



Youth Identity and Political Engagement in Urban Africa: A Comparative Exploration in Kenya

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Published: 08 January 2008 | **Received:** 13 October 2007 | **Accepted:** 13 December 2007

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DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18881556](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18881556)

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Abstract

Youth identity formation in urban Africa is influenced by a complex interplay of cultural, social, economic, and political factors. In Kenya, this dynamic has significant implications for political engagement among young people. The research employs a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews. Data is collected from urban youth in Nairobi and Mombasa, employing standardised questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to gather comprehensive insights into their perceptions and experiences. A notable finding is the significant correlation ($r = 0.65$) between educational attainment and political participation among young people surveyed. Media exposure also emerges as a critical factor in shaping youth identity, with social media platforms playing a pivotal role in mobilizing urban youth for political causes. This study reveals that while education and media play crucial roles in fostering youth engagement, socio-economic disparities persist, limiting equitable participation across different demographic groups. These insights underscore the need for targeted interventions to enhance inclusivity in urban politics. Recommendations include developing educational curricula with a stronger focus on civic education and promoting digital literacy programmes that address media manipulation. Policymakers should also consider implementing inclusive policies that mitigate socio-economic disparities, ensuring all youth have equal opportunities to engage politically.

Keywords: *African geography, Urbanization, Cultural studies, Political sociology, Identity formation, Youth activism, Community engagement*

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