin and Obote there was "operation panda gari" loosely translated as "get in the vehicle" in which Ugandans were arrested, detained and others disappeared mysteriously. NUP supporters were arrested and taken in a vehicle popularly known as "drone" to unknown places and subjected to many tortures. Even journalists have not been left untouched. But history will not judge NRM kindly for its restriction on democracy in Uganda. We have fallen back to Iddi Amin's regime. (W.E.R).

This view clearly shows that there was a disregard for freedom of association, respect for human rights, rule of law, and press freedom by NRM. It also confirms the view that NUP supporters and journalists who were covering Kyagulanyi, while he was to deliver his petition to the court. and were beaten by the military, while they were covering the event in which Kyagulanyi was going to court to deliver his petition. However, security argued that before their personnel were deployed, they are briefed and given rules of engagement (Buluba, 2021). The above submission supports Rukirabashaija (2021) argument that during Amin's regime, the military arrested those suspected to challenge the regime and took them to torture chambers, popularly known as "safe houses" in different parts of the country.

Opposing Rival Parties

Besides political party slogan and ideology, as a significant force that motivates people into political party activism. Political party members' engagement in their party activities was to pursue their political party interest while objecting to the policies of its rivals (Poletti et al., 2018). The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda guarantees political equality, but what pertains to the

current democratic practice is far from this constitutional provision. The data obtained from the respondents revealed pivotal divergent views. Dominant opinion among the NUP toward NRM was the loud perpetual allegation that NRM inclined so much on authoritarianism to frustrate the opposition. While on the NRM side, criticism revolved around NUP's inability to manage state power, lack of clearly defined vision for the country, and their negative perception that anyone who did not support NRM was an enemy of development and democracy in Uganda. When respondents were asked why they held passionate criticism of the rival party, they reported that:

NRM under the leadership of Gen. Museveni does not want to leave power democratically. They strongly believed that NUP leader Hon. Robert Kyagulanyi Sentamu lacked the art and science of governing the state. The regime survived on the manipulation of amending the constitution to favor it to cling to power. The biggest challenge with NRM is to hold the belief that it was only Gen. Museveni who has the mantle to lead the country and no one else can do so. (J.I.M)

Simply making a political sweeping statement by NUP that Museveni must go because he has overstayed in power was lack understanding that NRM was democratically elected by the majority people. NRM was corrupt, it favours a certain group of Ugandans. We knew the impact of these statements. They created remarkable hatred among Ugandans. NRM cannot accept such baseless accusations because it had invested time building democratic state institutions that had enabled NUP visibility to compete in the democratic process. The major problem with NUP was the radical attitude toward political activities. I do not have a problem with their intention to participate in the democratic process in this country, but I can tell you NUP does not know the vision and mission of NRM. Reflect on what happened on 18th and 19th November 2020 because their leader had been arrested for flouting COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) they incited violence in urban areas around the country in which many innocent Ugandans lost their lives. (A.U)

It is noticeable from the two claims that each party hurt each other labeling accusations to achieve their respective socio-economic and political objective.

I am a member of NRM. I am sure Uganda has developed and could continue developing under the stewardship of NRM. And, indeed, Uganda was heading to being a middle-income country. We are on steady progress as a country. NUP, if handed, political power will plunge Uganda into turmoil and sink it into a failed state like Somalia. (N.A.K)

Equally, the NUP respondents opposed NRM policies that were incapable of transforming Uganda because NRM had been in power for more than thirty years, but the development registered under its regime had widened the gap between the poor and the rich. Hence, the NUP desire to challenge it. Furthermore, NUP respondents were asked if NRM was willing to make a coalition with NUP and merge its ideology and NUP slogan would they join hand to support NRM. The respondents revealed that:

My involvement as an opposition activist emerged from the pain and grief, which NRM inflicted on Ugandans by clinging onto power without a plan for the peaceful democratic transfer of power. If NRM accepted to engage in the transition process, NUP would willingly treat the leader of NRM with dignity and take care of his welfare. There is no need to send him to exile, but NRM cannot be trusted. I will never have trust in NRM because its leader Gen. Museveni has frequently made promises which he has never fulfilled. He has influenced constitutional amendments to protect him in power. But if NRM genuinely promises to allow another leader to take over from him, I think there would be no pressure on NRM, but as far as I know, it was impossible. The NUP leader inspired me through his music, which has also taught people about politics. I also got motivation from friends who made me understand politics was a power struggle. (D.K)

The same question was asked NRM respondents on the possibility to hand over power to NUP or to constitute a coalition with it rather than labeling them as incompetent.

My father worked with NRM for decades and all family members were staunch supporters of NRM, but we are in a sorry state. I know NUP members very well they feel they cannot work with NRM. Additionally, they are impatient and ambitious, they do not want to be mentored before becoming competent leaders take over power. I do not see any possibility of a coalition between NRM and NUP. I don't think our democratic institutions established by NRM can survive if NUP took over power in this country. What they were doing was to misinform foreigners to believe that Uganda wasn't respecting the values of democracy, forgetting that they were using the democratic space NRM had provided the country. (T.S)

A critical analysis of the above demonstrates that there was mistrust on either side of the respondents of NRM and NUP. Indeed, NUP had a deep feeling that NRM was not sincere when dealing with opposition. Put differently, NRM respondents did not have trust in NUP's competence to take over state leadership. Similarly, NUP doubted the readiness genuineness of NRM to democratically hand over power. If the issue of how NRM under the leadership of Gen. Museveni to relinquish power was not resolved, it would be malignant to Uganda in the future. The common thought between the two parties was that each party suspected the other of being incapable to serve Ugandans effectively. NRM had a deep fear that NUP was being backed by foreigners and that it exhibited chauvinistic tendencies that would destabilize the country. NRM considered, NUP leader and his followers as agents of western states in the country even though since NRM came to power in 1986 had enjoyed enormous support from the west.

It was parties like FDC, the four-time NRM challenger, DP, or UPC with political experience to lead the opposition coalition to challenge NRM, not NUP. But what surprised me was that some members from opposition parties like DP joined NUP, even though it hardly had structures at the grassroots to effectively challenge NRM. I know these were political opportunists whose target was to retain their political leadership positions at different levels. (P.J)

The most challenge that was observed is disunity among the opposition on one side and the same cropping up among the NRM followers witnessed during its primaries. NUP was challenged by tackling financial support NRM candidates enjoyed from their party to facilitate their campaigns. NUP respondents mentioned that if NRM had no access to state resources, and the party could operate on a leveled ground, NUP would out-compete NRM in the election. The general perception was that NRM had to do anything, including the use of excessive security forces to keep power.

First Family Exposure Experience

First-time exposure to politics through the family members is a veritable tool for involvement motivation into political participation (Esau et al., 2018; Finnemore & Jurkovich, 2020; Hong & Lin, 2017). Study findings confirmed this literature. When respondents were asked if their family had influenced their political activists, Respondents showed that in one way or the other had had an early exposure to politics at their home. When asked how they had that exposure, they reported members often discussed politics in the country, especially when political events occurred like elections listening to radio political talk at home, and reading newspapers bought by their parents. One respondent from respective parties mentioned that:

My parents joined NUP and my brothers, and sisters had since become staunch supporters of the party. Since I was recruited as part of NUP leadership, I had to tirelessly mobilize for my party. So, I dedicated myself to party activities, and I liked our approach of engaging in a peaceful struggle to change in government. Security forces have continued to deny our NUP leaders and supporters political space to conduct our party activities. This has frustrated our political mission for this country. We have often been denied by security forces to freely access different parts of the country on an allegation that was not observing SOPs. (A.B)

My family and all our neighbours for a long time we have been subscribing to NRM. My father introduced me to different prominent politicians from whom I gained political skills and I can ably deal with people. My parents and our neighbor massively mobilized and voted for NRM. I have been attending NRM political functions since my childhood, and it has empowered me and many Ugandans politically. The clear manifesto of NRM made me and other Ugandans volunteer to mobilize for our mass party during the election. (Z.I)

These views are consistent with Neundorf and Smet's (2017) earlier study finding, which revealed that young people followed political behavior arising from exposure to their parents' political label identification and even become more politically active. This proposes that parents are critical mass mentors to their children in politics. One respondent stated that:

My father was a successful lawyer and politician, and a legislator. He had got his bachelor of laws (LLB) degree from the oldest university in Uganda and a master's degree in the same field from abroad. Before he died, he urged me to achieve more education and the highest educational qualification, i.e., Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Besides, he was passionate

about succeeding in politics and being more educated than an undisputed tool for success. He always insisted that if I can reach more achievements in politics and education than him. He specifically encouraged me to study law or political science at University. Unfortunately, I got admission to the university to pursue a bachelor of arts in journalism. Though, his interest was to make me succeed in politics if I took the advice to pursue a course in his dream. But important to note is that although I pursued my career in journalism, where served for fifteen years after my graduation, I found myself active in politics and more so NRM party activist. (S.S)

NUP respondents had a contrary view to that of NRM. They expressed that the growing unfair treatment of the opposition perpetuated by NRM mainly dictated that their party activism. They believed NUP was ready for the task to bring expected change in politics in Uganda. NUP vehemently accused NRM of discriminative treatment of Ugandans.

NUP had not in any way bought people to join the party. They were interested in participating in the political struggle that would retire NRM. The party was into recruiting as many members as possible and planned to establish a grassroots structure. We recruited many candidates to take part in elections at different levels of presidential, parliamentary, and local government to ensure NUP capture leadership at the different levels of government. Most importantly, our NUP members were oriented to understand that their activism was not going to give them the material benefit but it was a struggle to deliver Ugandans to "Uganda empya" loosely translated as new Uganda and many embraced the slogan of the party. Said, one respondent. (J.K)

This was contrary to NRM respondents, who said that they were active in NRM politics because they were recruited to participate in the NRM struggle as it emerged to fight against poor governance in the country. All interviewees agreed and mentioned that Ugandans wanted to see

Educational Institutions

Different literature confirms that knowledge and skills obtained from educational institutions enable individuals to acquire political participation ability and interest in politics (Finnemore & Jurkovich, 2020). Participants in this study were asked if educational institutions in any way influenced their political activism. They affirmed that educational institutions, where they studied partly influenced their political activism on different accounts. NRM respondents revealed that their interest in politics, which had greatly changed their personalities, had a foundation from their schools. They mentioned that schools offered them a training ground from, which they acquired the ability to offer themselves for leadership. They further stressed that at the university, they participated in students' guild electoral politics where they successfully won and were entrusted with the leadership of students' bodies. They stressed that being a student leader, exposed them to different government officials as well opposition political actors. One respondent explained that:

When I was elected as Makerere University students' Guild President, I became close to many high-profile politicians, government, and foreign mission officials in the country. I was recruited to work with the youth league of NRM. This engagement and exposure nurtured me into party activism. Severally, I was invited to participate in youth mobilization programmes, which enabled me to acquire political skills and climb the political ladder in party and national politics. My engagement in party activism was out of the earlier political experience I had obtained from student leadership politics at the university. I was invited to join their symposium, programs, and because I have public speaking skills, my English is good, I rose fast at the party. I extend my gratitude to my alma mater I had significant training from my university administration and student guild affairs. (N.M)

It was evident that students' politics at Campus played a significant role in influencing students' cognition not only about party politics but also national politics. This increased political efficacy among politically active students. Like NRM respondents, most NUP respondents reported that their active involvement in students' politics at the university had a profound link with their active participation in NUP party activism. They emphasized that different political party leaders marketed the ideas of their respective political parties to students' political talks organized by students, a symposium conducted at the campus. These socialized students into the party and national political values. All these, support earlier study findings conducted by Saha and Print (2010) who found that the involvement of students in their politics at school, provided them with political knowledge, which prepared them for future participation in political activism. Further, the finding is in agreement with Fuentes-Moreno et.al. 2020; Agerberg (2019) who argued that educational institutions' knowledge and skills matter in the development of citizen civic competence that motivates them into becoming political activists.

I am a NUP member, however, my political interest, knowledge, and skill, sharpened at my university. It was the resilience of Rtd. Col. Dr Besigye (former FDC leader) and Robert Kyagulanyi Sentamu also known as Bobi wine political struggle to challenge NRM, that my compatriot and I at the university that motivated our active involvement in NUP "People Power our Power" movement. It is difficult to tell you how much resources and time I have devoted to NUP but what I can tell you is that I have actively participated in NUP's political struggle to deliver Ugandans to "new Uganda". I was recruited as a NUP member and assigned a task to mobilize other youths to become NUP activist cadres, I distributed posters and campaigned for NUP in the January 14, 2021 general elections. Leaders such as Col. Besigye and Kyagulanyi have shaped my leadership journey. (R.K)

This narration finding corroborates with Bob-Milliar (2019) argument that party activism involved party members distributing posters, conducting campaigns, and helping their party to raise funds. Notably, it can be observed that NUP supporters were inspired by their political leaders into party activism. NUP became a rallying point to mobilize the people clamouring for change.

Conclusion and Implications

Conclusively, this study aimed at providing involvement motivations to participate in political party activities such as voting, political campaigns, running for political positions during elections, to mention but a few. Based on civic voluntarism and general incentives adopted to guide the study, different involvement motivations were reported for being catalysts for the members of NRM and NUP party activism. Drawing from study findings in the context of these theories, factors such as party slogans, political events, party ideology, family influence, and educational institutions emerged as significant involvement motivations for party activism. Like party activists in western democracy, these factors were a foundation for NUP and NRM party activists to create a sense of collective identity to frame their supporter's political actions and convictions (Harrison & Boyd, 2003).

The NRM party was considered as it stood to be for party activists who were struggling to ensure the continuity of their party in power. While NUP was chosen on account that it was a new party led by a young man with limited experience in politics, but presented his party as a potential platform for people to stand against continued NRM stay in power. In this respect, members of both parties enthusiastically expressed wanting to become politically active to help their respective parties to achieve their defined goals. NRM respondents strongly felt that NRM was a mass party with a better party ideology that appealed to many Ugandans. The feeling and thinking were that NRM wished to uphold state power to continue consolidating its achievements it had registered to deliver the socio-economic transformation of Uganda. Meanwhile, NUP looked at itself as a platform for Ugandans to join and fight to regain the power it claimed had been usurped by NRM. General analysis shows that respondents' popular views and opinions of the two parties, the NRM and NUP, highlighted the significance of party ideology and party slogan, respectively, among the factors that motivated them into party activism. These factors influenced their willingness to commit much of their time to work on behalf of their respective parties' activism. In the 2021 general election politics, NRM and NUP party members were visible in the entire election campaigns and made necessary contributions toward the campaigns.

Members of the respective parties were inclined toward the need to secure a future for Ugandans and deliver them to a new Uganda, respectively. It led to the emergency of the popular perception that NRM supporters were struggling for no change. However, NUP supporters were for a change in the country's leadership to deliver Ugandans to what NUP termed as new Uganda. Remarkably between the members of the two political parties was that the strong base of their party activism was through the different political message content in party ideologies, slogans, educational institutions, the first family exposure, and political events like it is in other countries in different parts of the world were preferred involvement motivation vehicle of party activism. Members of each party felt that their political actions would influence democratic electoral processes. Notwithstanding the study limitations associated with qualitative research, the study findings reinforce earlier study findings Rukirabashaija (2021), Bob-Milliar (2019), Finnemore and Jurkovich, (2020), and Neundorf and Smet (2017) among others, on political activism. From a theoretical perspective, the study reaffirms the usefulness of civic voluntarism and general incentive models in explaining the construction of party activism. They also show that party activists play an important role in building the democratic competition process therefore, NUP after losing to NRM should still value its members. Political parties should provide incentives to their members to develop strong civic competence and a sense of belonging to encourage them to present themselves as committed party activists in democratic election competitions. Political parties should devote adequate resources to facilitate their activities to contribute toward the development of democracy in Uganda. The young people in Uganda can position themselves largely as the best

alternative to take over from the NRM if required constructed traditional democratic standards functions. Finally, the findings of this study add to the already vast existing literature that explains different motivations through which individual citizens are driven into political party activism. Therefore, it is useful for researchers to critique it and make further wider study with many political parties.

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Conflict of Interest

I declare that this study was carried out without any hope of financial or commercial gain which could present a potential conflict of interest.

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