

**THE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATIZATION IN UGANDA  
(1995-2008)**

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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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### Declaration

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**The process of Democratization in Uganda (1995-2008)**” submitted by me in partial fulfilment of requirements for award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this or any other university.

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*Lastly it goes without saying that I am responsible for the remaining faults and inadequacies in this work.*

## List of Abbreviations

ADB:	African Development Bank
AU:	African Union
CEAO:	Common Economic Community African Organization
CMI:	Chr Michelsen Institute
CRS:	Catholic Relief Services
CRC:	Constitutional Review Commission
DP:	Democratic Party
ECOMESA:	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
ECOWAS:	Economic Community of West African states
EC:	Electoral Commission
EC:	European Community
FDC:	Forum for Democratic Change
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization
GCM:	General Court Martial
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
GSU:	General Service Unit
GOSS:	Government of Southern Sudan
GNP:	Gross National Product
HIPC:	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HRW:	Human Rights Watch
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
KY:	Kabaka Yekka (King Only/Alone)
LC:	Local Councils
LRA:	Lord's Resistance Army
MP:	Members of Parliament
NAI:	Nordiska Afrikanska Institutet
NEPAD:	New Partnership for African Development
NGO:	Non Government Organisation
NIJU:	National Institute of Journalists of Uganda
NRA:	National Resistance Army
NRM:	National Resistance Movement
NSC:	National Security Council
LRA:	Lord's Resistance Army
OAU:	Organisation of African Unity
SADCC:	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
RC:	Resistance Councils
SAP:	Structural Adjustment Programme
SRB:	State Research Bureau
UCB:	Uganda Commercial Bank
USA:	United States of America
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development
UK:	United Kingdom
UPC:	Uganda Peoples' Congress
UN:	United Nations
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UPM:	Uganda Patriotic Movement
UNLA:	Uganda National Liberation Army
WB:	World Bank
WTO:	World Trade Organization



## PREFACE

Uganda is a land-locked equatorial country in East Africa and one of the least developed countries of the world. Uganda became an independent on 9th October 1962 with Dr Milton Obote, leader of the Uganda people's congress (UPC), Prime minister from 1962. After its independence, the country was under the control the military regime and faced the socio-economic and political crisis for almost three decades. Uganda has a rich tradition of democratic struggle but post-independence in general and military in particular considerably eroded those traditions.

The people of this country struggled against the military regime and achieved the goal of democratization in 1995 when democratically civilian government enthroned President Museveni. Since independence, Uganda had only three successful civilian regimes elected by the common people before 1995. Now, there is a democratic government under President Museveni, which became a reality after a long struggle for democracy. For the last fifteen years, the country has experienced the democratic transition through the successful back-to-back parliamentary and presidential elections. Though Museveni introduced the multi-party system with the new constitution but Ugandians failed to challenge the single party dominance and the authoritarian regime of president Museveni. Nevertheless, Uganda has become one of the fewer Anglophone countries which have a significant reputation for political stability and democratization.

In this historical backdrop, I have tried to focus on the democratic struggle and political consequences of Uganda in a political aspect for the purpose of academic research. It has mainly focused upon the involvement of the state in the military regime as well as the political transformation in the post colonial period. The study has intended to understand the political changes of Uganda within context of multiple political and economic forces working since the period of 1995. The study employs historical, analytical and descriptive methods based on primary and secondary sources to understand the nature of democratization Uganda since 1995 to 2008.



Three hypotheses have been taken into consideration while conducting the research:-

- The process of democratization and political instability in Uganda has gamut of deep rooted social, political, communal, educational reasons.
- Democratization during Museveni's rule was an autocratic, despotic and limited that does not have required strong political institution and vibrant civil society.
- Western donors discourage Museveni's rule and enhance the democratization in Uganda.

The research work has been divided into five chapters-I contain the introduction which deals with the conceptual framework of democratization. It also analyses the political set up of Uganda. Chapter-II focuses with the causes and factors of civilian transition in a historical perspective. Chapter-III concentrates on the nature of democratization and political changes that the state attempted to bring up in the aftermath of independence. Chapter-IV deals with the impact of Westernization and its influence in continuing democratization process in Uganda. Finally, chapter-V has summarily throws the light upon the whole research that has been undertaken in the previous chapters.

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# **Chapter-1**

## **Introduction**

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## Chapter-1

### Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa faces many challenges for the restoration of democracy. The African political situation is different from other developing countries as Africa is facing increasing political instability to the improving picture in other developing countries region. African countries bear the legacies of imperial exploitation and economic dependence; and many countries fail to offer minimal protection to their people. Democracy is widely considered to be a necessary and important tool if a country is to develop politically, socially and economically. While democracy might be taken as a given right in most western parts of the world because of its basic principles it has not proved to have the same impact in other parts of the world.

What is democracy and democratization? Defining democracy is not a simple task because of its many meanings depending on whom you ask. Some associate it only with the political meaning while others associate it with socio-economic conditions. Therefore it is necessary to be specific about the definition one mean. To put it in simple terms democracy comes from the Greek word demos which means peoples' rule. It can be defined as a system where the authority has its legitimacy in the will of what the people have expressed. Democracy at the same time puts demands on how the people will should come to expression. Democratization is the transition from authoritarian or semi-authoritarian systems to democratic political systems, where democratic systems are taken to be those approximating to universal suffrage, regular elections, a civil society, the rule of law and an independent judiciary. Democratization is a process that is made up and caused by different factors; these can be connected with political or socio-economic structures and political institutions in which they act.

With the reinstating of democratic ideals a society hopes that it will prosper and develop. While democracy might be taken as a given right in most western parts of the world because of its basic principles it has not proved to have the same impact in other parts of the world. Although theorists may have different definitions of democracy they agree on at least what basic ideals it should contain like for example

free elections and universal rights for all individuals.

The fact that we are in the beginning of the 21 century and nearly half of the countries in the world are not considered to be democracies is a global problem which affects all of us in one way or another. So one has to ask why one half of the world has still not been democratized. The answer to the question above is connected to different factors. Of all the parts of the world where democracy has failed to take place the continent of Africa stands out more than the rest. Due to its dark history and political situation that differs from the rest of the world, democratization has shown little progress in taking place despite numerous efforts.

One of the countries in Africa that currently seems to be undergoing a democratization process is Uganda. After a turbulent past of war and conflict the country's current leader Yoweri Museveni took power in January 1986 and was seen as a liberator in the eyes of both his people and the western world. In his inauguration speech he stated, the general probing Africa and Uganda was not its people but its leaders who sat too long in power. By 2001 elections he stated in his manifesto that this was going to be the last time running for the presidency. Since then he has manipulated Uganda's constitution to still remain in power.

### **1.1 Democratization: A Conceptual Framework**

Democracy belongs to the sphere of collective decision making. It embodies the ideal that such decision, affecting an association as a whole, should be taken by all its members, and that they should each have rights to take part in such decisions making. A democracy in other words entails the twin principle of popular control over collective decision-making and equality of rights in the exercise of that control.<sup>1</sup> To the extent that these principles are realized in the decision-making of an association, we can call it democratic. The first principle defines political citizenship and focuses on who should be involved in the political process. The second principle concerns freedoms of all kinds of political opinions that may be expressed during the political process. Democratic government aspires to serve under "the people" rather than ruling

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<sup>1</sup> Beetham, David and Boyle Kevin (1996), *Democracy*, New Delhi: National Book trust, p.2.

over them. Implementing some form of a voting system, usually involving indirect representation pursues this ideal. It shares links with the concept of a republic.

A few scholars have followed in Schumpeter's footsteps by adopting the smaller definition. A couple that deserve to be mentioned are Samuel P Huntington who also focuses on elections, the aspect he believes to be the centre of democracy. The other scholar is American political scientist Robert Dahl whose work in the democracy field has been overwhelming. He claims that in order for a country to be democratized one needs a few democratic criteria or variables, he presents eight of them. In his opinion there is no society that can ever be fully democratic therefore the closest one that comes to full democracy is what he calls polyarchy, which many still interpret as democracy. What sets apart Dahl from both Schumpeter and Huntington is the fact that he also emphasises the importance of political rights such as freedom of speech, freedom of press, general right to vote and organisation freedom. In this way he develops the procedure definition in the qualitative direction.

By concluding these rights he gives the average citizens a greater chance to participate in the democracy process than Schumpeter and Huntington do. The wider definition of democracy has encountered various problems because it is considered being too wide and therefore limits a possibility to study it scientifically. Its broads to include the political aspects but also presents a type of democracy that is possible to reach and where you still can find a cause connection between democracy and other society variables. According to Teresia Rindeljäll a wider democracy definition means in general a minor chance for countries to be considered democracies. Here lays a problem when studying democracy in the third world because using a wider definition can constitute a problem in parts of the world where democracy has not come very far.

### **1.1.1 Democratisation**

Democratisation is the transition from authoritarian or semi-authoritarian systems to democratic political systems, where democratic systems are taken to be those approximating to universal suffrage, regular elections, a civil society, the rule of law and an independent judiciary. Democratization is a process that is made up and

caused by different factors; these can be connected with political or socio-economic structures and political institutions in which they act.<sup>2</sup> The democratisation we speak of today does not only occur by domestic forces in particular countries but also as a result of international pressure. So since democratisation is a wide subject how does one study it? Göran Hyden discusses two possibilities on this regard. According to him one can study democracy by either a narrow or wide definition. The small definition refers to study democracy, as a political phenomenon while the wide definition according to scholars should also include economic and social dimensions. Democratization should be studied the same way. Today's political science research often prefers the smaller approach that is based on studying democracy in a political way. The leading name that first pushed forward this study was Joseph Schumpeter who as early as 1942 stated that the central procedure of democracy is the selection of leaders through competitive elections by the people they govern.

### **1.1.2 Three theoretical approaches of democratisation**

Explaining democratisation means relating to a number of theories that exist in this field, Potter relates to three general types of theoretical approaches. All three of these theories bring into their explanation ideas about the changing nature of the state and the effect of that on the prospects for democratization, but they do so in different ways. The three theories are modernization- structural- and transition- theories respectively. Lauri Karvonen also brings modernization and transition theories in his book as important in the democratization process. He examines deeper than Potter does in explaining the democratization process. In this chapter transition, Karvonen's theory has been taking. A main reason for choosing this type of theory is that it explains the transition process better than the modernization and structural theories in my study. The analysis consists of both internal (political) and external factors (globalization) that have affected Uganda's democratization process. By the internal definition it is referred to the four dimensions in the transition theory which mainly focus on the domestic political factors, by external factors it is referred to the outside influence that affects.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratization>

Since 2001, Uganda has undergone a political reorganization in reaction to a combination of internal civic pressure and external pressure from donors and the World Bank (WB). Many scholars within political science bring up the globalization thesis and influence when studying democratization in the third world, mainly because it affects these countries more than we might imagine. The main focus on democratization in Uganda does not mostly lie in the economic and class factors but in different political dimensions. It brings focus on the political aspect better than the two other theories that are first and second presented below.

### **1.1.3 The modernization approach of Democratization**

The first theoretical approach to democratization is a socio-economic theory that emphasises on development as the most important factor in order for a country to make a transition towards democratic reforms. The theory came about in the 1950s by American sociologist Seymour Martin Lip set who stated that democracy is related to a country's social-economic development or level of modernization. He used fifteen different indicators in his research to measure democracy. He compared democratic and non-democratic countries in Europe and Latin America in terms of wealth, extent of industrialization, degree of urbanization and level of education.<sup>3</sup>

The results from his research were that democratic countries had higher mean levels of socio-economic development than the more authoritarian ones. Based on the results he came to the conclusion that the more a state does well economically the higher are the chances that it will be able to stay a democracy. This theory was one of the reasons the western world in the 1960s began donating financial aid to the third world in hope that they would be democratized through modernization. This kind of theory has been criticized to only emphasize on economical factors especially from political science scholars. The fact that there several developing countries that have a good economy but are not democratised brings problem to Lipset's thesis. Needless to say his theory has remained constantly strong and is still in affects even today especially in the third world. The fact that financial aid still makes up for a large

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.hrw.org/background/africa/uganda0206/3htm>

percent of many developing countries overall budget proves that the modernization theory still has an affect in third world countries development.

#### **1.1.4 The transition approach of Democratization**

This theory focuses on political processes, elite initiatives and choices that account for moves from authoritarian rule to liberal democracy. Transition theories aim to explain moving away from authoritarian regimes to more democratic ones. They aim to explain why some states achieve democracy and others fail. They also focus on stability when the democratic government has been installed. In some sense all research that has analysed transition to democracy during different periods in different parts of the world has contained transitions theoretic elements .This type of theory was developed in 1979 by researchers Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter began to study prospects for democracy in Latin America and Southern Europe. They refer to transition as the interval between one political regime and another Transition begins the moment the first signs of resolution by the old regime begin and ends when a democratic regime is installed, what seems to characterise transition processes is that the rules of the political games are not clearly defined. They are able to change fast and are at the same moment exposed to criticism from different directions. In real terms the whole process is a battle over which political game rules are to be applied, which groups and actors are going to be included in the process.

O'Donnell and Schmitter separate between two main components in the transition process, liberalization and democratization.<sup>4</sup> Liberalization refers to the extension of rights and creates guaranties for personal safety, freedom of speech and freedom of organization and socialization. Democratization in the sense the two researchers use it means the extension of the political field. Apart from increased political rights and freedom of organization the extension gives opportunity for new groups to be involved in the election and political process. So why is the transition to democracy so problematic? The German researcher Manfred Schmidt presents five special circumstances: the first is that those behind the democratization process have

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<sup>4</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986:6



little amount of time at their disposal. The second problem is what to do with the former regime, should they be treated fair or hard to make a standpoint. Third is that transition processes go hand in hand with economical crises, mainly because people expect the new government to make their lives better. Fourth is that it creates political instability which can lead to decreased economic?

## **1.2 Phases of Democratization**

Democratization takes place in two phases. One is transition to democracy and second democratic consolidation; civil society may play a crucial role for successful transition as well as for democratic consolidation. During the democratic transition phase, civil society organizations are often active in the process of putting an end to authoritarian rule in inaugurating democracy. Civil society is united; it has a common goal and internal differences as part aside. With relatively small resources civil society groups may discredit the authoritarian regime to the extent that it loses legitimacy, not only at home but also in an international context. Once authoritarian regime is replaced, mass participation might seem less important to ordinary citizen.<sup>5</sup>

### **1.2.1 Democratization in Africa**

The last decade of the twentieth century brought dramatic political changes to Africa. The whole continent was swept by a wave of democratization from Tunisia to Mozambique, from Mauritania to Madagascar after the government was forced to compete in multi-party elections against new or revitalized opposition movements. Elsewhere, the democratic picture was bleak. Africa had become a continent where governments were removed by force not by elections. By contrast, competitive democracy bloomed in the 1990s. As late as 1998, one-party states and military governments had been dominant and Africa was in an era of leader, one ideology and one political party.<sup>6</sup> Reasonably, free and fair elections did occasionally occur in these countries (When the military returned to barracks, for examples Nigeria and Ghana), but these elections never amounted to an on-going commitment to

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<sup>5</sup> Diamond, L. (1999), *Developing Democracy: Towards Consolidation*, Baltimore and London: John Hopkins Press, p.222.

<sup>6</sup> Claude, Ake (1993), 'The Unique Case of African Democracy', *International Affairs*, pp.239-244.

democracy. Granting several of these democracies amounted to paper exercises only but many proved to be fruitful. Momentous occasions such as when Kenneth Kaunda, president of Zambia for 27 years, respectfully bowed to the will of the people in 1991 or Nelson Mandela's 1994 victory in South Africa's first non-racial elections, demonstrated that multiparty democracy had gained a foothold in the African continent.<sup>7</sup>

Democracy is usually measured in terms of a viable multi-party system, separation of powers between legislative, executive and judicial institutions of the government, the rule of law through the setting up of constitutional and other legal norms as well as adequate institutions for their enforcement, free and fair elections freedom of the press, the general observance of human rights and should be taken into account in the evolution of democratization process in the transition countries. The non-existence of these vital virtues retarded the development and application of democracy in African countries. A prerequisite for the prospects of genuine democracy in the region is the reinstating of certain missing dimensions which constitute the fundamental conditions for sustainable democratization, namely representation, accountability and participation. Post-colonial Independent Africa necessary, these are not sufficient for democratization.

While free and fair elections are necessary, these are not sufficient for democratization. Many third-wave democracies have elections, but they lack basic institutions of the modern state. First wave democracy differs from the third wave democracy on grounds of sequence in development. Countries in the first wave, such as Britain and France initially became modern states establishing rule of law, and institutions of civil society. In contrast, third wave democracies started democratizing backwards, by introducing free elections prior to stabilizing basic institutions as the rule of law and civil society.<sup>8</sup> Third world democracies have begun democratization backwards. Free election and accountability of the government to the electorate introduced before the institutions of a modern state are fully secured. The governors

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<sup>7</sup> Alex, Thomson (2001), "Democracy: Relegitimising the African states"?. An introduction to African politics, London: Routledge, p.215.

<sup>8</sup> Christopher, Chelpham (1993), "Democratization in Africa: obstacle and prospect". Third world Quarterly, pp 425-438.

of these new democracies thus face a double challenge: completing the constitution of modern state while competing with their critics in free election.

The extent of the challenge is greater when a new democracy follows a totalitarian rather than the authoritarian regime. While an authoritarian regime includes the mass of the population from political participation, they may be satisfied with passive compliance with what the regime dictates and it may allow some scope for select institutions of civil society and the rule of law. By contrast, in communist countries the totalitarian vocation of the old regime led it to attempt to coerce the population to achieve the ideological goals.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the single most important aspect of the political transformation around the globe starting in early 1980s has been an assault on the state as on institutions. Around the world the state has been challenged both from above and from below by ethnic, religious and regional groups by international actors, supranational bodies and institutions and indeed the state elite itself.<sup>10</sup>

The democratization process that gathered renewed momentum, since the early 1980, a decade that marked the end of communism in eastern Europe and Soviet Union and parallel rejection, the decline of authoritarian one party regimes, in various third world countries more specifically in African continent. This wave of democratization in Africa was termed as 'second wave of democracy. Democratization may be regarded as a specific type of change and implies the transformation of a non-democratic dispensation in order to meet the requirements set for a multi-party democracy.<sup>11</sup> Democratization may be regarded as a specific type of change and implies the transformation of a non-democratic dispensation in order to meet the requirements set for a multi-party democracy.<sup>12</sup>

### **1.2.2 Democratization Process**

The purpose of election might not simply serve to conform to the liberal democracy but rather serve the state and ruling elite. An electoral process provides the means to

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<sup>9</sup> Richard, Rose and Doh Chull Sin (1998), *Democratization Backwards: The Problems of Third Wave Democracies*, *British Journal of Political Science*. pp. 432-453.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid* pp. 454-455.

<sup>11</sup> Emmanuel, Ezahi (1997), "Problems and prospects of Democracy in Africa", *Philosophy and Social Action*", pp.17-19.

<sup>12</sup> A. Duvenhange (1998), "Democratization as a Phenomenon: An Africa Prospective", *Africa Quarterly*, pp. 17-19

manage regime change thereby pre-empting a possible prospect of violent change through revolution the coup d'état, whether managed by military or civilian forces. The new wave was the hope of the various reform movements that appeared in most African countries from the late 1980 that authoritarian one party régime were to succeed by the restoration of the democracy, or multi-party democracy ,the platform from which the first opposition parties were mostly launched to the election of the early 1990s.

Simultaneously, from the standpoint of international donors agencies, political liberalization was regarded as condition of economic liberalization, improved economic performance, growth and development.<sup>13</sup> Elections are to serve as a means of change in regime to make a transition away from corruption as a systematic form of government. Elections are meant to be the means for establishing governance. As an alternative to violent change through a coup pre revolution, election is to legitimate a change in regime and make a new regime, through successive election an accountable one.<sup>14</sup>

In the case of Uganda, it is somehow different; even though it became a multi-party democratic country, but could not succeed as pure democracy .It has been ruled by single party dominance based on electoral process from 1986 to 2009, the country is dominated by the National Resistance Movement (NRM), party .Even in the presidential election, the NRM party has been winning with absolute majority. Thus, there is no scope for regime change in Uganda .It has turned as a restricted ,limited and authoritarian democracy since 1986 President Yoweri Museveni is well set up to continue an authoritarian state even though there is regular election but there is no change of government and political leaders.

### **1.2.3 The of political parties and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Two important questions are imperative which influenced for the evolution of Africa political parties. First, what the factors that contributed to the emergence of the Africa political parties? Second, what are functions of political parties in general and Africa

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid,p.12.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid p.13.

political parties in particular? what are the consequences of the above factors in the evolution of Africa political parties and their capacity to sustain ?Africa political parties originated outside the electoral and parliamentary cycle .They emerged during the colonial rule which was neither democratic nor legitimate. In most of Africa countries political parties emerged in a non-democratic setting.<sup>15</sup>

The existence of several competing political parties is accepted as a crucial characteristic regime. In the words of Robert Dhal, political regimes that ban political opposition and competition among political parties for votes of the people are not competitive and as a consequence not democratic .The wave of democratization in Africa in the early 1990s represented the most significant political liberalizations resulted in the emergence of free press, opposition parties,<sup>16</sup> independent union and a multitude of civil society organizations from the state.

While Botswana is Africa's longest continuous multi-party democracy, Benin can be considered as the first African country that made a transition to democracy during the exclusive wave of democratization after the end of cold war. It is generally agreed that events in Benin had a crucial 'democratization effect' in Western African, especially among the Francophone countries as those in South Africa did later among the Anglophone countries in Southern parts of Africa. There are many African democracies in which civil liberties are not sufficiently guaranteed; of Uganda during the government of Museveni NRM regime has used laws against inciting muting and threatening public safety to harass journalists. In fact a dominant single party system has developed recently in the Uganda democracies .It is a system in which one party is constantly in office and often governs alone. For example, Yoweri Museveni's party NRM (National Resistance Movement) has been dominating since Museveni came to power in Uganda in 1986.

### **1.3 Uganda: An Overview**

Uganda is a very fertile country in the heart of East Africa; it's half the size of Sweden and the country's south border lies just south of the equator. The country's

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<sup>15</sup> Salih Mahamed M.A.(2003)(ed),Africa political parties :Evolution ,Institutionalization and Governance ,London:Pluto pree,pp.1-2

<sup>16</sup> Ibid,pp.169-170

landscape consists mostly of savannah and bush steep, on the mountain slopes and alongside its rivers and lakes grows tropical rain forests. The biggest lake is Victoria that is the second largest inland lake in the world. Its bordering countries are Kenya in the east, Sudan in the north, The Republic of Congo in the west, Tanzania in the south and Rwanda in the Southwest. Uganda has taken its name from the Buganda kingdom that takes up much of the south of the country. Africans of three main ethnic groups Bantu, Nilotic and central Sudanic constitute most of the population. The population consists of over forty different ethnic groups the largest being the Buganda, about one fifth of the population are Buganda (est.17 percent). Other bigger Bantu groups are the Banyoro, Banyankore and the Bakiga. It is so the country's second largest ethnic group belongs to the Nilotic group.<sup>17</sup>

In numerous rounds Uganda has deported large ethnic groups, in 1970 former president Milton Obote deported 33 000 Kenyan immigrants and during his second term of office during the 1980s he did the same to 70 000 Rwandans. But the most familiar deportations came during former Dictator Idi Amin's regime when he deported about 50 000 citizens of Asian origin in 1972. Most of the country's population resides in the rural areas. Because of it's ethnologically diversity they are at least forty languages in use. These can be split into four major groups, the Bantu language that is spoken by two thirds of the population, and the Nilotic and Kuliak languages that are spoken in the northern part and Sudanese which is common in the country's north western part west of the Nile. English is the country's official language but is spoken by ten to twenty percent of the population, mainly city people. Uganda being a country with a history of rivalry and political disagreement, language differences may have increased ethnic tensions and caused difficulty to form a national identity<sup>18</sup>.

Religion has an important place in Ugandan life and a relative large part of the population attends church services. More than half of the country's inhabitants are Christians, most of who are Catholics (est. 41 %), among the Protestants (est. 31 %) the Anglican Church of Uganda clearly dominates. Muslims make up for about five to

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<sup>17</sup> länder i fickformat Uganda 1999:3

<sup>18</sup> Länder i fickformat Uganda 1999:5

fifteen percent of the population (depending on numerous sources) and live mostly in the north. About one third of the population admit to follow traditional religions. While Muslims today appear to be experiencing some degree of discrimination, in the seventies they were the most favoured<sup>19</sup> group under the rule of President Idi Amin Dada, he himself a Muslim, under whose government the number of Muslims had significantly grown.

The lack of unity in African politics is mostly based upon differences among ethnic groups and occasionally members of social classes and religious groups. Uganda's move towards independence was different from that of other colonial countries where political parties had been organized to force self-rule or independence from a reluctant colonial regime. Instead of reaching out for unity in Uganda there was a call for better autonomy by each of the five largest kingdoms, Uganda by this time was deeply divided among national, religious and ethnic groups. As John Stuart Mills stated that of the ethnic problem in countries trying to democratize "free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities, because each fears more injury to itself from the other nationalities than from the common arbiter, the state".<sup>20</sup>

The religious issue was that while the British-linked and British supported elite had largely converted to Protestantism, the majority of the population on the other hand were Catholic. This meant that the Protestants excluded Catholics from power. Just as important were the ethnic divisions, under the British rule Uganda's economy was largely in the hands of Indian immigrants who controlled much of the businesses around the country. Besides that ethnic divisions between the Nilotics from the north and the Bantu from the south had been gradually rising over the years. Before independence in 1962 three political parties had emerged. First was the Democratic Party (DP) that took its ideology from the Germany Christian Democrats and represented the catholic population. Second was the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) that was mainly supported by northern and western parts groups. Third was the Buganda nationalist party named Kabaka Yekka (KY) meaning, "King only".

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<sup>19</sup> [http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages\\_of\\_Uganda](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_Uganda)

<sup>20</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early\\_independent\\_Uganda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_independent_Uganda)

During the pre-independence period the Democratic Party won the most seats but failed to have a majority. Instead the UPC and KY united and formed a government choosing to exclude the DP. Upon independence on the 9th of October in 1962 Milton Obote, Leader of the UPC became Uganda's first Prime Minister. The new government was fragile and faced several difficulties mostly due to ethnic problems. Faced with the challenge of sustaining the evolving democracy, the new government had to literally share power constitutionally with the leaders of various ethnic groups, who continued to exert a great influence on their leaders.<sup>21</sup>

Instead, Obote turned to Idi Amin and the army, and, in effect, carried out a coup d'état against his own government in order to stay in power. Obote suspended the constitution, arrested the offending UPC ministers, and assumed control of the state. He forced a new constitution through parliament without a reading and without the necessary quorum. That constitution abolished the federal powers of the kingdoms; most notably the internal autonomy enjoyed by Buganda, and concentrated presidential powers in the Prime Minister's office.<sup>22</sup> The Kabaka refused and the Buganda kingdom prepared to battle him legally, but once again the Kabaka underestimated Obote who sent in Idi Amin and his loyal troops to storm the Kabaka's own palace.<sup>23</sup>

This forced him to flee into exile. After the assault, Obote was reasonably secure from open opposition. The new republican 1967 constitution abolished the kingdoms altogether. Buganda was divided into four districts and ruled through martial law, a forerunner of the military domination over the civilian population that all of Uganda would experience after 1971<sup>24</sup>.

Most of the secret service personnel were from Obote's region and ethnic group. The concerns for his safety were well founded; in December of 1969 he was the object of an assassination attempt that left him seriously wounded when a grenade

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<sup>21</sup> Ocitti 2000:124

<sup>22</sup> Uganda constitution(1995), article20(1)

<sup>23</sup> Hansen, H.B.; Twaddle, Michael (1995) (eds.): From Chaos to Order. The Politics of Constitution Making in Uganda

<sup>24</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early\\_independent\\_Uganda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_independent_Uganda)



that was thrown near him failed to explode. The following year a second attempt was made for his life when his motorcade was ambushed but the assassins mistook his vice president's car instead. Obote could no longer rely on Idi Amin and the army for their continuing loyalty. He instantly began to recruit more troops from his ethnic group to match those of Amin's own group. It was beginning to become clear that Idi Amin was a problem that Obote couldn't handle. In 1971 while Obote was abroad at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Singapore Amin executed a coup against Obote. According to reports Obote was planning of getting rid of Amin. When he learned about it, he decided to strike first. On January the 25th army units still loyal to Amin attacked specific targets in the nation's capital Kampala and the nation's airport of Entebbe. Amin's troops were better organised than the opposition and quickly overtook power, he immediately ordered mass executions of Obote's ethnic group of Acholi and Langi troops.

The Ugandan people mostly the majority ethnic group the Buganda, who did not approve of Obote, positively welcomed the coup. Amin stated that the new government was only going to play a mere "care taker role" until civilian rule would take over. He quickly changed Obote's non-aligned foreign policy and the new government was instantly accepted by most of the international community. In September 1972 Amin decided to deport all of Uganda's estimated 50,000 Asians, a large majority of these had lived in Uganda all their lives. The motive is believed to have been to let Ugandans handle their own economy and stop being explored by the Asians. This act proved to be a disaster since all of the trade and economy was run by Asians, the country's economy that was already on a down spiral almost hit bottom. It has been estimated that this act put Uganda's economic development 20 years behind; the only beneficiaries from this act were the army who overtook most of the Asians belongings. Important private and state owned businesses were run into the ground due to lack of maintenance and skills. Because the state had entirely taken over the selling of the country's most important export product coffee, a black market emerged and the smuggling problem to Kenya became an ever-increasing problem, which undermined the state finances.

Between April 1979 to January 1986, six different presidents and a presidential

commission ruled the country. During the short period between the April 1979 to the elections in December 1980 Uganda governed by Yusef Lule a former principle of Makerere University. Godfrey Binaisa a member in the military council overthrew him. Once the 1980-multi party elections were announced Obote returned from exile to begin his election campaign.<sup>25</sup>

Four political parties participated, The Uganda peoples Congress (UPC) led by Obote, The Democratic Party (DP), The Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM) led by Yoweri Museveni and the Conservative Party (CP). Preliminary reports hinted on a victory for the DP but the chairman of the military commission and the ruling military junta Paul Muwanga intervened and announced that only he would announce the election results. He soon announced that Obote's party the UPC had won; Muwanga is believed to have tampered with the election results to give his party the win. Nevertheless Obote took his second presidential office in early 1981 but not without controversy. A few days after Obote's installation former defence minister Yoweri Museveni along with a few supporters took to the bush to start a guerrilla war against the new regime.

By 1985 the NRA had control of vast areas in Southwest Uganda. As if determined to replay the January 1971 events, Obote once again left the capital after giving orders for the arrest of a leading Acholi commander, Brigadier (later Lieutenant General) Basilio Olara Okello, who mobilized troops and entered Kampala on July 27, 1985. Obote, together with a large entourage, fled the country for Zambia. This time, unlike the last, Obote allegedly took much of the national treasury with him. Tito Okello a high officer of the military and not Basilio Okello became the president in July 1985 until January 1986 when Yoweri Museveni eventually overthrew him in 1986. The non-party system did not prohibit political parties, but prevented them from fielding candidates directly in elections. The so-called "Movement" system, which Museveni said claimed the loyalty of every Ugandan, would be a cornerstone in politics for nearly twenty years<sup>69</sup>. Although dominated by the National Resistance Movement and National Resistance Army,(NRM/A), the

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<sup>25</sup> Museveni,( 1997), *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, p. 187. See also, "Museveni Opposes Multi-Party System," Pan African News Agency.

coalition government included members of different parties. In February 1989 the country held its first elections since 1980.<sup>26</sup>

In March of 1994 an election was held by the Constituent Assembly that in October 1995 accepted a new constitution. The NRM had the overall majority in the Assembly. The ban on party political activity was drafted into the new constitution despite criticism from the opposition. Uganda held presidential elections in May 1996. The main candidates were Yoweri Museveni and the Democratic Party's leader Paul Ssemogerere, who earlier had sat in Museveni's government. Despite the ban against party activity the candidates were permitted to run their campaigns but Ssemogerere's rallies were often forbidden while Museveni had full support from the army, police, and the government owned media at his disposal. Museveni won with a landslide 75.5 per cent of the vote from a turnout of 72.6 per cent of eligible voters. Museveni was sworn in as president for the second time on the 12th of May 1996. The main weapon in Museveni's campaign was the restoration of security and economic normality in to much of the country.<sup>27</sup>

Political parties were banned during the elections although the Movement operated more like a traditional one-party state where all other parties were banned. Besigye accused Museveni on several accounts, among these was having compromised the Movement ideals, issues such as corruption, nepotism, lack of tolerance and the never ending wars in- and outside Uganda. Besigye seemed to get most of his support from groups, who were opposed to Museveni's rule.

The 2001 official results of the presidential elections gave the incumbent President Museveni majorities win of nearly 70% of the total votes, the closest runner up Kizza Besigye received almost 28%. The voter turnout was 7,389,691 an estimated 70% of the total registered voters. The polling day was described as calm by observers although they criticised the Electoral Commission. It failed to update and display voter registers as required by the law. They also failed to issue voter cards of a satisfactory quality and in time, and had to decide that voters did not require them on

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<sup>26</sup> See also, "Museveni Opposes Multi-Party System," Pan African News Agency.  
<sup>27</sup> *ibid*

polling day. They also failed to publish a full list of polling stations in time. All these factors contributed to confusion and created opportunities for fraud. These were clearly exploited at some places, particularly by supporters of the president.

The 2006 multi-party elections were Uganda's first party elections in 26 years. The 2005 referendum led the way to the multi-party elections, but according to Human Rights Watch the playing field was not fair in this election either. In October 2005 Besigye returned from exile to run for the upcoming elections. Approximately two weeks to his return Besigye was arrested in November and was accused of treason, concealment of treason and rape. The treason case included his alleged links to the various rebel groups, Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and People's Redemption Army(PRA), and the rape charge referred to an alleged incident in November 1997 that involved the daughter of his friend who at the time was his maid.<sup>28</sup>

The arrest led to demonstrations and riots in Kampala and towns around the country. In Kampala the riots was the worst urban violence the city had ever witnessed since the end of the civil war in 1986. The protesters believed that the motive behind the charges was designed as a way to stop Besigye from challenging the president in 2006 elections. His arrest embarked criticism from the international community and even the local media. The Ugandan authorities banned all public rallies, demonstrations, assemblies or seminars related to the trial of the arrested opposition.

The elections were held on February 23, 2006 and were considered to be peaceful and calmer than the previous elections, though a few minor incidents occurred. Official figures released by the EC confirmed that Museveni had won with 59% of the total votes, giving him a third term as President. Main rival Besigye received 37%. It should be noted that voting was down compared from the 2001 elections. Besigye rejected the results claiming fraud, he appealed the results to the Supreme Court. On April 6th, The Ugandan Supreme Court ruled by a vote of 4-3 to dismiss Besigye's appeal. The court acknowledged that the vote count involved minor

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<sup>28</sup> Nordiska Afrikainstitutet Oloka-Onyango, Joe (2006), Multiplying the 'Jiggers' in the Feet of Officialdom

irregularities, but said that the FDC did not meet its burden in proving that these issues substantially affected the final vote in a manner that supported their allegations of fraud and malfeasance.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *ibid*

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## **Chapter-2**

# **Causes and process of Transition from national Resistance Movement to democratic Rule in Uganda**

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## Chapter 2

*The main aim of this chapter is to explore the causes and various factors behind the transition from military to civilian rule in Uganda in historical perspective. It attempts to analyze the political development of Uganda since pre-colonial to post-colonial period. It examines the nature of the political organizations of Uganda revolution which was started by Museveni.*

### **2.1 History setting**

Uganda is a very fertile country in the heart of East Africa; it's half the size of Sweden and the country's south border lies just south of the equator. The country's landscape consists mostly of savannah and bush steep, on the mountain slopes and alongside its rivers and lakes grows tropical rainforests.

The biggest lake is Victoria that is the second largest inland lake in the world. Its bordering countries are Kenya in the east, Sudan in the north, The Republic of Congo in the west, Tanzania in the south and Rwanda in the Southwest. Uganda has taken its name from the Buganda kingdom that takes up much of the south of the country. Africans of three main ethnic groups Bantu, Nilotic and central Sudanic constitute most of the population. The population consists of over forty different ethnic groups the largest being the Baganda, about one fifth of the population are Baganda (est.17 percent). Other bigger Bantu groups are the Banyoro, Banyankore and the Bakiga. It's so the country's second largest ethnic group belongs to the Nilotic group.<sup>1</sup>

In numerous rounds Uganda has deported large ethnic groups, in 1970 formed president Milton Obote deported 33 000 Kenyan immigrants and during his second term of office during the 1980s he did the same to 70 000 Rwandans. But the most familiar deportations came during former Dictator Idi Amin's regime when he deported about 50 000 citizens of Asian origin in 1972 Most of the country's population resides in the rural areas. Because of its ethnologically diversity they are at

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<sup>1</sup> länder i fickformat Uganda 1999:3

least forty languages in use. These can be split into four major groups, the Bantu language that is spoken by two thirds of the population, and the Nilotic and Kuliak languages that are spoken in the northern part and Sudanese which is common in the country's north western part west of the Nile.

English is the country's official language but is spoken by ten to twenty percent of the population, mainly city people. Uganda being a country with a history of rivalry and political disagreement, language differences may have increased ethnic tensions and caused difficulty to form a national identity Religion has an important place in Ugandan life and a relative large part of the population attends church services. More than half of the country's inhabitants are Christians, most of who are Catholics (est. 41 %), among the Protestants (est. 31 %) the Anglican Church of Uganda clearly dominates. Muslims make up for about five to fifteen percent of the population (depending on numerous sources) and live mostly in the north. About one third of the population admit to follow traditional religions. While Muslims today appear to be experiencing some degree of discrimination, in the seventies they were the most favoured group under the rule of President Idi Amin Dada, he himself a Muslim, under whose government the number of Muslims had significantly grown.

### **2.1.1 Pre-Colonial Uganda**

The region now known as Uganda is divided linguistically by into a south and north. The Nilotes of the north were organized by lineage into small clans. While a cattle raiding was practiced extensively, the highly decentralized nature of northern societies precluded the possibility of large-scale warfare. By comparison, the introduction of as a in the south around 1000 AD permitted dense populations to form in the area north of Lake Victoria. One of the early powerful states to emerge was Bunyoro. However, chronic weakness within the structure of Bunyoro resulted in a continual series of Civil war and royal succession disputes. According to legend, a refugee from a Bunyoro conflict, Kimera of Buganda , became Kabaka of Buganda of the contemporaneous kingdom of Buganda, on the shores of Lake Victoria.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Rupin James E. (1971), East Africa: A background Book from Ancient Kingdoms to Modern Times, parents ,Magazine press, New York ,pp, 29-31.





Bagandan governance was based on a stable succession arrangement, allowing the kingdom to more than double in size by the mid-nineteenth century through a series of wars of expansion, becoming the dominant power in the region. As well as a force of infantry, Baganda also maintained a navy of large outrigger canoes, which allowed Baganda commandos to raid any shore on Lake Victoria. Henry Morton Stanley visited in 1875 and reported viewing a military expedition of 125,000 troops marching east, where they were to join an auxiliary naval force of 230 canoes.

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, Uganda began to lose its isolated status, mainly due to traders seeking new sources of Ivory after the decimation of Elephant herds along the coast. Arab people traders from the coast began making trade agreements with the Kabaka of Uganda to provide guns and other items in exchange for a supply of ivory. In the north, History of Sudan under Muhammad Ali and his successors under Khedive Ismail Pasha sought to expand its control of the white Nile.. In 1869, the khedive sent a force under British explorer Samuel Baker to establish dominion over the upper Nile. Encountering stiff resistance, Baker was forced to turn back after burning the Bunyoro capital to the ground.<sup>3</sup>

Foreign influences led to the eventual disruption of royal rule in Buganda. In 1877, the London based church Missionary society sent Protestantism missionaries, followed two years later by Catholicism, France based White Fathers. The competition for converts in the royal court also included Zanzibar based Islam traders. When the new kabaka Mwanga II of Buganda attempted to outlaw the divisive foreign ideologies, he was deposed by armed converts in 1888. A four-year civil erupted in which the Muslim forces initially declared victory, but were eventually defeated by an alliance of Christian groups. The conclusion of the civil war was also marked by various epidemics of foreign diseases, which halved the population in some localities and further weakened Baganda.

The arrival of European colonial interests, in the persons of British captain Frederick Lugard and German Karl Peters, broke the Christian alliance. Protestant missionaries moved to put Uganda under British control, while French Catholics

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp.33-35

either supported the German claim or urged national independence. In 1892, fighting broke out between the two factions. Momentum remained with the Catholics until Lugard brought Maxim guns into play, resulting in the French Catholic mission being burnt to the ground and the Catholic bishop fleeing. With the support of Protestant Buganda chiefs secured, the British declared a protectorate in 1894 and began expanding its borders with the help of Nubian mercenaries formerly in the employ of the Egyptian khedive.

### **2.1.2 Colonial Uganda**

In spite of the British declaration, actually taking control of the region was a prolonged affair. The British and their Buganda ally engaged in a bloody five-year conflict with Bunyoro, which boasted several regiments of rifle infantry under the firm rule of Kabarega. After defeating and occupying the Bunyoro, the British forces defeated the Acholi and other people of the north. Elsewhere, the Ankole kingdom and chiefdoms of Busoga signed treaties with the British, but the loosely-associated kinship groups of the east and northeast resisted until they were finally conquered. The general outline of the modern state of Uganda thus took shape.<sup>4</sup>

However, in 1897 the Nubian mercenaries rebelled, resulting in a two-year conflict before they were put down with the help of units of the British Indian Army, transported to Uganda at great cost. The protectorate rewarded Buganda for its support during these wars of expansion by giving it privileged status within the protectorate and awarding it most of the historic heartland of Bunyoro, including the locations of several royal tombs. The Baganda offered their expertise in administration to the colonial rulers, resulting in Ganda administrators running much of the country's affairs in the name of the protectorate. The Banyoro, aggrieved by both the "lost counties" and arrogance of Baganda administrators, rose up in the 1907 Nyangire "Refusing" rebellion, which succeeded in removing the irksome Baganda civil servants from Nyoro territory.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <http://hrw.org/backgrounder/africa/uganda0206/uganda0206.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, pp22-23

Despite these tensions, the protectorate was generally stable and prosperous, especially in comparison with Tanganyika, which suffered greatly during the East African Campaign of World War I. This began to change with the British decision to divest itself of its colonial properties and prepare Uganda for independence, embodied in the arrival of Andrew Cohen in 1952 to assume the post of governor. Various groups began to organize themselves in preparation for planned elections, which was given urgency by the announcement that London was considering joining Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika into an East African federation.

Many politically aware Ugandans knew that the similar Central African Federation was dominated by white settlers and feared that an East Africa counterpart would be dominated by the racist settlers of the White Highlands in Kenya, where the Mau Mau Uprising was being bitterly fought. In the complete lack of popular confidence in his rule, Cohen was forced to agree to Buganda demands for a continued privileged status in the new constitution. The major dissenters were the Baganda Catholics, which had been marginalized since 1892 and were organized into the Democratic Party (DP) of Benedicto Kiwanuka, and the Uganda People's Congress (UPC), a coalition of non-Baganda groups, determined not to be dictated to by the Baganda, led by Milton Obote. After much political manoeuvrings, Uganda entered independence in October 1962 under an alliance of convenience between the UPC and Kabaka Yekka (KY), a Buganda separatist party, against the DP. The Kabaka was named ceremonial head of state, while Obote became prime minister.

## **2.2 Post-Independence political Development**

The lack of unity in African politics is mostly based upon differences among ethnic group sand occasionally members of social classes and religious groups. Uganda's move towards independence was different from that of other colonial countries where political parties had been organized to force self-rule or independence from a reluctant colonial regime.<sup>6</sup> Instead of reaching out for unity in Uganda there was a call for better autonomy by each of the five largest kingdoms, Uganda by this time was deeply divided among national, religious and ethnic groups. As John Stuart Mills

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<sup>6</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early\\_independent\\_Uganda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_independent_Uganda)

stated that of the ethnic problem in countries trying to democratise “free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities, because each fears more injury to itself from the other nationalities than from the common arbiter, the state”.<sup>7</sup> The national divisions proved to be the most visible; the country was dominated by the largest group the Baganda. Other kingdoms felt disadvantaged because they had lost several land areas since Uganda had become a British colony; besides this national deep religious division had began to develop.<sup>8</sup>

Before independence in 1962 three political parties had emerged. First was the Democratic Party (DP) that took its ideology from the Germany Christian Democrats and represented the catholic population. Second was People’s Congress (UPC) that was mainly supported by northern and western parts groups. Third was the Buganda nationalist party named Kabaka Yekka (KY) meaning, “King only”. During the pre-independence period the Democratic Party won the most seats but failed to have a majority. Instead the UPC and KY united and formed a government choosing to exclude the DP. Upon independence on the 9th of October in 1962 Milton Obote, Leader of the UPC became Uganda’s first Prime Minister. The new government was fragile and faced several difficulties mostly due to ethnic problems. Faced with the challenge of sustaining the evolving democracy, the new government had to literally share power constitutionally with the leaders of various ethnic groups, who continued to exert a great influence on their leaders.

This problem led to undermine the Prime Minister’s power within the government and created difficulties for him to execute decisions. Besides problems of legitimacy the new formed UPC-KY alliance was suffering from internal feuds mostly due to who would have what positions within the government and patronage. In order to maintain the UPC-KY alliance PM Obote proposed a motion to amend the constitution to provide for a non-executive President and nominated Mutesa (king of Buganda) for the post.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ocitti 2000:115

<sup>8</sup> Ocitti 2000:131-132

<sup>9</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early\\_independent\\_Uganda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_independent_Uganda)

In October 1963 Kabaka Mutesa was elected President, but this meant that he had placed himself into a double position. He not only had to keep proving loyalty to his own ethnic group but also had to show loyalty to the rest of the other groups. The first major challenge to the Obote government did not come from the kingdoms or the regional interests but from the military that in January 1964 mutinied due to unfair laws that favoured the British army officers who had stayed after independence. During 1964 Obote finally felt strong enough to address the critical issue of the "lost counties" which the British had conveniently postponed until after independence.<sup>10</sup>

Eventually two years after independence, Obote finally had secured enough votes to give the UPC a vast majority and at the same time be free from a KY coalition. The turning point came when several DP members of parliament from Bunyoro agreed to join the government side if Obote would undertake a popular referendum to restore the "lost counties" to Bunyoro. Civil war was averted, and the referendum was held. The vote demonstrated an overwhelming desire by residents in the counties annexed to Buganda in 1900 to be restored to their historic Bunyoro allegiance, which was duly enacted by the new UPC majority despite KY opposition.<sup>11</sup>

This victory strengthened Obote and his government while it crippled the KY to the core, by 1966 the parliament members consisted of seventy-four members from UPC, nine DP, eight KY and one independent MP. Uganda turned into a one party state as soon as the constitution was suspended and the monarchs of the five kingdoms were stripped of their positions and forced into exile. But the UPC itself began to have internal conflicts, the issue that brought the UPC the most problems involved around Obote's protégé Idi Amin.

The problems concerned taking personal advantage of the state funds and intervening in the neighbouring Congo crisis. In February 1966 while Obote was away on a trip, his own UPC members of parliament passed a no confidence vote against him. Because his governing party and national parliament faced him with a nearly unanimous disavowal, many people expected Obote to resign. Instead, Obote

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<sup>10</sup> 0    ibid  
<sup>11</sup> 1    ibid

turned to Idi Amin and the army, and, in effect, carried out a coup d'état against his own government in order to stay in power. Obote suspended the constitution, arrested the offending UPC ministers, and assumed control of the state. He forced a new constitution through parliament without a reading and without the necessary quorum. That constitution abolished the federal powers of the kingdoms; most notably the internal autonomy enjoyed by Buganda, and concentrated presidential powers in the Prime Minister's office.

The Kabaka refused and the Buganda kingdom prepared to battle him legally, but once again the Kabaka underestimated Obote who sent in Idi Amin and his loyal troops to storm the Kabaka's own palace. This forced him to flee into exile. After the assault, Obote was reasonably secure from open opposition. The new republican 1967 constitution abolished the kingdoms altogether. Buganda was divided into four districts and ruled through martial law, a forerunner of the military domination over the civilian population that all of Uganda would experience after 1971.<sup>12</sup>

The UPC became the only legal party therefore the original independence election from 1962 became the last election in 18 years held in Uganda until the 1980 elections. Obote called for African socialism reforms but his critics complained that he placed most of the country's economy in the hands of Asians. He also founded the General Service Unit (GSU) that was a secret police headed by one of his relatives their duty was to protect him from his enemies.

Most of the secret service personnel were from Obote's region and ethnic group. The concerns for his safety were well founded; in December of 1969 he was the object of an assassination attempt that left him seriously wounded when a grenade that was thrown near him failed to explode. The following year a second attempt was made for his life when his motorcade was ambushed but the assassins mistook his vice president's car instead. Obote could no longer rely on Idi Amin and the army for their continuing loyalty. He instantly began to recruit more troops from his ethnic group to match those of Amin's own group. It was beginning to become clear that Idi Amin was a problem that Obote couldn't handle.

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<sup>1 2</sup> Ibid 34-36

## 2.2.1 Towards military dictatorship: Idi Amin era 1971-1979

In 1971 while Obote was abroad at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Singapore Amin executed a coup against Obote. According to reports Obote was planning of getting rid of Amin. When he learned about it, he decided to strike first. On January the 25<sup>th</sup> army units still loyal to Amin attacked specific targets in the nation's capital Kampala and the nation's airport of Entebbe. Amin's troops were better organised than the opposition and quickly overtook power, he immediately ordered mass executions of Obote's ethnic group of Acholi and Langi troops.

The Ugandan people mostly the majority ethnic group the Baganda, who did not approve of Obote, positively welcomed the coup. Amin stated that the new government was only going to play a mere "care taker role" until civilian rule would take over. He quickly changed Obote's non-aligned foreign policy and the new government was instantly accepted by most of the international community. By 1978 Amin had lost most of his friends and associates many mutinied and fled into neighbouring Tanzania. In October 1978, Amin sent troops still loyal to him against the mutineers. Amin claimed that Tanzanian President Nyerere, his perennial enemy, had been at the root of his troubles. Amin accused Nyerere of waging war against Uganda, and, hoping to divert attention from his internal troubles and rally Uganda against the foreign adversary, Amin invaded Tanzanian territory and formally annexed a section across the Kagera River boundary on November 1, 1978.<sup>13</sup>

Tanzania in turn declared war on Uganda in 1979; and joined forces with different Ugandan liberation forces such as the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA). The Ugandan Army was forced to retreat due to poor resistance and lack of military skills. Tanzania and the UNLA took the capital city of Kampala in April 1979. Amin fled to Libya and later to a permanent exile in Saudi Arabia where he lived for the rest of his life until his death in 2003. The war is estimated to have cost Tanzania an one million USD per day but the true victims during the Idi Amin era were the millions of Ugandans who had suffered and an estimated 300,000-500,000

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<sup>13</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uganda\\_under\\_Amin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uganda_under_Amin)

who lost their lives.

### **2.2.2 Uganda after Amin: 1980-1985**

After Idi Amin this period in Ugandan history was “characterized by an aberration of democracy, intensification of militarism, ethnic mobilization and violence”.<sup>14</sup> Between April 1979 to January 1986, six different presidents and a presidential commission ruled the country. During the short period between the April 1979 to the elections in December 1980 Uganda governed by Yusef Lule a former principle of Makerere University. Godfrey Binaisaa member in the military council overthrew him. Both of these two had virtually no political influence and were not seen as strong enough to lead the country. When the latter tried to forbid old parties from running for the upcoming elections he was quickly overthrown from office by chairman of the military commission Paulo Muwanga that was still allied to former President Milton Obote.

Once the 1980-multi party elections were announced Obote returned from exile to begin his election campaign. Four political parties participated, The Uganda peoples Congress (UPC) led by Obote, The Democratic Party (DP), The Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM) led by Yoweri Museveni and the Conservative Party (CP). Preliminary reports hinted on a victory for the DP but the chairman of the military commission and the ruling military junta Paul Muwanga intervened and announced that only he would announce the election results. He soon announced that Obote’s party the UPC had won; Muwanga is believed to have tampered with the election results to give his party the win. Nevertheless Obote took his second presidential office in early 1981 but not without controversy. A few days after Obote’s installation former defence minister Yoweri Museveni along with a few supporters took to the bush to start a guerrilla war against the new regime. He claimed that the reason to wage war on the new government was based on the fact that the elections had been rigged, according to reports he had only received one mandate in the elections. Obote did try to come to terms with the country’s economy and create stability but failed in his efforts. One of the main reasons for his failure was the not

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<sup>14</sup> <sup>4</sup> *ibid*



being able to control the army.

They were not paid and earned a living by looting and other deeds. In the war against Museveni's now named National Resistance Army (NRA), the government army used aggressive brutality. Anyone who was affiliated with Museveni and his movement was met with violent measures. According to sources as many people were killed in fights, massacres and torture during the Obote regime as during Amin's rule. The NRA during this period of time continued to flourish and became an ever-increasing problem for Obote. It received a huge majority of its support from the population of the South and was reported to be very disciplined and organised.

The ethnic groups of the south that made up for the majority of the population had their reasons to support the NRA. Ever since independence there had never been a politician from the South who had ever ruled Uganda and since Museveni came from that part of the country he was seen as a liberator in their eyes. By 1985 the NRA had control of vast areas in Southwest Uganda. As if determined to replay the January 1971 events, Obote once again left the capital after giving orders for the arrest of a leading Acholi commander, Brigadier (later Lieutenant General) Basilio Olara Okello, who mobilized troops and entered Kampala on July 27, 1985. Obote, together with a large entourage, fled the country for Zambia. This time, unlike the last, Obote allegedly took much of the national treasury with him Tito Okello a high officer of the military and not Basilio Okello became the president in July 1985 until January 1986 when Yoweri Museveni eventually overthrew.

### **2.3 The National Resistance Movement (NRM): 1986 – 2000**

On January 26th 1986 the NRM entered Kampala and where seen as liberators. Yoweri Museveni became president and invited all representatives of other parties and political groups to be a part of a new national united government. Many accepted the invitation, including leaders of the UPC, DP and several minority groups, a few months after overtaking power he banned all party politics activity even if they were allowed to exist.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>5</sup> Länders i fickformat Uganda 1999:16

The reason for his no party democracy politics was that "Uganda's past political problems were mainly due to the ravages caused by divisive sectarian politics". Museveni posits the movement or no party system of government as an alternative to a multiparty system, and the necessary antidote to the perceived poisonous sectarianism of the political parties in Uganda. Instead of political parties which were viewed as divisive, Museveni introduced the idea of a no party system, one supposedly all-inclusive movement in which individual candidates would run for elections based on their personal merit. A pyramid of five levels of councils, from the village to the national level, is designed to ensure grassroots participation at all levels of society.<sup>16</sup>

In theory every Ugandan was a member of the Movement and could stand for any public office, from the village to the cabinet, but couldn't do so under the banner of the political parties. The non-party system did not prohibit political parties, but prevented them from fielding candidates directly in elections. The so-called "Movement" system, which Museveni said claimed the loyalty of every Ugandan, would be a cornerstone in politics for nearly twenty years.

Although dominated by the NRM/A, the coalition government included members of different parties. However, the coalition grew narrower over time: All these groups eventually withdrew from the coalition, citing the government's complicity in human rights violations, official corruption, continuing instability in northern and eastern Uganda, the creation of tribal animosities, and communist and Libyan infiltration of Uganda.

During the government's first twelve months in power it arrested several political figures and government members claiming they were Obote supporters. In February 1989 the country held its first elections since 1980. The elections were unfair and indirectly. The NRM used its power and position and took a clear majority of the seats that were at stake. After the elections a proposition to extend the government's mandate period for five more years from January 1990 was approved. In

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>6</sup> Human rights Watch: Hostile to democracy, the movement system and political repression in Uganda 1999:46

April 1991 a large military offensive was launched in northern Uganda to wipe out the remaining guerrilla forces. Three months later about 1,500 rebels were killed and 1,000 arrested. International observers accused the army for assault during the operations. In the middle of the 1990s guerrilla activity increased mainly by the Lord Resistance Army (LRA).

In 1993 the king of Buganda, Ronald Mutebi was reinstated by Museveni although his duties were limited to ceremonial duties. Other ethnic groups also eventually got back their traditional kingdoms. In March of 1994 an election was held by the Constituent Assembly that in October 1995 accepted a new constitution. The NRM had the overall majority in the Assembly. The ban on party political activity was drafted into the new constitution despite criticism from the opposition. Uganda held presidential elections in May 1996. The main candidates were Yoweri Museveni and the Democratic Party's leader Paul Ssemogerere, who earlier had sat in Museveni's government. Despite the ban against party activity the candidates were permitted to run their campaigns but Ssemogerere's rallies were often forbidden while Museveni had full support from the army, police, and the government owned media at his disposal.<sup>17</sup>

Museveni won with a landslide 75.5 per cent of the vote from a turnout of 72.6 per cent of eligible voters. Although international and domestic observers described the vote as valid, the losing candidates rejected the results. Museveni was sworn in as president for the second time on the 12th of May 1996. The main weapon in Museveni's campaign was the restoration of security and economic normality in to much of the country.<sup>18</sup>

#### **2.4 Political organizations of Uganda revolution.**

For in our everyday lives, we need not only to have the opportunity to give our consent to the composition and programmes of our government, but also the possibility of changing our rulers through peaceful means. It was therefore in an international climate of repugnancy to racism that democracy gained political

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<sup>17</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoweri\\_Museveni#Museveni\\_in\\_power\\_.281986.E2.80.9396.29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoweri_Museveni#Museveni_in_power_.281986.E2.80.9396.29)

<sup>18</sup> Human rights Watch: Hostile to democracy, the movement system and political repression in Uganda 1999:37

currency in Uganda. The populist efforts by politicians in the 1950's were aided by the Governor, Andrew Cohen, who acted as a virtual midwife for self- government and eventually independence in October 1962. Thereafter the promise of democratic pluralism found expression in the federal and multi-party system, whose liberalism provided the country with a lively vibrancy. However, the violent termination of the political marriage between the Uganda People's Congress (U.P.C.)<sup>19</sup> and Kabaka Yekka (K.Y.) in August 1964 meant that the experiment failed before it could flower, let alone bear real fruit, thereby ushering in a period of political autocracy. This was brought to an abrupt end by the coup d'etat led by General Idi Amin in January 1971.

The National Resistance Movement (N.R.M.) was created to oppose the Uganda People's Congress. (U.P.C.) Government of 1980-5 and the ensuing short-lived military junta of Tito Okello were overthrown in January 1986 by the N.R.M.'s National Resistance Army (N.R.A.) led by Yoweri Museveni. Since then, have the democratic aspirations of Ugandans been fulfilled or betrayed? Let us look, first of all, at the policies and actions of the N.R.A. Government especially in 1987, not least because they set the tenor for what has happened there after. More over, according to Museveni's own time-schedule, the N.R.A. was supposed by then to have sufficiently consolidated its power and to have resolved many of the problems that had festered in the country.<sup>20</sup>

On the eve of the N.R.A.'s assumption of power, Mahmood Mamdani suggested that the movement had already effected a high degree of democratisation and even a modicum of agrarian revolution in those rural areas over which it had previously gained control: What was crucial to the social program of the NRA in the countryside was the dismantling of the local apparatus of the state. It was tantamount to a transformation in production relations because it was creating a free peasantry for the first time. The NRA's politics of democratization were not only anti-regime, they were more over anti-state.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See Amii Omara-Otunnu(1987), *Politics and the Military in Uganda*, pp, 8-14

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> See Mahmood Mamdani(1986-7), 'Uganda Today', in *Ufahamu* (Los Angeles), 15, 3, Winter p. 42.

However, Mamdani's assertion seems to have been based on a profound misreading of socio- economic and political realities in Uganda and on misplaced hopes about what the new leaders would even attempt to accomplish. Others also wrote enthusiastically about the N.R.A. In particular, it was the foreign journalists stationed in Uganda especially William Pike, Catherine Watson, and Catherine Bond, and to some extent Cameron Duodu, Victoria Britain, and the B.B.C. - that made the new regime and its leaders known to, and favourably perceived by, the outside world. Statements issued by Museveni during the course of his guerrilla war certainly suggested that he intended to pursue the quest for democracy. Indeed, as early as 1981 he had justified commencing his campaign against the elected U.P.C.

Government in terms of the need for achieving such a goal: "We are fighting for the democratic rights and human dignity of our people. In our case, for democracy to be meaningful and not a mockery, it must contain three elements: parliamentary democracy, popular democracy and a decent level of living for every Ugandan. In other words, there should be an elected parliament, elected at regular intervals and such elections must be free of corruption and manipulation of the population".<sup>22</sup> Museveni claimed at the outset that the N.R.A. Government would soon be able to rejuvenate the country. In an interview with Pike, he stated: Within about two years with our discipline... we can restore most of the important things in the industrial sector, some of the roads and production of exportable crops. Corruption can also be eliminated in two years.<sup>23</sup>

Soon afterwards Museveni made the following announcement: "My Government is interim. Its job is to restore peace in the country, to rebuild the police, civil service, judiciary and the country on the basis of unity... my Government will not interfere in other people's affairs". Despite the bitter disillusionments experienced during the second administration of Obote, many Ugandans were only too willing to give credence to the image of the new regime being created by the media. But within a year of assuming power, the most serious challenge to the N.R.A. Government was posed from a 'movement' led by a barely literate woman known as Alice Lakwena.

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<sup>2</sup> <sup>2</sup> Yoweri K. Museveni (1981-1986), Selected Articles on the Uganda Resistance War Kampala p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> Ibid. 1984, p. 50.

Her rise to political visibility, as a symbol of the most disadvantaged sectors of the population, raises a number of questions about the struggle for democracy, the patterns of socio-political relations and interactions, and the nature of the expected/promised fundamental changes.<sup>24</sup>

It was as early as October 1986 that some of the most influential persons who had welcomed the N.R.A. were incarcerated for their alleged actions against the Government. They were Paulo Muwanga, a former Vice-President; Francis Bwengye, N.R.A. Minister of Commerce and treasurer of the Democratic Party (D.P.); Anthony Ssekwenyama, editor-in-chief of *The Citizen*; David Lwanga, N.R.A. Minister of Environmental Protection and chairman of the Uganda Federal Democratic Movement (Fedemu); Charles Lwanga, chairman of the Kampala branch of the D.P.; and Andrew Kayiira, N.R.A. Minister of Energy and chairman of the Uganda Freedom Movement (U.F.M.), one of the first guerrilla groups to declare war against regimes led by Godfrey Binaisa, 1979-80, and by Milton Obote, 1980-5.<sup>25</sup>

Of all those arrested, the most shrewd and effective was probably Kayiira, a dedicated federalist whose political stature and ambition appears to have marked him out as a serious threat to the leadership of the N.R.A. There was a warning to educated Ugandans that even those who had supported Museveni in his bid for power were now vulnerable. A few days later, N.R.A. troops detained hundreds of soldiers who had belonged to Fedemu and U.F.M., raided the Kampala headquarters of the Uganda People's Congress (U.P.C.), and even searched the Ministry of Internal Affairs, then headed by the leader of the D.P., Paulo Ssemogerere, a cabinet minister. Robert Elangot, a distinguished civil servant who had been deputy governor of the Central Bank of Uganda, was also arrested at this time, and it was not long before several overseas newspapers raised questions about Museveni's claim that he had established stability in the country.<sup>26</sup>

Yet the international media continued to be virtually silent about the fate of

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<sup>24</sup> Weekly Topic, 26 February 1986, Kampala.

<sup>25</sup> Financial Times, (1986); London, The Guardian London, 7 October; and International Herald Tribune, 8 October, Paris.

<sup>26</sup> The Guardian (1986), 10 October and The Daily Telegraph (London), 13 October.

thousands of ordinary people in government camps, as well as those killed in frequent armed skirmishes. What the arrests of these prominent Ugandans did indicate was that the patched-up truce between various political groups, which had aided Museveni's rise to power, had been merely a marriage of convenience, and that the continued existence of organizations with alternative agendas would no longer be tolerated by the N.R.A.-dominated administration. Rusoke placed Ugandans in two broad categories: peasants, farmers, workers, and a small number of intellectuals were regarded by the N.R.A. as allies, while all the rest were described as 'biological substances who should be eliminated'.<sup>27</sup>

Another former ally who received harsh treatment from the new leadership was Lance Seera-Muwanga, the secretary-general of the Uganda Human Rights Activists Organization which he had helped to form in 1982, while in exile in Sweden, in order to monitor abuses committed during Obote's regime. This close friend and collaborator of Museveni had returned home in January 1986, hoping that a new era had dawned in Uganda. But within a year Seera-Muwanga was arrested for giving an interview to an African news-magazine in which he criticised the killings taking place in northern Uganda by government soldiers.<sup>28</sup>

His allegations of serious human rights abuses committed against the civil population confirmed the remarks made by the Anglican Bishop of Northern Uganda, Benoni Ogwal-Abwang, during a B.B.C. interview, about troops 'uprooting whole villages, burning houses and burning down granary stores'.<sup>29</sup> Seera-Muwanga paid a heavy price for his indiscreet revelation of some most unpleasant facts: he was locked up in the country's maximum security prison in Luzira for a whole year, under a detention order signed by the President. This series of arrests and massacres raised a number of serious questions for Ugandans about Museveni's democratic intentions and human rights scruples.

By October 1987, the socio-political situation had degenerated so much that

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<sup>2</sup> <sup>7</sup> The Standard Nairobi, (1987), and The JNfew Vision (Kampala), 4 Sept.

<sup>2</sup> <sup>8</sup> See African Concord Lagos(1987), 26 February.

<sup>2</sup> <sup>9</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation(1987), 'Focus on Africa', London, 10 February.

several readers of local newspapers began to complain in writing about the ongoing tragedies. Indeed, the editors of the government-owned New Vision felt that it was appropriate to publish a letter under the alarming heading, 'Uganda: Bloodbath of Africa?', that summarised the concerns of many ordinary citizens about what was taking place in northern and eastern Uganda: NRM/NRA came [to power in 1986] with good intentions. But the hierarchy was not all clean. Those who had the element of revenge were never lacking. Boys were seen to wear 'three piece' [a method of killing by strangulation] many times on false reports and allegations. Innocent lives were lost in the process. The Langi, Acholi and particularly Iteso also had all along seen the kraals as their banks.

## **2.5 Economic and Social Development in Uganda**

Uganda's economy has great potential. Endowed with significant natural resources, including amply fertile land, regular rain fall, and mineral deposits, it appeared poised for rapid economic growth and development at independence. Yet, chronic political instability and erratic economic management produced a record of persistent economic decline that has left Uganda among the world's poorest and least-developed countries.<sup>30</sup>

Since assuming power in early 1986, Museveni's government has taken important steps toward economic rehabilitation. The country's infrastructure--notably its transportation and communications systems that were destroyed by war and neglect--is being rebuilt. Recognizing the need for increased external support, Uganda negotiated a policy framework paper with the IMF and the World Bank in 1987. It subsequently began implementing economic policies designed to restore price stability and sustainable balance of payments, improve capacity utilization, rehabilitate infrastructure, restore producer incentives through proper price policies, and improve resource mobilization and allocation in the public sector. Uganda's macroeconomic policies are sound and contributed to an 8.6% growth rate in fiscal year 2007-2008, compared to 7% in FY 2006-2007. Inflation ran at 240% in 1987 and 42% in June 1992, and was 5.1% in 2003. It bounced up to 7.7% in 2007 and 12% in

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<sup>30</sup> Military Affairs, Cultural Exchange, Travel, History, Trade/Economics, International Organizations.



2008, well above the government's annual target average of 5%, as food prices rose.<sup>31</sup> Investment as a percentage of GDP was 17% in 2006/2007 compared to 15.7% in 2002/2003. Private sector investment, largely financed by private transfers from abroad, was 20% of GDP in 2006/2007. In the same year, gross national savings as a percentage of GDP fell to an estimated 12%, from 13% the previous fiscal year. The Ugandan Government has worked with donor countries to reschedule or cancel substantial portions of the country's external debts.<sup>32</sup>

Agricultural products supply nearly all of Uganda's foreign exchange earnings, with coffee (of which Uganda is Africa's second leading producer) accounting for about 15% and fish 12% of the country's exports in 2007/2008. Exports of non-traditional products, including apparel, hides, skins, vanilla, vegetables, fruits, cut flowers, and fish are growing, while traditional exports such as cotton, tea, and tobacco continue to be mainstays. Most industry is related to agriculture. The industrial sector has been rehabilitated and resumed production of building and construction materials, such as cement, reinforcing rods, corrugated roofing sheets, and paint. Domestically produced consumer goods include plastics, soap, cork, beer, and soft drinks.

Uganda has about 45,000 kilometres (28,000 mi.), of roads, of which 10,000 (6,213 miles) kilometres are main roads and 35,000 kilometres (21,747 miles) are feeder roads. Only 3,000 kilometres (1,864 mi.) are paved, and most roads radiate from Kampala. The country has about 1,350 kilometres (800 mi.) of rail lines, but most of it is not currently in use. A railroad originating at Mombasa on the Indian Ocean connects with Tororo, where it branches westward to Jinja, Kampala, and Kasese and northward to Mbale, Soroti, Lira, Gulu, and Pakwach. Uganda's important road and rail links to Mombasa serve its transport needs and also those of its neighbours Rwanda, Burundi, and parts of Congo and Sudan. An international airport is at Entebbe on the shore of Lake Victoria, some 32 kilometers (20 mi.) south of Kampala.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> [www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33701.pdf](http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33701.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid* pp. 8-9

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*

The overall impact of the crisis in northern Uganda is not clear, although day today life for many in this region has changed significantly. The economy in northern Uganda has been devastated, especially in light of the fact that much of the population is displaced internally and some have left the region. According to various sources, there are an estimated 1.5-1.7 million internally displaced people in northern Uganda. Children who are not in internally displaced persons camps often leave their homes at night to sleep in hospitals or churches, although over the past year conditions have improved. These children are known as “Night Commuters.” Education for many of these children seems out of reach, since many are unable to stay in one place to attend school.

## **2.6 Role of Civil Society Organization**

One of the most notable improvements in Uganda has been in the relative freedom given to the NGO community and the press. Uganda is home to a number of independent newspapers, some of which are frequently critical of the government. The Human Rights Network of Uganda (HURINET), a consortium of human rights NGOs in Uganda, currently has twenty-five member organizations. The Human Rights and Peace Centre (HURIPEC) at Makerere University has been able to make human rights education a central part of the education of all university students and is considered to be one of the pre-eminent academic human rights institutions in Africa. Human Rights Watch attended a seminar sponsored by the Centre for Basic Research in Kampala in May 1998 where academics and politicians debated the movement system in a frank and open manner, seemingly without fear of retaliation. Despite this apparent openness, however, there are limits placed on the work of human rights NGOs and the media in Uganda.<sup>34</sup>

But the civil society hasn't done enough to push that space. They are better embraced in the context of service delivery, but not so much in the context of pressure.” (Prof. Oloka-Onyango, Makerere University, 16th August 2007) All four

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<sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> Andrea Useem(1998), "A Human Rights Center in Uganda Combines Academics With Activism," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, p. A33

groups of interviewed actors share the view that civil society could act as a complementary institution to political parties towards transition to increased political pluralism. However, at the same time they admit that civil society in Uganda has not taken up the political agenda sufficiently.

Civil society organizations dealing with politics have been according to Oloka-Onyango very “coy, reluctant and unwilling” to become engaged in the debates on political issues. The organizations have primarily development character (Dicklitch 1996, 1998; de Coninck 2004) and their main area of concentration is service delivery (women, youth and children are strong areas of influence) because in this field, they act in cooperation with the state (which is still lacking the capacity to deliver) and not in opposition to it. (Tripp 1998, 2000; Bazaara 2000; Kjaer, Olum 2008) The explanatory reasons for this attitude of “a culture of fear and political apathy” (Dicklitch, Lwanga 2003: 482) have to be searched in the historical development of civil society in Uganda and the legacy of colonialism as well as the following repressive regimes.

With NRM coming to power, “civil society activity in Uganda virtually exploded” (Oloka-Onyango, Barya 1997: 120), however, the NRM government tolerated and encouraged solely apolitical and service-oriented organizations, as it does not accept the possibility of being challenged politically. (Bazaara 2000; Katusiimeh 2005; Kjaer, Olum 2008) Even if the political realm of civil society organizations is not in direct opposition to authoritarian practices of the NRM and it acts rather as a watch-dog, the government side continues to label many civil society organizations as “opposition” and tends to repress confrontational NGOs, media, anti-corruption groups, election monitoring bodies, human rights groups. (Kjaer, Olum 2008) The idea that one could be colored politically constructs fear among Uganda’s civil society organizations (Dicklitch, Lwanga 2003; Coninck 2004).

That is why, the majority of the partners claimed that civil society in Uganda often tries (or is forced) to remain apolitical, or in other words does not try to challenge the government and other power stakeholders in their positions. The NRM strengthens its position with a set of legal practices to successfully accomplish the

“ritual of democracy” and thus appear credible while obeying the principle of the rule of law. Bazaar (1999: 66) notes: “The NRM has made arrangements so as to ensure that NGOs remain basically ‘economist’ organizations whose activities cannot rise into politics.”<sup>35</sup>

This it has done by enacting the 1989 NGO Registration statute allowing no NGO to operate until it is registered by the NGO Registration Board (Ministry of Internal Affairs).” Other problems faced by civil society organizations, which became apparent in the interviews, are that civil society organizations are very often perceived as a source of income and some of them are developing into an industry as a means of survival. The donor-driven agenda constrains their activities and forces them to follow the rules set from above. (Mamdani 1995; Bazaara 2000; Kjaer, Olum 2008) Many do not use their own comparative advantage but concentrate their activities on specialized areas of work set by donors without diversifying their resources and stretching their capacity. (Robinson, Friedman 2005; Oloka-Onyango 2006; personal interviews).

There is agreement among pro-oppositional forces that civil society organizations in Uganda could play a significant role in fostering democratization, as they might be able to mobilize the population around programs, advocate for particular positions or even oppose the government on some issues. Their main area of delivery in a transition process should become a proper civic education program. (Hadenius, Uggla 1996; Kjaer, Olum 2008) However, to manage this agenda of crucial importance alone is not imaginable due to the institutional and governance weaknesses as well as financial and capacity constraints mentioned above. Interviewed partners stressed the importance of involvement and co-governance of several actors including further international civil society organizations, grass-roots groups, development partners, Electoral Commission, parliament and political parties while delivering civic education. As stated above, the donor community in Uganda plays, besides local stakeholders, a crucial role in the transition to the multiparty political system.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid

## 2.7 Role of political parties in democratization process in Uganda

Political parties in the Ugandan context are according to their own representatives (as well as observers from outside) too new, untested and ungrounded to become a real formative political force. Their organizational and structural base has become very weak if existent at all - through the twenty years long ban of their activities.<sup>36</sup> (Kiiza, Svasand, Tabaro 2008; Kiiza2008; personal interviews) Even though the existence of political parties is no longer restricted by the law (since the referendum of 2005) and they could officially form a viable opposition, their representatives admit that the efficiency of their playing field is minimized by their own weaknesses and their disability to function as real institutions.<sup>37</sup> Their leadership – being the most crucial aspect of effective transition – is reputedly not committed enough to the principles of multi-party democracy.

Due to internal factions and lack of vision the parties are not in the position to present the people of Uganda a viable alternative to the current government in office. This scenario makes clear that the coalition of such parties would not improve the situation as bringing several single, weak institutions together does not create one strong coalition. In the year 2000, shortly before the unsuccessful referendum on opening up of the political space, a loose coalition of seven opposition parties was formed and allied behind a common presidential candidate, Dr. Kizza Besigye.

After his failure to succeed against President Museveni in the 2001 presidential elections, the coalition resumed its existence, however, with the original members of the G7 coalition were: RA (Reform Agenda), NDF (National Democratic Forum), DP (Democratic Party), UPC (Uganda Peoples Congress), CP(Conservative Party), JEEMA and the pressure group Free Movement which initiated the talks. The coalition was later renamed G6, after the merging of the RA and the NDF to form a new political force and the strongest opposition party FDC (Forum for Democratic

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<sup>36</sup> Electoral Democracy in Uganda. Understanding Institutional Processes and Outcomes of the 2006 Multiparty Elections. pp. 53-90, Kampala

<sup>37</sup> Ibid,p70-71

Change). increasing internal disputes which escalated ahead of the 2006 elections when each of the opposition political parties fielded its own presidential candidate. Political parties' representatives themselves admit that they have serious problems to complete the transition to the multiparty system since they are not capable of organizing, mobilizing, or reaching the people and setting up branches outside the capital city of Kampala.

The academics from Makerere University as well as representatives of civil society draw further attention to the lack of credibility and legitimacy of the Ugandan political parties, as their character is essentially "electoral". They point at the fact that these are not grassroots parties that emerged in response to the needs of the people or to the demands of local self-help groups. The political parties appear shortly before elections and disappear almost immediately after their unsuccessful performance.

Academics and analysts claimed that one of their major failures with respect to communication to their voters is that their agenda has not yet been identified, and their message has not yet been clearly sent and translated to the people. Political parties often seek the excuse for their own failures in the concept of "Movementocracy" and claim their environment is not supportive of their activities and does not enable them to obtain sufficient funding for their operations throughout the country. (Ssenkumba 2007) However, many of my interview partners were convinced that if the local communities considered the parties relevant, no additional funding for their organizational structures would be necessary, as the people would contribute and participate voluntarily.

The hampering elements, which complicate the transition process to multi-parties are unique to the Ugandan context and are made up both of the historical structures in place and the current performance of the various stakeholders of the transition process and their interactions. It was not possible to identify a single element of crucial importance responsible for "protracted" transition, as all five - tight control over the transition process by the ruling party, poor mode of governance, shortcomings of anti-governmental political and societal actors, upwards accountability of local stakeholders towards donor community, and absence of culture

of political tolerance - are closely intertwined and dependent on each other. They have to be considered and addressed simultaneously while assessing the impact of "Movementocracy" on the current mode of governance in Uganda. To separate them and concentrate solely on a single component, while not taking into consideration its embedment into Uganda's historical, political, cultural and social legacy, will not allow for genuine pluralism within Ugandan politics, but only at a "ritual" or institutional level.

## **2.8 Effects from the international community for Democratic transition in Uganda**

Days after the imprisonment of opposition leader Kizza Besigye, came the first signs of dissatisfaction by the international community. In December 2005 when several donor countries, notably the UK, Sweden, Norway and The Netherlands, announced cuts in aid to Uganda amounting to millions of dollars. Since then, there has been much debate over the timing and motives of this decision by these governments, although they stated that it had been prompted by, among others, Uganda government's poor macro-economic management; political transition uncertainties; stifling growth of development in the country and the arrest in November 2005 of the FDC leader Col. (rtd.) Dr. Kizza Besigye.<sup>38</sup>

Although they had not cut financial aid before it's believed that the arrest of opposition leader Besigye was the main reason that led to this decision. Britain which is Uganda's biggest donor was concerned about delays in the government's transition to multi-party politics, state financing for the ruling party, and a significant overrun on public administration expenditure.<sup>39</sup>

Instead donor countries are using some of those funds on the never-ending conflict in the north since they claim has not been given enough attention. They have also begun using NGOs instead of governmental institutions when handing out aid, this is believed to be that corruption is high within the government. Museveni in turn has accused donors of "external, misguided meddling" in Ugandan affairs and blames

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<sup>3 8</sup> <http://allafrica.com/stories/200604241245.html>.

<sup>3 9</sup> [http://platform.blogs.com/passionofthepresent/2005/12/britain\\_cuts\\_ai.html](http://platform.blogs.com/passionofthepresent/2005/12/britain_cuts_ai.html).

them for lack of electricity, and many other problems the country is facing. He has even said he can do without their "conditional aid" and called some undesirable names.<sup>40</sup>

He has further stated that even though the international community has cut aid, he is not going to give in from outside pressure. No longer is Museveni seen as the "darling of the west" but as a typical African leader, who sits in power too long some critics are even comparing him to Zimbabwe president Robert Mugabe. The international community has vowed through this demonstration that it seems serious to its devotion to democratise Uganda, but the question is if Museveni will listen or refuse to budge down from external pressure.

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<sup>40</sup> <http://www.ugpulse.com/articles/daily/homepage.asp?ID=401>



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## **Chapter-3**

### **Nature of democratization during 1995-2008 in Uganda**

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*This chapter intends to deal with the nature of democratization through the various regimes during 1995-2008. It attempts to analyze the political development of Uganda in the context of multi-party democracy. It also examines the electoral process, role of political parties, functioning of the National Assembly, civil and political rights judicial system, grassroots democracy and the role of civil society in strengthening in Uganda.*

## **CHAPTER – 3**

### **3.1 The 1995 constitution background and its affects on the transition**

In Uganda the constitution making exercise was of crucial importance because it was an integral part of a wider process of democratization and nation building.<sup>1</sup> There was a commitment not to repeat earlier mistakes from the three previous constitutions that had been composed by foreign influence and were not based on national agreement. The first constitution of 1962 was made in England almost entirely by the British. The 1966 constitution was imposed on Ugandans through the display of force and intimidation and the 1967 constitution was enacted and promulgated by an assembly whose electoral mandate had already expired. For the NRM the making of the constitution was seen as a foundation in building a modern democracy.

People's welfare and freedoms were at the very core of the constitution as article one of the constitution states. All power belongs to the people who shall exercise their sovereignty in accordance with this constitution. All authority in the state emanates from the people of Uganda and the people shall be governed through their will and consent. All power and authority of Government and its organs derive from the constitution which in turn derives from the people who consent to be governed in accordance with this constitution. The people shall express their will and consent on who shall govern them and how they should be governed through regular, free and fair elections or through referenda.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kabwegyere 2000:117

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*:135

Though the constitution strengthened the presidential powers it also stressed the clear demarcation of powers between the executive, legislature and the judiciary. The president could now only serve a maximum of two terms of five years. It was important that the duty of the presidency not rely heavily on the shoulders of one individual for far too long. While it prohibited party activity, it also prohibited the Ugandan Government from enacting a law establishing a one-party state. It was further announced that a referendum would be held in the year 2000 to decide if Ugandans wanted to keep the no party movement system or vote for multi party politics.

### **3.2 Electoral Process**

The constitution of Uganda ensures universal suffrage for all Ugandans above the age of 18, and instructs the State to take every necessary step to ensure that every citizen that is qualified to vote, shall register and exercise their right to vote. The Electoral Commission (EC) Act, 1997 gives the responsibility to the EC to organize elections in Uganda. The EC's duties includes: to demarcate constituencies; to maintain the voter register on a rolling basis; to appoint election officials; to organize for all election materials; to gather, collate and announce the election results. The act also gives the EC power to take emergency measures as it sees fit, even if this should contravene with other sections in the act.<sup>3</sup>

A statutory of instruments, gives the rules for petitions that challenge the validity of the elections, and describes the trial a petition will be given. A petition will have to be delivered within 10 days from the elections and the Supreme Court will have to rule within 30 days from the receipt of the petition. There is no possibility to appeal the Supreme Court ruling. The constitution regulates legal political organization in Uganda. The Police and Public order Act supports these regulations. The 2001 elections strictly prohibited political parties, this made it difficult for the<sup>4</sup> opposition to organize themselves and function properly. It was also forbidden for any individual candidate running for presidential, parliamentary or local to be sponsored by any political party 2001 presidential elections Political parties were

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.humanrights.uio.no/forskning/publ/wp/wp\\_2001\\_08.html](http://www.humanrights.uio.no/forskning/publ/wp/wp_2001_08.html).

<sup>4</sup> <http://hrw.org/backgrounders/africa/uganda0206/uganda0206.pdf>.

banned during the elections although the Movement operated more like a traditional one-party state where all other parties were banned. Indeed, the Constitutional Court ruled on a 2002 petition that the Movement is in fact a political party.

The 2001 presidential elections were held in March, the final six candidates that became eligible were: Kizza Besigye, Aggrey Awori, Kibirige Mayanja, Chaapa Karuhanga, Francis Bwengye and Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the current president. During the preparation of the 2001 elections, it stood clear that President Museveni had competition for the first time since his presidency. The candidate that became the most obvious threat from since the beginning to Museveni's presidency was Dr Kizza Besigye, a former friend and personal doctor during their days in the bush before Museveni first came to power. The race was made all the more exciting because of the formerly close relations between the two men. Dr Besigye was once Mr Museveni's personal. Elections have always been one of the most vital aspects in any country's transition towards democracy. Uganda is no exception, almost all the country's elections have been sparked by controversy because of how they have been held.

The circumstances that took place before both the 2001 and 2006 elections may have caused the outcome results. The 2000 referendum to keep the no party movement system and reject multi-party system may have led to Museveni winning by a wide margin. The 2005 referendum to allow multi-party elections and the parliament to uplift presidential term limits may have effected the out come of the 2006 presidential elections. Political competition in these two elections has been marked by violence, accusations of rigged elections, intimidation and so on. The transition process between these two elections have also brought positive changes that have been absent in Ugandan politics for many decades.

Between April 1979 o January 1986, six different presidents and a presidential commission ruled the country. During the short period between the April 1979 to the elections in December 1980 Uganda governed by Yusef Lule a former principle of Makerere University. Godfrey Binaisaa member in the military council overthrew him. Both of these two had virtually no political influence and were not seen as strong enough to lead the country. When the latter tried to forbid old parties from running for

the upcoming elections he was quickly overthrown from office by chairman of the military commission Paulo Muwanga that was still allied to former President Milton Obote. Once the 1980-multi party elections were announced Obote returned from exile to begin his election campaign. Four political parties participated, The Uganda peoples Congress (UPC) led by Obote, The Democratic Party (DP), The Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM) led by Yoweri Museveni and the Conservative Party (CP). Preliminary reports hinted on a victory for the DP but the chairman of the military commission and the ruling military junta Paul Muwanga intervened and announced that only he would announce the election results.<sup>5</sup>

He soon announced that Obote's party the UPC had won; Muwanga is believed to have tampered with the election results to give his party the win. Nevertheless Obote took his second presidential office in early 1981 but not without controversy. A few days after Obote's installation former defence minister Yoweri Museveni along with a few supporters took to the bush to start a guerrilla war against the new regime. He claimed that the reason to wage war on the new government was based on the fact that the elections had been rigged, according to reports he had only received one mandate in the elections.

A pyramid of five levels of councils, from the village to the national level, is designed to ensure grassroots participation at all levels of society. In February 1989 the country held its first elections since 1980. The elections were unfair and indirectly. The NRM used its power and position and took a clear majority of the seats that were at stake. After the elections a proposition to extend the government's mandate period for five more years from January 1990 was approved.<sup>6</sup>

Political parties were banned during the elections although the Movement operated more like a traditional one-party state where all other parties were banned. Indeed, the Constitutional Court ruled on a 2002 petition that the Movement is in fact a political party.<sup>7</sup> The 2001 presidential elections were held in March, the final six

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<sup>5</sup> Human rights Watch: Hostile to democracy, the movement system and political repression in Uganda 1999:46.

<sup>6</sup> Länder i fickformat Uganda 1999:16.

<sup>7</sup> <http://hrw.org/backgrounder/africa/uganda0206/uganda0206.pdf>.

candidates that became eligible were: Kizza Besigye, Aggrey Awori, Kibirige Mayanja, Chaapa Karuhanga, Francis Bwengye and Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the current president. During the preparation of the 2001 elections, it stood clear that President Museveni had competition for the first time since his presidency. The candidate that became the most obvious threat from the start to Museveni's presidency was Dr Kizza Besigye, a former friend and personal doctor during their days in the bush before Museveni first came to power.<sup>8</sup>

The 2001 official results of the presidential elections gave the incumbent President Museveni majorities win of nearly 70% of the total votes, the closest runner up Kizza Besigye received almost 28%. The voter turnout was 7,389,691 an estimated 70% of the total registered voters. The polling day was described as calm by observers although they criticized the Electoral Commission.

The 2006 multi-party elections were Uganda's first party elections in 26 years. The 2005 referendum led the way to the multi-party elections, but according to Human Rights Watch the playing field was not fair in this election either. Before the upcoming elections it was not sure if Museveni would respect the will of the people if he were to be defeated. He hinted during campaign rally, that a vote against him might not be respected, saying, "You don't just tell the freedom fighter to go like you are chasing a chicken thief out of the house".

The elections were held on February 23, and were considered to be peaceful and calmer than the previous elections, though a few minor incidents occurred. Official figures released by the EC confirmed that Museveni had won with 59% of the total votes, giving him a third term as President. Main rival Besigye received 37%. It should be noted that voting was down compared from the 2001 elections.

### **3.3 Political crisis of Democratization in Uganda**

In February 1989 the country held its first elections since 1980. The elections were unfair and indirectly. The NRM used its power and position and took a clear majority of the seats that were at stake. After the elections a proposition to extend the

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/SODA-6LZC42?OpenDocument>.

government's mandate period for five more years from January 1990 was approved. In April 1991 a large military offensive was launched in northern Uganda to wipe out the remaining guerrilla forces. Three months later about 1,500 rebels were killed and 1,000 arrested. International observers accused the army for assault during the operations. In the middle of the 1990s guerrilla activity increased mainly by the Lord Resistance Army (LRA). In 1993 the king of Buganda, Ronald Mutebi was reinstated by Museveni although his duties were limited to ceremonial duties.

Most important of all a constitution in 1995 prohibited political parties to participate in any political activities so the opposition was forbidden to organize themselves to protest against the referendum. In June 2000, a referendum was held to let the citizens vote if they either wanted to keep the then existing no party movement system or to change to a multiparty system. The referendum was met by criticism from the opposition, since the 1995 constitution prohibited the establishment of a one party rule, this referendum was to prove that a majority of Ugandans still preferred a no-party state for two reasons.

First it would enable Museveni to establish a one-party state system legally and secondly it would allow him with a legitimate moral of argument to defend his no-party politics to the world communities that the movement rule was the only democratic choice that was best for the people of Uganda. As one critic put it before the referendum vote "With massive votes for no-party system behind him, Museveni will have nothing to fear. He will freely legalize his no party rule and enshrine it in the constitution of Uganda as the only legitimate political system that the people of Uganda have chosen democratically. Afterwards, no foreigner will raise a finger to criticise him and support any demand for liberal democracy in Uganda"<sup>9</sup>.

The 2001 presidential elections were held in March, the final six candidates that became eligible were: Kizza Besigye, Aggrey Awori, Kibirige Mayanja, Chaapa Karuhanga, Francis Bwengye and Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the current president. During the preparation of the 2001 elections, it stood clear that President Museveni had competition for the first time since his presidency. The candidate that became the

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.afrobarometer.org/papers/AfropaperNo6.pdf>

most obvious threat from the start to Museveni's presidency was Dr Kizza Besigye, a former friend and personal doctor during their days in the bush before Museveni first came to power.

There were four presidential candidates from four political parties and one independent candidate. Museveni decided to run for a third term in office through his NRM party. Like the previous 2001 elections the 2006 elections contained resembled incidents. It was between two candidates from the 2001 election, the incumbent president Museveni and Forum of Democratic Change (FDC) opposition leader Kizza Besigye. Intimidation and harassment also marked the elections by the government towards the opposition; they were especially directed to Besigye since he was seen as the most obvious threat. In October 2005 Besigye returned from exile to run for the upcoming elections. Besigye's return was in his words "made more precipitate" by the fact that he had to register as a voter before the voter registration deadline in order to be a candidate for the 2006 elections.<sup>10</sup>

Approximately two weeks to his return Besigye was arrested in November and was accused of treason, concealment of treason and rape. The treason case included his alleged links to the various rebel groups, Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and People's Redemption Army (PRA), and the rape charge referred to an alleged incident in November 1997 that involved the daughter of his friend who at the time was his maid. The government also tried to prevent Besigye from receiving the FDC presidential nomination. In respect of Besigye's prospective presidential candidacy, the Attorney General wrote to the Electoral Commission on December 7 that Besigye's candidacy was "tainted with illegalities". Nonetheless, the Electoral Commission cleared Besigye for nomination on December 12, and two days later he was nominated by the FDC as its presidential candidate.<sup>11</sup>

The arrest led to demonstrations and riots in Kampala and towns around the country. In Kampala the riots was the worst urban violence the city had ever witnessed since the end of the civil war in 1986. The protesters believed that the motives behind the charges were designed as a way to stop Besigye from challenging

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<sup>10</sup> <http://hrw.org/backgrounder/africa/uganda0206/uganda0206.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/SODA-6LZC42?OpenDocument>



the president in 2006 elections. His arrest embarked criticism from the international community and even the local media. The Ugandan authorities banned all public rallies, demonstrations, assemblies or seminars related to the trial of the arrested opposition Forum for Democratic Change leader Kizza Besigye and even banned all the country's media from debating on his trial. During his trial, the police used tear gas against his supporters who were outside the court. He was denied bail and subsequently dragged before a military tribunal on separate charges. Black-clad men armed with machine guns, members of a military intelligence unit called the Black Mambas Urban Hit Squad--surrounded Uganda's High Court building, just to show the judge who was Boss.

The government further introduced new restrictions on foreign journalists and threatened to ban the Monitor, Uganda's independent newspaper. Just like the previous elections the NRM received the most coverage since a majority of its members owned several media sources. On January 2 2006 the High Court ordered his immediate release, later that month the Constitutional decided that he could not be tried for terrorism accusations. After the elections which took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February, Besigye was cleared by the court from the allegedly rape charges on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March 2006. Judge John Bosco Katutsi stated, "The State has dismally failed to prove its case against the accused." Testimony given in court indicated the President Museveni has personally instructed the police to investigate the case.<sup>12</sup>

Besigye always claimed that the accusations against him were politically motivated used as a way to stop him from campaigning. During this period while Besigye was imprisoned the President used this time to campaign, after his release Besigye only had a few weeks to campaign before the elections. Before the elections Besigye was not the only one intimidated by the government, the Electoral Commission's police squad was allegedly investigating cases of the same character in twenty-two (of sixty nine) districts.

It should be noted that the opposition supporters also caused a few problems though not nearly as the government ruling party. Other inequalities during this

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <http://hrw.org/backgrounder/africa/uganda0206/uganda0206.pdf>

election included the imbalance in campaign resources between the NRM and the other opposition parties, the same issue occurred in the previous elections. The NRM party allegedly used resources from state funds that were intentionally to be used for other purposes. 130 Ugandan government officials were involved in a scandal involving \$45 million from the U.N Global Fund for fighting AIDS Malaria and Tuberculosis that had disappeared. Uganda's domestic judicial commission disclosed in late 2005 that Ministers even borrowed funds from the Ministry of Health to campaign during the 2005 referendum.<sup>13</sup>

### **3.4 Political Development and Democratization in Uganda**

The 1995 constitution established Uganda as a republic with an executive, legislative, and judicial branch. The constitution provides for an executive president, to be elected every 5 years. President Yoweri Museveni, in power since 1986, was elected in 1996 and re-elected in 2001 and 2006. Legislative responsibility is vested in the parliament; legislative elections were last held February 2006. There currently are 332 members of parliament, of which 79 are women. The Ugandan judiciary operates as an independent branch of government and consists of magistrate's courts, high courts, courts of appeals, and the Supreme Court. Parliament and the judiciary have significant amounts of independence and wield significant power.

Despite the major political crisis for long time, president Museveni maintained the balance to continue his administration with the help of his ruling party, the NRA, in Uganda. In course of time political development took place in the country through the electoral process. It makes clear that the 2001 and 2006, General election and presidential election stood for the great signal of democratic development. This is an achievement for the future of the successful democracy in Uganda. The presidential election of 2006 of Uganda makes the path of political development in terms of political participation and representation.

Political development is traditionally defined as moving towards a democratic system with free and fair elections in which all citizens can participate to govern themselves, and eventually moving to a more liberal democratic state which also

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<sup>1 3</sup> James Odong,(2006) "Besigye can't win - Oryem," New Vision.

protects civil rights.<sup>14</sup>

However, unlike his predecessors, Museveni did move towards a more democratic system as he had promised at the beginning of his interim administration. In 1989, the Odoki Commission, officially known as the Uganda Constitutional Commission, was formed to draft a new constitution. The Odoki Commission worked on outreach programs to the Ugandan public and received over 25,000 submissions of suggestions for the new constitution. A popularly elected Constituent Assembly debated the Odoki Commission constitutional outline from 1994-1995. On September 22, 1995, the Constituent Assembly adopted a new constitution, which included strong restrictions on political party activity. Democratic presidential elections were held in 1996. The main candidates were Museveni, Dr. Paul Kwanga Ssemogerere and Mohammed Mayanja Kibirige, Museveni was re-elected in 2001 and election in 2006. Political development in Uganda has gone full circle, from parliamentary democracy to years of dictatorships and military rule and back to a parliamentary democracy.

The democracy in place today, however, is more legitimate than the original parliamentary system left behind by Britain because the Ugandan people elected representatives at all levels and had a voice in the creation of the new constitution. Uganda is a success story for state-led democratization since the ruler, Museveni, was able to remain in power after the transition to elected government. Uganda has politically recovered and bloomed into a successful democracy. The political development in Uganda is a beacon of hope for other African countries plagued with military rule and dictatorships. Along with this full circle transition in political development, Uganda has also experienced a circular transition in economic development. At independence, Uganda was more fortunate than most of its African neighbours in that the country had promising economic potential.

There have been significant new developments in this conflict since January 2006. With the signing of the Sudanese "Comprehensive Peace Agreement," the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) was created. To protect this fragile peace

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<sup>14</sup> From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

from LRA incursions in southern Sudan, Riek Machar, a GOSS Vice President, launched efforts to broker a peace agreement between the Government of Uganda and the LRA in July 2006. Those talks are ongoing and represent the first time there has been meaningful progress in ending this conflict. As a result, many northern Ugandans are leaving the IDP camps and returning to their villages.

### **3.5 The role of parliament for the Democratization in Uganda**

The Parliament of Uganda, comprises 215 Constituency Representatives, 79 District Woman Representatives, 10 Uganda People's Defence Forces Representatives, 5 Representatives of the Youth, 5 Representatives of Persons with Disabilities, 5 Representatives of Workers, and 13 Ex-officio Members. In June 2005 the MPs voted overwhelmingly on a bill to remove the presidential two-term limit of the 1995 constitution. The vote to remove the term limit was 220 in favour and 53 against, the overwhelming support to overturn the presidential term limit is claimed to have been the bribes MPs received earlier. This eventually meant that Museveni could run for presidency for a third term and stay in power. This decision was criticised by the opposition and foreign donors in particular. They claimed that this move would allow for the sitting president to stay in power indefinitely. This constitution change seemed to have paved the way for the 2006 presidential elections.

In April 2005 a resolution to hold the referendum was held and tabled in front of the parliament, the opposition MPs instantly opposed it. When a motion was presented for voting to change the political system, it failed because the NRM failed to raise the necessary 147MPs to support it. The MPs who opposed to the motion claimed that a referendum was unnecessary to change the political system since the 1995 constitution had a cheaper way. It was estimated that 30 billion shillings would be spent on the referendum to get people to vote, instead it would be cheaper if the Parliament voted on the referendum. The government began getting ready to reintroduce the same motion but found out that, under the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, a decision taken by the Parliament cannot be re-introduced unless the decision is first rescinded. Museveni intervened on this issue and the matter was sent back to the parliament where the referendum was chosen as a way to decide on the political system outcome.

In May 2005 the parliament overturned its earlier decision that opposed the referendum motion on the country's political system. When put to vote, 189 MPs approved the motion, 24 opposed it and none abstained. This vote paved the way for reconsideration of the motion seeking to request the Electoral Commission to hold a referendum on the political system of Uganda. By overturning the parliament's first decision that opposed the motion it proved that the parliament was vulnerable to the presidential powers. The high representation of the NRM MPs in the parliament has given the President influence in decisions made in the parliament.<sup>15</sup>

### **3.6 Functioning of National Assembly**

The National Assembly has 332 members. 215 members are elected directly via universal adult suffrage - in single-seat constituencies. In addition, each of Uganda's 79 (soon to be 80) districts elects a Woman Representative via a direct vote, and 25 MPs are selected from so-called "special interest" groups via a complicated regional electoral college system. These special interest MPs include ten representatives of the UPDF (Uganda's Armed Forces), 5 youth representatives, 5 representatives of people with disabilities and 5 representing workers. Uganda's Parliamentary elections were held in March 2006.

Many of the debates which ultimately led to today's legal restrictions on civil and political rights took place in the Constituent Assembly in 1994-95. The original statute of the Odoki Commission envisioned a situation wherein the last stage of constitutional reform would be "the discussion and adoption of the draft constitution by a Constituent Assembly consisting of the National Resistance Council, the Army Council and other delegates."<sup>16</sup> The Constituent Assembly Election Act of 1993 provided the first opportunity for the NRM government to translate its administrative ban on political party activity into a legal ban. The election rules provided that candidates would "stand and be voted for upon personal merit," and that any candidate who used or attempted to use any political party, tribal or religious affiliations or other "sectarian" grounds for purposes of the election would be

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.makerere.ac.ug/socialsciences/Uganda%202006%20elections/documents/referendum-report-2005.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Amaza, Museveni's Long March, p. 179

disqualified.

In Uganda pre to the year of the 2001 elections a referendum was held on either to allow multiparty elections or not. The prospects for fair elections were minimal due to the domination of Museveni and his NRM party among other factors. Most important of all a constitution in 1995 prohibited political parties to participate in any political activities so the opposition was forbidden to organize themselves to protest against the referendum. In June 2000, a referendum was held to let the citizens vote if they either wanted to keep the then existing no party movement system or to change to a multi party system.<sup>17</sup>

A Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) issued a report proposing comprehensive constitutional change in December 2003. In July 2005 Ugandans voted in a national referendum to approve a multi-party system. In 2005, Parliament voted to change the constitution to lift presidential term limits. The elimination of term limits clears the way for Museveni to run again in 2006, and there are increasing signs that he wishes to do so, despite significant controversy.<sup>18</sup> On July 28th Ugandans voted for the return of multi-party elections, political parties were once again allowed to compete in elections for the first time in almost 25 years. The “yes” side was declared the winner with 92.5% of the votes. The “no” side received 7.5% of the vote. However, the voter turn out was low with 47% of the registered voters (8.5 million) voting.

**1. Article 74 (1) (c)** of the Constitution allows the change of political system through a petition to the Electoral Commission by at least one-tenth of registered voters from each of at least two-thirds of constituencies.

**2. Article 74 (2)** provides that a political system can be changed by a petition from district councils supported by two-thirds of at least 28 district councils. The same petition must be supported by at least 196 MPs, which is two-thirds of voting MPs.

**3.** A resolution by MPs whereby at least two-thirds of all MPs so decide on a petition to parliament made and supported by at least two-thirds majority of the total membership of at least two-thirds of all district councils.

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<sup>17</sup> Mukholi 1995:82

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

The 2005 referendum was different from the previous 2000 referendum for various reasons. First of all this time around both the opposition and the government both supported a return to multi-party politics than in 2000 when the government opposed the idea. Secondly, the 2005 referendum was part of a larger process of amending the constitution changing the political system and electoral laws, and should not be seen as an isolated event. Third, unlike the 2000 referendum, the recent one was preceded by the registration of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) as a political party, the National Resistance Movement - Organization (NRM- O).<sup>19</sup>

On 4 May 2005, the Ugandan Parliament voted to conduct a referendum on the reintroduction of party politics in Uganda. The referendum was held on July 28, 2005 and Ugandans voted for a return to multi-party politics. Summary of the 23 February 2006 Ugandan presidential election results:

**Table 1:**

Candidates	Nominating Parties	Votes	%
Yoweri Museveni	National Resistance movements (N. R. M.)	4,109,449	59.26
Kizza Besigye	Forum of Democratic Change (F. D. C.)	2,592,954	37.39
John Ssebaana Kitso	Democratic Party (D.P.)	109,583	1.58
Abed Bwanika	Independent	65,874	0.95
Miria Obote	Uganda People's Congress (U. P. C.)	57,071	0.82
Total	.....	6,934,931	100.00

Table 1:Source: *New Vision newspaper, Electoral Commission of Uganda*

There were four presidential candidates from four political parties and one independent candidate. Museveni decided to run for a third term in office through his NRM party. Like the previous 2001 elections the 2006 elections contained resembled incidents. It was between two candidates from the 2001 election, the incumbent president Museveni and Forum of Democratic Change (FDC) opposition leader Kizza Besigye. Intimidation and harassment also marked the elections by the government towards the opposition; they were especially directed to Besigye since he was seen as the most obvious threat. In October 2005 Besigye returned from exile to run for the

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.makerere.ac.ug/socialsciences/Uganda%202006%20elections/documents/referendum-report-2005.pdf>

upcoming elections. Besigye's return was in his words "made more precipitate" by the fact that he had to register as a voter before the voter registration deadline in order to be a candidate for the 2006 elections<sup>20</sup> wrote to the Electoral Commission on December 7 that Besigye's candidacy was "tainted with illegalities". Nonetheless, the Electoral Commission cleared Besigye for nomination on December 12, and two days later he was nominated by the FDC as its presidential candidate:

**Table:2**

<b>Summary of the 23 February 2006 National Assembly of Uganda election results</b>						
<b>Parties</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Constituency seats</b>	<b>District woman reps</b>	<b>Indirect seats</b>	<b>Total seats</b>
National Resistance Movement (N R M)	-	-	142	49	14	205
Forum for Democratic Change (F D C)	-	-	27	10	-	37
Uganda People's Congress (U P C)	-	-	9	-	-	9
Democratic Party (D P)	-	-	8	-	-	8
Conservative party (C P)	-	-	1	-	-	1
Justice Forum (J F)	-	-	1	-	-	1
Independents	-	-	26	10	1	37
vacant	-	-	1	-	-	1
Uganda People's Defence Force representatives	-	-	-	-	-	10
Ex-officio members	-	-	-	-	-	10
<b>Total (turnout 72%)</b>	-	-	215	69	15	319
<b>Note on the Distribution of seats:</b>						
- <b>Constituency seats</b> refers to directly elected constituency representatives (215)						
- <b>District Woman Resp.</b> Refers to directly elected District Woman Representatives (69)						
- <b>Indirect seats</b> Include: Representatives of the Youth (5), Representatives of Persons with Disabilities (5), and Representatives of Workers (5)						

*Source: New Vision newspaper, Electoral Commission of Uganda*

<sup>20</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kizza\\_Besigye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kizza_Besigye).



### 3.7 Democracy and Decentralization

The implementation of the decentralization programmed, which is given effect by the Local Government Act 1997 has widened political space at the level where different actors have been enabled to participate in the decision making of those activities that affect them. Not only has it widened political space, it has also made available financial resources that have made planning, resource allocation, programming and prioritization predictable and possible. The process of decentralization in Uganda traces back to the establishment of the Resistance Council System in 1986 onwards. In October 1992, the President launched the decentralization programmed. Since then, the policy of decentralization has been included in the new Ugandan Constitution, and in 1997, a Local Government Act was enacted. These two legal instruments have dramatically changed the central government framework within which its local governments operate.<sup>21</sup>

It is expected that districts, under decentralization, will have more power, resources, more responsibilities and more decision-making autonomy. Also, their performance will thus be increasingly important for growth, poverty eradication and long-term rural development prospects. This examines how decentralization has been implemented to ensure participatory democracy and to advance rural development.

The local government to which power is transferred is given authority is given to autonomous local governments or special statutory bodies, with their own personnel whom they can appoint and dismiss. This is a system, which is characterized by a high level of local government autonomy. Decentralization, on the other hand, refers to administrative decentralization where officials appointed by the centre are posted to the field (district or province, etc) to act as central government representatives. "These officials vary in the extent to which they freely exercise discretion in the performance of their duties".<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.fiuc.org/esap/UMU/UMU1/UMU1JS11/Mtafiti5.PDF>.

<sup>22</sup> M. A. M Kisubi, (1996) "The Process of Decentralization" in P. Langseth and Justus Mugaju (eds.), *Towards an Effective Civil Service*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, pp. 88-89.

The local district leaders and councillors at various levels have been popularly elected. The citizens' participation has been enhanced to the extent that they can now question the performance of their leaders and even recall them. To harmonize the provisions of the Constitution of 1995 with decentralization, the Local Governments Act was passed in 1997. The Local Government Act of 1997 gave effect to the implementation of decentralization. The emphasis of the Act is to devolve powers to the district and the lower levels of local governments and the democratization of decision-making. Under the Act the district and the sub-county have been made local governments that are body corporate, capable of suing and being sued.

The administrative changes are supposed to enhance local autonomy and bring decision-making at the place where people affected want it, including the decisions in district human-power development. A word on human-power development is desirable. Every district establishes its own District Service Commission to appoint, promote, discipline, and remove any officer serving the district. If the commission aggrieves a district officer, he/she has the right to appeal to the Public Service, and the latter's decision is final. The local governments have been enabled to perform their functions by decentralizing the finances.

Sub-counties are entitled to retain 65% of the tax revenue they collect on behalf of the government for local development, in accordance with local formulated policies (community participation). In every district a tender board is established which must conform to the standards established by the Central Tender Board for procurement of goods, services, and works. It acts only on their quest by the Local Council seeking these goods, services, and works. The local council system starts at village level, known as LCI. All adult people of a village, that is the electors, form a local council from which they elect a committee of nine, to run local affairs of the village on the day to day basis. Each member of the committee has a specified field of duty.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> Fountain Publishers, (1995) Kisakye, J. "Political Background to Decentralization" in S. Villadsen and F. Lubanga (eds), Democratic Decentralization in Uganda.

Bushenyi District Administration (BDA) has renovated 4 county headquarters and 9 sub-county offices. The town Council is building a 45-office block. They have built the new houses for their senior staff. It has constructed 16 roads covering 388.5 Kms using funds from NGOs. 1543.8 Kms of roads have been constructed without external support. Bushenyi, now, has 428 primary schools compared to 419 in 1989. It boasts of 38 secondary schools. Judging by these figures Bushenyi seems to be a true success story of decentralisation. Many other districts have followed Bushenyi example, by putting up office blocks, grading their feeder roads, repairing and building health units, constructing schools, and training personnel.

“Air-supply” is a term used in Uganda to refer to that situation when one or a firm is paid for the supply of goods and services, when in actual fact these goods and services have not been supplied. The working relations between the political leadership and the public servants in the decentralized districts is identified as a problem on one hand, and political interference from high authorities and among councillors in the affairs of the local governments, on the other. The public servants fear to discuss the errors committed by the politicians saying that the latter have been powerful to be criticized. Interference of leading politicians in district programs is identified by many as a factor, which contributes to the stagnation of district programs. Cases are often quoted that during elections; politicians go around encouraging taxpayers not to pay taxes because they want votes. Consequently, the districts collect taxes far below their projections. Wrangles among councillors are rampant in many types of council. The nature of the wrangles hinges around allocation of resources, and projects, poor resource utilization, political affiliation, allocation of plots, cliquish, and policy matters.<sup>24</sup>

The problem of accountability is very high with 65% of the money retained at LC III level. There is evidence that chairpersons of LC II connive with the executives of LC III and allocate the money, leaving some at the sub-county. The LC I chairpersons, together with their executives share what was meant for the parishes. Citizen participation at LC I level appear to end during elections. For LC II and I level, the 1997 Act is quiet about the frequency of council meetings. It is clear that

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<sup>2</sup> <sup>4</sup> [http://www.fiuc.org/iaup/sap/Electronic Publications from Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi.](http://www.fiuc.org/iaup/sap/Electronic%20Publications%20from%20Uganda%20Martyrs%20University,%20Nkozi)

decentralization hasn't really enhanced citizen participation in decision-making at basic levels. Even when citizens are not banned from attending III, IV and V councils, except when they meet as committees, the councils are remote and the citizens feel disinterested in what is going on in these councils. This is because the council executives do not mobilize.

The citizens' lack of civic competence and poverty impedes participation, and, most importantly decentralization has been a top-down approach, though not authoritarian, participation is largely seen as a government obligation rather than people-driven process. Civil organizations at the local level are few. However, the new division was much debated and drawing of boundaries emerged as key issue. Above all, the segmentation of socio-political structure is not merely caused by the divide and rule governance initiated by post-colonial state, but results from the inter play of logistics of the post-colonial state with those of local political process.

### **3.8 Judicial system in Uganda**

The institutional separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial branches is guaranteed in Uganda's constitution, but limited significantly in practical terms. The president's board powers and the continued majority on power. Parliament's authority and involvement in the political decision-making is inefficient and limited significantly, which was organized and run pursuant to the 1995 constitution and the organizational instruments, is based on democratic principles and seeks to guarantee collective and other rights for all inhabitants of Uganda.

Concerns about judicial independence in Uganda were reinforced by the security forces' intervention in a politically sensitive trial in 2007. The government also sought to increase limitations on press freedom during the year. Progress was made toward resolving the long-running and gruesome conflict with the rebel Lord's Resistance Army in the north, although ongoing instability in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo spilled over into Uganda.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <sup>5</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/487ca269c.html>

The Judiciary is one of the three arms of Government vested with judicial authority. It is independent and self accounting. The Judiciary's vision is to improve access to justice for all the people in Uganda through reform of the composition; structure and procedures of the judicial system; improving the efficiency; effectiveness and transparency of case administration; enhancing the effectiveness of judicial officers/ staff; maintaining, improving and increasing the infrastructure and equipment of the courts; as well supporting the reform of legislation and administration of justice. The mission of the Judiciary is; "To develop and administer an efficient and effective judicial system, accessible to all the people in Uganda, respectful of their traditions, mindful of their aspirations, serving them without bias or discrimination".<sup>26</sup>

The National Assembly passed the Political Parties and Organizations Act in 2002, setting the conditions under which political parties could be registered and function fully. In 2003, the Constitutional Court ruled that parts of the law were unconstitutional, as they effectively prevented political parties from carrying out their activities. Despite the ruling, the NRM continued to dominate the nation's political life. In 2004, the Constitutional Court voided restrictions on the freedom of political parties to function. Ugandan voters in 2005 approved constitutional amendments that both lifted the ban on political parties and repealed the prohibition on sitting presidents running for a third term. As a result, Museveni was able to seek reelection in 2006. There are also numerous shortcomings in the judicial branch. The judiciary is formally independent and institutionally distinct, but dominated and politicized in practice by the executive branch. Thus, Uganda's judicial system suffers from deeply rooted corruption resulting from inefficiency, political pressure, poor equipment and lack of education.

The court refused the application claiming that despite the dislike of holding a referendum on human rights and freedoms, the one party system was so entrenched that it needed to be changed through a referendum. The court came to the conclusion that there were several cheap methods of changing the existing political system but it was not for the court to tell parliament how to do their job when it came to this issue.

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.judicature.go.ug/index.php>

Further, as the Electoral Commission was only implementing a constitutional requirement and the impugned sections of the Referendum and other Provisions Act, 2005, their operations did not in any way infringe any provision of the Constitution. The constitutional court came to the conclusion that Ugandans citizens had to decide their own destiny in this issue.

An appeal against this decision was lodged with the Supreme Court; however, due to a lack of quorum following the retirement of Justice C.M. Kato the appeal could not be heard, bringing the case to a premature end. This may be interpreted as a denial of justice, although due to circumstances beyond the control of the justices of the Supreme Court. A new permanent appointment could have been made, or an acting judge appointed and it was politically significant that the seat was not filled, leaving the Supreme Court dysfunctional.<sup>27</sup>

The Judiciary handling of this constitutional challenge proved that the courts did not entirely function independently. It showed that the Executive could influence the courts both directly and indirectly. The President has the influence to see who will be able to make it to the bench and also when appointments are in order to be made or not. The example of his ability to influence came when he failed to appoint a replacement for the vacant post of the retired Justice C.M. Kato. This act prevented the hearing of the appeal in the referendum case and effectively blocked the Supreme Court from holding the executive to account.<sup>28</sup>

### **3.9 The Role of Civil Society in Strengthening Democratization in Uganda**

A healthy democracy requires information about government actions, and effects of their policies from independent sources that are accessible to the public. The strengthening of democracy must be considered from the point of view of balance between the state and civil society, each occupying its own sphere of competence and managing its own domain in a spirit of mutual respect and tolerance. Democratization takes place in two phases: first transition to democracy and second, democratic consolidation. Civil society plays a crucial role for successful transition as well as for

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.makerere.ac.ug/socialsciences/Uganda%202006%20elections/documents/referendum-report2005.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*

democratic consolidation. The most significant pressures for democratic reform come from civil society groups particularly; trade unions, labour unions, human rights movements, media, student movement and eventually political parties played a key role in fighting against the post-colonial military rule in Uganda.

Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) are viewed as a sub-component of other organizations within civil society, which are characterized by four attributes. They are voluntary, independent, not for profit and not self-serving. In order to be regarded as 'legitimate', NGOs, in addition to their non profit character, are required to demonstrate their accountability to a genuine constituency. These constituencies are identified by some degree of need of marginalization, which the state cannot fully address. NGOs are, therefore, expected to prove that they act 'in the public interest'.

Indeed, the continued dependence of the majority of NGOs, particularly on foreign sources of funding puts a greater challenge on the question of ownership and legitimacy. In addition, internal governance of NGOs is dominated by personalities and lack of democratic culture. In other words, the influence and the role of founders and leaders is overwhelming. Without adequate internal democratic culture, dialogue, and participation, NGOs could not be expected to play a positive role. As NGOs have attained prominence in the economic and political life in Uganda, the NRM government is determined to control them. The government of Uganda has proposed or enacted legislation designed to strengthen official authority over NGOs, usually under the guise of developing a national regulatory framework for associations. Relationships between NGOs and government are characterized by suspicion and confusion about roles and rights.

Perhaps the most dramatic growth of any sector in civil society in Uganda has been witnessed in the women's movement. However, there are significant problems in the fashion in which the women's movement has grown and developed. This is true of the fact that the movement has failed to mark distance from the NRM in a manner that affirms its autonomous and independent growth. In other words, the women's movement considers that it owes the advances made for women to the NRM. Ultimately, such a posture undermines the women's cause and confines the

development of the movement to issues that do not fundamentally challenge or affect the status quo. This was evident in the run up to the Presidential elections in 1996 and 2001 when women organizations conducting civic education were accused of campaigning for President Museveni.

### **3.10 Media**

The media represents different social/political actors with different interests and agendas. In this sense, we can identify media for civil society and media for political parties. During the NRM period, the media has had more space and many privately owned newspapers and FM stations have mushroomed. Several media houses have exposed and discussed cases of human rights violations and corruption. However, these are areas where the NRM government has not always been very tolerant. The NRM passed a statute “The Press and Journalist Statute (6/1995). The aim of the Statute is “to ensure the freedom of press” and to establish a Media Council and the National Institute of Journalists of Uganda (NIJU).<sup>29</sup>

The Media Council is a regulatory body that deals with the conduct, standards and discipline of journalists. It is also supposed to arbitrate between the public and media and the state. The Media Council exercises disciplinary control and acts as a censorship body. The Press and Journalists Statute raise serious issues of control. First, it has made it difficult for anyone wishing to practice journalism to join the profession. The requirement is for one to have a university degree. Secondly, a journalist cannot practice the profession without having a valid practicing certificate and his/her name recorded in the Register kept by the Media Council. Registration is a mechanism for excluding undesirable journalists. This gives the government room to deal with those journalists who step out of line on the basis of the laws of defamation and sedition (Bazaara, 2000).

The media can play a big role in consolidating democracy. The media has the ability to provide citizens with electoral and other kinds of social choices related to the provision of information about political candidates and events. The media can be

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<sup>29</sup> Oloka Onyango and J.J. Barya (1996), “civil society and the political Economy of foreign Aid in Uganda, p.14.



vigilant against corruption practices and tendencies and can keep public figures accountable in the public realm. The media should scan information and set the agenda for politicians and citizens in the domestic and international arena. Lastly, the media can open communication channels and organize a dialogue among the various elements of society concerning everyday problems, chiefly with respect to the protection of ethnic and minority rights.

As regards the media in Uganda, more than twenty newspapers have sprouted since 1986. The broadcast media has been freed of state control and monopoly, and political commentary over virtually any issue is widely tolerated. Yet at the same time, at least 40 journalists have appeared before the courts of law charged with a variety of criminal offences since 1986; new laws governing the media have been enacted enshrining several questionable provisions, and punitive economic measures (increasing taxes on news print) have been deployed with the intent of curtailing the operation of the free press. Private newspapers also fear losing much-needed revenue from government advertisements and will engage in self-censorship rather than displease high officials.

Private media in Uganda is emerging but most of it is in the hands of people close to the political regime or individuals who do not necessarily have the ambition of improving the performance of democracy, but are primarily profit driven, and hence have mainly commercial ideas in mind.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid*

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## **Chapter-4**

### **Western pressure and it's impact on Democratization Under Museveni Rule**

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## Chapter-4

*This chapter intends to deal with the influence of Western countries in spreading Democratization in Uganda. It attempts to analyse Uganda's economic environment and its performance with the help of international institutions particularly IMF and World Bank and the role of external power on Uganda's democratic struggle.*

### **4.1 Westernisation and its effects on Ugandan politics.**

Since Yoweri Museveni assumed power in 1986, Uganda has often been hailed as a role model for successful post-conflict reconstruction in Africa. After almost two decades of violence the country has emerged as one of the continent's most vibrant economies. However, regional and structural inequality persist, not least due to ongoing violent conflict in the North, and – as a legacy of British colonial rule – the country remains divided along ethnic lines. External actors have had an influence on Ugandan politics for more than a century.

Uganda was a British colony since the end of the 19th century, and they helped to shape its landscape and politics. When Uganda received its independence in 1962, British influence did not end there. They were involved in drafting the country's first constitution and implementing the same governmental system as their own in Uganda. Their involvement in Uganda led to conflicts between the country's ethnic groups among other factors. This colonial legacy which by the way is rather common in Africa has continued to be present until today. Almost all African countries have come to depend on western countries for their financial well being. Financial Aid is no longer used as a means of fighting poverty but has become a powerful good/bad negotiation tool that the west opposes on poor states in order for them to comply with their demands, and Uganda has not been an exception. According to J.Olaka-Onyango a law professor at Makerere University, among one of the reasons Museveni gave for Uganda to return to a multi-party system in 2003 were external pressure.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Olaka-Onyango( 2006): Paper the socio-political context of the elections.

Until recently, against the backdrop of Uganda's positive economic development, the international community had turned a blind eye on democratic deficits. With the worsening democratic situation over past years, it has taken more assertive measures, such as freezing funds, which have a significant impact on opening the political landscape, as well as on resuming peace talks in the North. In 2005, following internal and external pressure, Museveni abandoned his no-party system, the 'Movement', in favour of multi-party politics and elections were held in 2006, granting Museveni a third term in office. Even though Uganda is inhabited by a large variety of ethnic groups European anthropologists divided the country into the 'Nilotic North' and the 'Bantu South', creating fissures that still account for collective identities and planting the seeds for ethnicity-based antagonisms that shape political alliances and power struggles to the very day.

The Northern and Eastern regions, in particular, remain marginalized and impoverished, women remain traditionally excluded from wealth, class differences prove to be insurmountable, particularly when linked to landownership and education, and a clear urban/rural divide prevails. The Role of the International Community When Museveni came to power in 1986, the international community showed little interest in democratizing post-conflict societies. His early years did however coincide with the first efforts by IMF and World Bank, and subsequently other Western donors, to promote economic liberalization in Africa.

When Museveni took power in 1986 he was seen as a liberator and the new breed of African statesman in Africa. He was considered modern and one of the few leaders who could help rebuild a new African renaissance. He was applauded and praised for his efforts for bringing peace and economic stability, reducing Aids, respecting women rights and a lot of other things. Uganda did not have any major problems of getting financial aid and foreign investments. Uganda even received 100 percent debt relief from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the African Development Bank.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> World Bank, (1998), Uganda: "Recommendations for Strengthening the Government of Uganda's Anti-Corruption Program".

The country economically prospered and was considered to be one of Africa's good examples and became a role model that inspired others to follow its path. In the Western world it was seen as a good example on how financial aid and new leadership can completely transform a country around. As of 2005 foreign donors funded almost half of the government budget. By the beginning of this millennium the international community started having doubts and expressing criticism towards President Museveni and his political leadership. Some of these worries were based on the following reasons presented below:

**The northern conflict** between the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) which has dragged on for almost 18 years and has yet to come to an end. The government has been accused for not doing enough to end the war that has caused many thousands of Ugandans their lives and brought suffering and displacement to over a million citizens. Jan Egeland the United Nations (UN) Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator has described the situation in northern Uganda as the worst in the World. Rates of violent death in northern Uganda are three times higher than those reported in Iraq following the Allied Invasion in 2003. (The violent death rate for northern Uganda is currently at 146 deaths per week, 0.17 violent deaths per 10,000 people per day). This is three times higher than in Iraq, where the incidence of violent death in the period following the allied invasion was estimated to be 0.052 per 10,000 people per day. According to new reports the devastating economic cost of the war has been estimated at US\$1.7 billion (GBP £1bn) over the course of the last two decades. The average annual cost of the war in Uganda is US\$85 million.<sup>3</sup>

Another conflict that has left the international community in doubt was Uganda's involvement in the Congo war that began in 1996 and continued to 2003 when they left due to intense foreign pressure. Uganda was directly involved in this crisis and even has continued to support rebels who are opposed to the Congolese government. The reasons for Uganda's involvement are believed to have been

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/press/releases/uganda300306.htm>.

financial gain since Congo holds one of the world's largest natural resources. In late April this year, the Monitor reported that Uganda troops had once again entered Congo. According to a UN official in Kinshasa, the Ugandan soldiers are said to have gone to Congo in pursuit of Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels.<sup>4</sup>

In December 2005, The international Court of Justice, the UN's highest court found Uganda guilty of violating the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Congo when it sent armed troops into the country during the period from 1996 to 2003. It was further responsible for violating human rights and plundering Congo's natural resources. Uganda was ordered to pay an estimated 10 billion US\$ in compensation and damages. These two conflicts have cast a dark shadow to the Ugandan government and are bound to have economical consequences to the already pressured economy. Corruption has been a highly publicized issue in Uganda for the past 15 years. When Museveni came to power he announced that he would eliminate corruption and misuse of power. There are no visible signs of eradicating corruption. If anything, the image of the Movement government in terms of corruption has been degenerating to the extent that Transparency International listed it as the third worst in the world in 2000.

According to Ugandan MP Miria Matembe, corruption scandals involving the government have been many and barely come as a surprise to Ugandans any more. Among noticeable corruption scandals that have caught the eye of the international community were the alleged bribing of MPs during the 2005 decision to uplift the presidential limit. Another one involved the embezzlement of millions of dollar from the UN Global Fund that was for prevention of HIV/AIDS and other diseases. These reasons and the already mentioned problems during the elections and change of the constitution mentioned earlier in my analysis have led to replications from the international community.<sup>5</sup>

Days after the imprisonment of opposition leader Kizza Besigye, came the first signs of dissatisfaction by the international community. In December 2005 when several donor countries, notably the UK, Sweden, Norway and The Netherlands,

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<sup>4</sup> <http://allafrica.com/stories/200605010357.html>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.ipacademy.org/PDF\\_Reports/Uganda.pdf](http://www.ipacademy.org/PDF_Reports/Uganda.pdf)

announced cuts in aid to Uganda amounting to millions of dollars. Since then, there has been much debate over the timing and motives of this decision by these governments, although they stated that it had been prompted by, among others, Uganda government's poor macro-economic management; political transition uncertainties; stifling growth of development in the country and the arrest in November 2005 of the FDC leader Col. (rtd.) Dr. Kizza Besigye. Although they had not cut financial aid before it's believed that the arrest of opposition leader Besigye was the main reason that led to this decision. Britain which is Uganda's biggest donor was concerned about 58 delays in the government's transition to multi-party politics, state financing for the ruling party, and a significant overrun on public administration expenditure.<sup>6</sup>

Instead donor countries are using some of those funds on the never-ending conflict in the north since they claim has not been given enough attention. They have also begun using NGOs instead of governmental institutions when handing out aid, this is believed to be that corruption is high within the government. Museveni in turn has accused donors of "external, misguided meddling" in Ugandan affairs and blames them for lack of electricity, and many other problems the country is facing. He has even said he can do without their "conditional aid" and called some undesirable names.<sup>7</sup>

He has further stated that even though the international community has cut aid, he is not going to give in from outside pressure. No longer is Museveni seen as the "darling of the west" but as a typical African leader, who sits in power to long some critics are even comparing him to Zimbabwe president Robert Mugabe. The international community has vowed through this demonstration that it seems serious to its devotion to democratize Uganda.

#### **4.2 The United States Role on formation of democratization in Uganda**

The United States is one of the few donor nations which has attempted to engage in a substantial public discussion with the Museveni government about the movement

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<sup>6</sup> Stephen Buckley,(1998), "African Leaders Ask World Bank for More Aid," *Washington Post*.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Busharizi (1999), "Uganda under pressure to embrace more democracy," Reuters.

system. The Museveni government is a close ally of the United States, as evidenced by the frequent high-level visits of U.S. officials to Uganda. Because of the close relationship between the U.S. and Uganda, U.S. criticism of the movement system has become increasingly silent. The U.S. took a more critical stance on the movement system during the 1995 constitutional debates. Noting the "undesirable, often tragic, consequences of governments which do not allow political competition and which deny human rights,"<sup>8</sup> the U.S. embassy in Kampala issued a strongly worded statement during the constitutional debates on Uganda's future political system.

Despite the remarkable progress that Uganda has achieved, the United States now notes with concern that the stage is being set for the entrenchment of a system of government which falls seriously short of full democracy and political enfranchisement. Normally a constitution is designed to protect human rights and ensure free and fair competition for political leadership. However, some forces in Uganda would like to see a constitution that preserves monopoly power indefinitely and continues the prohibition on the right of association and the right of assembly.<sup>9</sup>

A press briefing during President Clinton's visit to Uganda offered an insight into the Clinton Administration's policy towards democratization and human rights in Uganda. The press briefing was addressed by Jesse Jackson, Susan Rice, and National Security Council (NSC) Director for Africa John Prendergast. Jesse Jackson strongly defended Uganda's movement system, arguing that it had been established by popular mandate, that Uganda was a democracy "more so than many other nations with which we have relations," and that democracy takes time to build. Susan Rice was more reserved, recognizing that "there is a long way to go" on democratization and human rights in Uganda, and stressing that respect for human rights was a fundamental benchmark for measuring democracy.

The people of Uganda will ultimately choose the nature of their democratic system, whether it is multi party or takes some other form. That's for them to decide. But in the meantime, we have made it absolutely clear and I think the government of Uganda fully shares the view that respect for basic human rights is fundamental and

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<sup>8</sup> Edmond Kizito,(1995) "U.S. urges Uganda to build full democracy," Reuters World Service

<sup>9</sup> ibid



that democratic participation, freedom of expression, freedom of association-those have to be the benchmarks by which a democratic society is measured.<sup>10</sup>

President Museveni rejected the U.S. call for a speedy return to pluralist democracy, responding that "what the people of Uganda decide is what we shall take. It is not for the Americans to decide for Ugandans what is best for them."<sup>11</sup> But this linking of human rights and democracy has not been translated into a program of action. Bruised by past Museveni rejections of U.S. pressure, democratization and human rights no longer seem to occupy a high place on the U.S. agenda, despite the considerable leverage the U.S. and other donor states have because of their extensive activities in Uganda. While other governments in the region such as those of Kenya and Zambia become subjected to conditional funding which requires progress on democratization and human rights, the international community seems happy to continue with business as usual in Uganda. The lack of resolve is particularly disturbing in light of the extensive coverage that human right abuses in Uganda receive in the yearly U.S. State Department human rights reports. It is not that the U.S. is unaware of the political and human rights situation in Uganda: they simply have chosen to ignore it.

Overall, the United States has since the departure of Ambassador Michael Southwick been noticeably quiet about restrictions associated with the movement system. The few informal and unpublicized meetings which have taken place between U.S. officials and opposition politicians have done little to dispel the widely held view that the U.S. government is the patron of the Museveni government, a view which has substantially increased the legitimacy with which this form of the one-party state is seen on the continent.

#### **4.3 IMF-World Bank Structural Adjustment Programme in Uganda.**

The World Bank has been one of the strongest international supporters of President Museveni. President Museveni is one of the few allies of the World Bank on a continent increasingly dissatisfied with the bank's approach to structural adjustment

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<sup>10</sup> White House Press Briefing by U.S. Special Envoy for the Promotion of Democracy in Africa Reverend Jesse Jackson,(1998) National Security Council Director for Africa John Prendergast, Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Susan Rice, and USAID Administrator Brian Atwood.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

and debt relief. Having invested heavily in making Uganda an economic success story, the World Bank is loathe to see Museveni criticized.

The relationship between Uganda and the World Bank is a symbiotic one, providing important benefits to both. Uganda is one of the few African countries which has been willing to embrace the stringent structural adjustment programs which the World Bank considers essential to restoring fiscal discipline and monetary stability, and has served as an important advocate for the World Bank's programs in Africa. In January 1998, Uganda hosted a landmark closed-door meeting between World Bank president James Wolfensohn and leaders of twelve African countries to discuss the World Bank's policies in Africa.<sup>12</sup> Uganda has benefited from close attention from the World Bank and a generous economic package.

Uganda's economy has rebounded from a complete collapse in the 1970s and 1980s, and between 1994 and 1997 Uganda posted a real GDP growth rate of 8 percent, the highest in Africa. Because of its strict adherence to the fiscal discipline requirements and its sound economic reform record, Uganda was the first country to benefit from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. In April 1998, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund agreed to a U.S. \$650 million debt relief package for Uganda, effectively reducing Uganda's external debt by twenty percent. Since 1987, the World Bank has provided an estimated U.S. \$790 million in adjustment support, in addition to an estimated U.S. \$1 billion in project support in the agriculture, infrastructure, and social sectors.<sup>13</sup>

Unfortunately, despite its recent commitment to "good governance," the World Bank has done little to address the need for political reform in Uganda. Its own assessments of the Ugandan government argue that "economic reform has been accompanied by political reform," and that the Ugandan government is "composed of broad-based political groupings brought together under the country's no-party political system."<sup>14</sup> The World Bank has touted Uganda's economic achievements and ignored

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<sup>12</sup> United States Information Agency(1998), *Africa News Report*, p. 16

<sup>13</sup> Press Release (1998)"Uganda to receive U.S. \$650 million in debt relief," The World Bank Group

<sup>14</sup> "Countries: Uganda ," from the World Bank website at.

its civil and political rights shortcomings, thereby playing a counterproductive role in Uganda's democratization process.

The willingness of the World Bank and key donors to ignore Uganda's rights problems were clearly demonstrated at the most recent Consultative Group Meeting in Kampala in December 1998. The donor meeting took place at a time that Uganda, together with Rwanda, was openly embroiled in the conflict in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo, aiming to topple the government of Laurent Kabila, himself installed with Ugandan and Rwandan support. On December 8, days before the Consultative Group Meeting, the Ugandan Parliament released a damning report on Uganda's privatization process, arguing that privatization had been "derailed by corruption," and implicating three senior ministers who had "political responsibility." According to the report, most of the funds raised through privatization had apparently disappeared due to corruption. President Museveni's own brother and defense advisor, Major General Salim Saleh, had been forced to resign two days earlier after it was revealed that he had improperly and secretly tried to buy a majority stake in the Uganda Commercial Bank (UCB).

The World Bank itself shared a confidential report detailing many cases of corruption involving government officials with the Ugandan government prior to the Consultative Group meeting, a report later released to the public at the request of the Ugandan government. Despite these concerns and the continued moves towards a more restrictive political system, the Consultative Group Meeting ended with Uganda receiving its biggest-yet package of aid: U.S. \$2.2 billion, to be dispersed over the next three years. A strong statement issued by the European Union at the end of the meeting, discussed above, was a strong indication of rising international concern about Uganda's restrictive political practices.<sup>15</sup>

The World Bank's support for Uganda's economic rehabilitation may ignore one of the greatest threats to Uganda's economic recovery, namely corruption. It is difficult to track corruption in Uganda because of a lack of transparency by the

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<sup>15</sup> World Bank(1998), Poverty Reduction and Social Development Section, Uganda: "Recommendations for Strengthening the Government of Uganda's Anti-Corruption Program".

government, at least partly caused by the limitations placed on political opposition and the repressive actions faced by politicians who try to raise corruption concerns. In the words of Aggrey Awori, an opposition Member of Parliament, the corruption is a symptom "of an unaccountable government. If there was an effective opposition based on party lines that would hold them accountable and threaten their tenure as government."<sup>16</sup>

With Uganda dependent on the international community for fifty-five percent of its budget, the international community and the World Bank certainly could do more to ensure the government of Uganda respects its international treaty obligations and fundamental human rights. Uganda did not have any major problems of getting financial aid and foreign investments. Uganda even received 100 percent debt relief from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the African Development Bank. The country economically prospered and was considered to be one of Africa's good examples and became a role model that inspired others to follow its path. Western countries and international monetary institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) appreciate Museveni's pragmatic economic management and rave about the positive economic growth rates in Uganda since the early nineties.

#### **4.4 The European Union and its Member States**

Like most other Western donor countries, the member nations of the European Union (E.U.) have remained remarkably silent on the issue of democratization and respect for human rights in Uganda. Several E.U. countries regularly send delegations to Uganda and funding ties between E.U. members and Uganda are extensive, but human rights and democratization is rarely part of the public agenda of E.U.-Uganda interaction.

However, the E.U. issued a strong and unprecedented statement on the need for democratization in Uganda following a stormy Consultative Group donor meeting in Kampala in December 1998. In the days preceding the donor meeting, as noted,

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>6</sup> Paul Busharizi,(1999) January 15, "Uganda under pressure to embrace more democracy," Reuters

President Museveni's brother Major General Salim Saleh and the minister in charge of privatization resigned from their positions following a fraud scandal; a parliamentary committee released a damaging report on privatization and corruption in Uganda; and the World Bank handed over a confidential report to the Ugandan government documenting twelve cases of high-level corruption. The donor meeting took place against the background of increasing concern among donors about Ugandan and Rwandan involvement in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In the statement presented by Austria to the Ugandan government at the closing of the meeting, the E.U. stated its commitment to following political developments in Uganda: The E.U. shall monitor developments between now and the referendum in 2000 very closely. In particular it shall be looking at the terms and applications of the Political Organizations Bill for the regulation of political parties which it hopes will be passed very soon; the Referendum Bill and the time provided to debate it; and Movement's structures and activities, in particular the revival of the Chaka-mchaka political education programme.

There should be freedom of association in support of preferred candidates. During a visit to Kampala, Irish Minister of State for Overseas Development and Human Rights, Liz O'Donnell, vowed that Ireland would support the referendum. The government's New Vision newspaper stated that O'Donnell declined to comment on the movement system of government but then asked: "What could be fairer than putting it to the people in 2000? If there is anything we can do to help, we will."<sup>17</sup>

Nick Sigler, the British ruling Labour Party's secretary for international affairs, expressed concern over the movement system while attending an October 1997 conference of the Africa Multiparty Democracy Workshop sponsored by the British Labour Party. Sigler described the movement system as "worrying" because parties could not carry out their normal functions. He further stated that the referendum was a "cause for concern" because it would lead to the end of pluralism without putting into place another similarly competitive system.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> "Ireland to help on referendum,(1998)" New Vision

<sup>18</sup> John Kakande, ( 1997) "DP hosts African parties," New Vision.

His comments contrasted with those of British Secretary of State for International Development Clare Short, who announced during a visit to Kampala in October 1997 that the British Labour government would not press for multiparty reforms in Uganda and that Britain would support the referendum: Uganda creates new optimism for Africa. The new British government likes to work with this kind of government. Our relationship with Uganda is precious. I do not think it is necessarily right for Uganda to have the same kind of political system as Britain.

When the Ugandan Parliament was considering the proposed referendum legislation, the British High Commissioner to Uganda Michael Cook argued in favor of allowing political parties to campaign on the referendum issue, stating that "it is important for political parties to be given a proper platform to explain their cause before the referendum."<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the United Kingdom has focused its attention on ensuring the procedural fairness of the referendum, ignoring the more basic concerns about the legitimacy of a referendum which puts fundamental human rights up for a vote. With the democratization process coming to a standstill at the beginning of the Millennium, the international community underwent a considerable shift. Individual donors started resorting to sanctions such as freezing pledged funds (about half of Uganda's budget comes from international donors), e.g. in response to the UN's accusations of Ugandan troops looting minerals in the DR Congo (2002), after violent protests and the amending of the constitution to enable Museveni to stand for a third term in office (2005), and over the arrest of the presidential contender Besigye (2006).

Moreover, in 2004 the threats by the UN Under-Secretary General to bring the situation of the Acholi in the North before the UN Security Council had a decisive impact on alerting donors to what had been happening before their eyes for almost twenty years, as well as on advancing peace talks with the LRA. Since then, there has been an increasing awareness amongst donors that the Northern and Eastern regions of the country have so far been largely excluded from their development assistance and some agencies have been taking steps to launch programmed, e.g. to reduce the

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<sup>19</sup> "UK Envoy Appeals on Referendum, (1999)" New Vision.

prevalence of SALW in Karamoja. After years of inactivity regarding Uganda's democratization process, it appears that the international community has now realized its own responsibility and its potential to exert some pressure.

#### **4.5 Economics Condition of Uganda**

Uganda is blessed with fertile soils, regular rainfall, and sizable deposits of copper and cobalt. Its largest sector is agriculture, which employs 78% of the workforce and accounted for about 90% of export earnings and 23.4% of Uganda's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2003/2004. Coffee exports make up half its export earnings and Uganda is Africa's largest coffee producer. Other major exports include cotton, tea, and to a lesser extent, maize. Crop production has been hampered by security concerns in the northern and western regions of Uganda. Uganda's economy has great potential. Endowed with significant natural resources, including ample fertile land, regular rainfall, and mineral deposits, it appeared poised for rapid economic growth and development at independence. However, chronic political instability and erratic economic management produced a record of persistent economic decline that left Uganda among the world's poorest and least-developed countries.<sup>20</sup>

Since assuming power in early 1986, Museveni's government has taken important steps toward economic rehabilitation. The country's infrastructure notably its transportation and communications systems that were destroyed by war and neglect--is being rebuilt. Recognizing the need for increased external support, Uganda negotiated a policy framework paper with the IMF and the World Bank in 1987. It subsequently began implementing economic policies designed to restore price stability and sustainable balance of payments, improve capacity utilization, rehabilitate infrastructure, restore producer incentives through proper price policies, and improve resource mobilization and allocation in the public sector. Uganda's macroeconomic policies are sound and contributed to an 8.6% growth rate in fiscal year 2007-2008, compared to 7% in FY 2006-2007. Inflation ran at 240% in 1987 and 42% in June 1992, and was 5.1% in 2003. It bounced up to 7.7% in 2007 and 12% in

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<sup>20</sup> (2006), *Europa year Book*, p.4425.

2008, well above the government's annual target average of 5%, as food prices rose.<sup>21</sup>

Investment as a percentage of GDP was 17% in 2006/2007 compared to 15.7% in 2002/2003. Private sector investment, largely financed by private transfers from abroad, was 20% of GDP in 2006/2007. In the same year, gross national savings as a percentage of GDP fell to an estimated 12%, from 13% the previous fiscal year. The Ugandan Government has worked with donor countries to reschedule or cancel substantial portions of the country's external debts. Agricultural products supply nearly all of Uganda's foreign exchange earnings, with coffee (of which Uganda is Africa's second leading producer) accounting for about 15% and fish 12% of the country's exports in 2007/2008. Exports of non-traditional products, including apparel, hides, skins, vanilla, vegetables, fruits, cut flowers, and fish are growing, while traditional exports such as cotton, tea, and tobacco continue to be mainstays.<sup>22</sup>

Most industry is related to agriculture. The industrial sector has been rehabilitated and resumed production of building and construction materials, such as cement, reinforcing rods, corrugated roofing sheets, and paint. Domestically produced consumer goods include plastics, soap, cork, beer, and soft drinks. To stabilize the economy, Museveni adopted a policy of reducing inflation while simultaneously increasing production and export earnings. Uganda raised producer prices on export crops, increased the prices of imported petroleum products, and boosted civil service wages. Long periods of forced displacement in northern Uganda have seriously disrupted agricultural productivity in the region, but USAID U.S. (Agency for International Development) reports that recent security improvements have allowed a number of farmers to return home and resume normal cultivation. According to USAID officials in Uganda, the restoration of normal farming practices is essential to the recovery process. Throughout FY2007, USAID contributed significant funds to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to distribute farm equipment and seeds to Ugandan farmers prior to the Spring 2007 planting season. In 2006-2007, food production was better than expected, in part

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<sup>21</sup> <http://kampala.usembassy.gov/>. Northern Uganda Virtual Presence Post - <http://northernuganda.usvpp.gov/>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid p.19-20



due to good weather conditions.<sup>23</sup>

However, recent flooding in the north and east of the country could impact food production in 2008. The industrial sector has also expanded, with real output growth approaching 10% a year. Industry constituted 24.2% of GDP in 2003/2004. The main industries include the processing of coffee, cotton, tea, sugar, tobacco, and edible oils, dairy.

Products, and grain milling as well as brewing. Other ventures include vehicle assembly and the manufacture of textiles and metal products. According to the Economic Intelligence Unit (11/2007): Overall, real GDP growth is forecast to rise gradually, to 6.4% in 2008 and 6.6% in 2009, as the government begins to get to grips with the energy crisis. These figures are below the targets of around 7% set by the government and its development partners as necessary to bring significant improvements to the living standards of most Ugandans, especially given that the population is expected to grow by an annual rate of over 3%.

Obstacles to economic growth remain. Uganda's heavy reliance on coffee exports makes it vulnerable to international commodity price fluctuations and poor weather conditions. Privatization initiatives pose a problem as they are seen by many to be a scramble for previously state-owned property. Another problem plaguing Uganda's economy is corruption. Uganda relies upon international donors for 41% of its national budget. Those donors, in particular Ireland, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, have become increasingly critical of governance issues and a rise in defense spending. The late-June discovery of an oil reserve in the fields of western Uganda much larger than initially estimated has many speculating about the potential implications for Uganda's economy. The oil was discovered in an exploratory mission by oil and gas groups Heritage and Tallow. The oil reserve is located in the Albertine Basin, close to Uganda's border with the Democratic Republic of Cong.<sup>24</sup>

Uganda has about 45,000 kilometers (28,000 mi.), of roads, of which 10,000 (6,213 miles) kilometers are main roads and 35,000 kilometers (21,747 miles) are

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<sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2963.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2963.htm)

<sup>2</sup> <sup>4</sup> Ibid p.22-23

feeder roads. Only 3,000 kilometers (1,864 mi.) are paved, and most roads radiate from Kampala. The country has about 1,350 kilometers (800 mi.) of rail lines, but most of it is not currently in use. A railroad originating at Mombassa on the Indian Ocean connects with Tororo, where it branches westward to Jinja, Kampala, and Kasese and northward to Mbale, Soroti, Lira, Gulu, and Pakwach. Uganda's important road and rail links to Mombasa serve its transport needs and also those of its neighbors--Rwanda, Burundi, and parts of Congo and Sudan. An international airport is at Entebbe on the shore of Lake Victoria, some 32 kilometers (20 mi.) south of Kampala.

#### **4.6 Regionalization and its effectiveness on Democratization in Uganda**

The declining effectiveness of national government is the cause of growth of regionalization. As the territorial nation-state is seen to be less effective in delivering security, stability and prosperity, these goals are increasingly achieved through collaboration with neighbouring and geographically prominent states. Regionalization is a step on the road to globalization. With the close economic integration, each country has an interest in ensuring the appropriate policies are followed in its partner countries. This can be achieved by coordination components relevance national policies within countries a regional context. Throughout the continent, African government are coming together to coordinate components of their policies and virtually all countries are now members of regional organizations.

Raise regional democratic standards. At its essence, the future trajectory of democracy in Africa is a battle of norms. Will democratic reformers be successful in establishing basic democratic principles of openness, accountability, recognition of private space, and equality before the law? Or will a modified version of neopatrimonialism, with its deference to personality-based decision-making, patronage, and state exploitation remain dominant? While these battles are waged in each country individually, the outcomes in one have a direct bearing on expectations in others. Benin's constitutional convention and elections in 1991 changed the parameters of democratic possibility across the continent. ECOWAS's endorsement of Faure Gnassingbe's disputed election in Togo in 2005, similarly, provided a guidepost to leaders wishing to orchestrate hereditary succession outcomes.

External actors can contribute to the spread of democratic norms in Africa by rewarding countries that pursue these reforms while facilitating the exchange of lessons learned around the continent. Regional and sub-regional bodies are important forums for conveying these standards. Through the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), the African Union (AU) has advocated expanded democratic practices and introduced a peer review mechanism (PRM) to assess progress toward these practices. This innovative, indigenous regional accountability strategy has considerable merit and potential. Donor support for NEPAD and the PRM, as requested, could facilitate expanding democratic expectations. Similarly, the AU and sub-regional bodies, ECOWAS, SADCC, and IGADD play vital roles in responding to crises and criticizing actions by members that threaten the interests of the group as a whole. Increased international engagement with these bodies can elevate awareness of how other parts of the world have pursued democratic reforms, enhance the exposure and exchange of ideas within these sub-regions, and boost the capacity of these organizational structures. Strengthening regional associations of journalists, legislators, judges, and businesses is a complementary means by which advances in democratic norms in one country can be shared elsewhere.

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**Chapter-5**

**Conclusion**

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## Chapter - 5

### Conclusions

This study's main focus has been Uganda's transition process towards democracy that is mainly based on the period between 1995 until present by the assistance of the transition theory. The analysis of this study has come to the conclusion that Uganda's democratization process has been progressed and hindered by different factors from both within and outside the country. As it has been brought to knowledge in my analysis that past events in Ugandan history has shaped part of Uganda's current political situation, the analysis has also emphasized on other factors that played a major role in the transition process towards liberal democracy.

Following conclusions have been reached through empirical analysis. The democratization process in Uganda started to develop after the country received its independence in 1962 but never got a fair chance due to problems that took place before and after independence. With colonialism and internal ethnic conflicts, democratization was off to a rocky start. Though it had the necessary institutions in place to make the transition, it was not united and well prepared enough, outside interference by the former colonial British rulers also made it more difficult for Uganda to be totally independent. Requirements for democracy were partly met when it held its first elections and even got its first elected government but failed to endure partly due to the lack of respect towards democratic ideals and weak institutions.

A major obstacle to democratization seen in the early process has been the sign of one-man dictatorship rule that Uganda has faced during several periods. All the rulers claimed to be in favour for democracy in the beginning but refused later to step down from power and have used any means necessary at their disposal to still be in charge. Since Uganda's independence not one single leader has stepped down voluntarily. This study has come to find out that the difficulties of Uganda's efforts to democratize in the earlier period were mainly due to strong one-man leadership, military conflicts ethnical conflicts, outside interference and weak institutions.

The transition theory in this paper has focused on what has probably been one of the main factors in Uganda's democratization process. It has emphasized that two dimensions (independent institutions and political competition) within the transition theory have paved the way for the transition towards democracy that seriously began in the beginning of the 21st century. This study has showed that the constitution has had positive and negative effects in the transition process.

Without the draft of the 1995 constitution, Uganda would have had a difficult time to return to multi party elections because of the NRM no-party system. The 1995 constitution as an independent institution made it possible to separate powers between the executive, legislature and the judiciary. It also allowed and gave the judiciary system increased powers, this independent branch of government even though approved by the president has done its best to be impartial and carry out its necessary duties.

It also further limited the presidential term limit to only two periods before the parliament overturned this decision in 2005. By drawing a new constitution it was no longer possible for the head of state to find loopholes so it was thought. While the judiciary has managed to play its role to a certain point, the legislature has managed to remain weak due to the majority of the ruling party in the Parliament.

The constitution has failed to specifically determine the parliament's roll, this has led to a few set backs such as the decision to overturn presidential term limits. Though the constitution is not complete and holds a few holes, in this study it shows that it provided a way to more fair elections than before in Ugandan history during the country's recent elections. Political competition has had a difficult place in Uganda's history, fair elections have almost been absent since independence. There has been lack of respect for political competition even though elections have been held. During the transition period both elections of 2001 and 2006 have had flaws in terms of equal participation.

The 2001 presidential elections was seen by observers as unfair and violent, not only was the opposition denied the right to organize themselves as a party, they did not have the equal resources at their disposal. Even if the Supreme Court found

the elections unfair, the judges chose to accept the election results anyway. The 2006 elections were the country's first multi-party elections in 26 years. The difference between the 2001 and 2006 elections was that this time political parties were allowed to function, this was a step in the right direction towards democratization.

It was also viewed as the fairest election in Uganda, so far even though it was considered to be unfair due to harassing the opposition and what happened during the pre-elections. The parliament decided to uplift the presidential two-term limit and therefore allow the sitting president to seek for a third term. Even in this election the Supreme Court came to the fact that it was unfair but still chose to accept the results. The influence of the head of state once again caused the election observers to call it unfair. The conclusion is that Uganda still has difficulties sustaining a transition towards democracy due to a powerful head of state.

The study reveals that external forces from outside have been one of the main factors that have caused Uganda to move towards democracy. They have consequently pressured the government since the beginning of this millennium to open up to democracy. One of the reasons Museveni gave to Uganda's return to a multiparty system was because of international pressure. Part of the reason comes from economical reasons the fact that almost half of the government budget is from foreign donors. To not listen to some of their requirements would be a costly mistake that would have negative effects for the country's future.

Museveni and his government's treatment towards the opposition candidate Kizza Besigye before and during this year's election seems to have been the main reason why the international community decided to cut some of the aid funds. Right now Uganda is going through a difficult time international observers have noticed, it has begun to see a negative economy than before and is facing a serious electric crisis which Museveni blames on the cutting of financial aid. The days were he was considered to be Africa's great leader seems to be gone and his relations with the international community are at an all time low.

The study shows that Uganda's democratization process is far from over. Uganda indeed finds its self in a transition process towards democracy since it has

moved over to multiparty politics. The 1995 constitution has served as a catalyst leading to the 2006 elections. It is of importance that Uganda continues to build independent institutions to fight for example injustice, corruption and other factors that make the transition towards democracy more difficult.

The past elections show that there is potential in the democratization process, the observations that the polling day was peaceful and the opposition was allowed to fund and spreading their views show signs of change. Even though they were far from fair the foundation is apparently there. Professor J. Oloka-Onyango states in his paper, The socio-political context of the 2006 elections, that Uganda runs the very serious danger of having a system of multiple parties, but absent any genuine multiparty or pluralism. He further explains that the reasons to return to a multiparty system were wrong. The interest did not come from Museveni but rather from the opposition and the international community, this makes the transition process harder since he was against the idea for so long.

While the UPC and DP have been around since independence, they have lost their structure for the past two decades. The FDC is less than one year old and its leader Kizza Besigye has just begun to build it up through all the turmoil. The only party that has been steady and unchallenged has been the president's own NRM party. For the past 20 years, the Local Councils have dominated grassroots politics in Uganda, while national politics has been dominated by the movement monopoly. It means that since the political parties were banned, the only party with any meaningful and grounded structures is the NRM. Despite the alleged transition, the old movement is still around and behind the local politics like the RDC, LDC and LC1. When the president claims to have 1.5 million officials, he is not referring to the government but to his party.

Unfortunately the government and the NRM party are the same thing by which Onyango means that government officials are expected to carry out party work. The pessimistic aspects towards the future of democratization in Uganda is that Museveni, the country's president for the past 20 years is not going to retire way soon. By the way he has treated the opposition; it is doubtful the opposition is going to survive



during his third term. While the international community has partly affected the transition towards democracy, in my opinion they have also contributed to the difficulties Uganda has experienced in the process. The international community was quick to embrace Museveni and come to his aid when he came to power but failed to pressure him on democracy earlier.

When they came under criticism for being too passive it was already late to and Museveni had gained more control. This kind of foreign aid politics has usually backfired on foreign donors. When a new western friendly regime is installed in the third world, western donors are eager to assist the new regime without hesitating. Then when the new regime decides to go its own way, they are objects for reprisals by the west; this does not affect the higher people in the hierarchy but the less advantaged citizens. The international community needs to put up more strict guidelines from the start before they embrace the new governments.

Final comment is that democratization is not an easy and quick process which is demonstrated in the Ugandan case. However a beginning transition towards democracy does not guarantee that a country is going to become a stable democracy. Besides all these factors that have been highlighted, democracy finally is in the hands of the people. It should be once more noted that even though multiparty elections have taken place the number of voters has declined in elections. This can lead to a democratic deficit similar to what former Soviet countries experienced in the 1990s after the end of communism. It is therefore important that once the transition process has begun, it should continue to be supported not only by the opposition and international community but by the current government itself. That seems not to be occurring with Uganda's current government.

### **5.1 Consolidation of Democracy in Uganda**

Obote era inspired the country with vision and practical measures for the future. The Ugandians are therefore politically aware and capable of imagining alternatives to the present authoritarian rule. They emphasize a high degree of participation in public matters, greater transparency in political decision-making, and demand an understandable explanation of claims that democracy requires a free market economy.

Many Ugandians feel that the participatory structures of traditional society and the grass roots development of the Obote era were destroyed by those promoting a market economy. The development of last two decades may have expanded the space of civil society in the political system, but there are still something lacking in this civil society. Just because of these problems, civil society does not play effective role in democratization process.

This study indicates that civil society has dual and some times contradictory role and its contributions may have both supportive and critical roles in achieving and sustaining democracy. Although Uganda is not having the strong civil society like other East African countries, however, now these organizations are actively pointing out the shortcomings such as corruption, embezzlement, lack of transparency and weak judiciary. On the other hand, there is an obvious discontentment with the government and the president, the too little was done to improve the overall the living standard. On the other hand, the notoriously weak opposition does not offer any convincing alternative. However, despite the shortcomings of Museveni's government, it has over many years guaranteed a level of stability in a country surrounded by fragile states or conflict-ridden neighbours.

## **5.2 Challenges for the future of Uganda**

Substantial improvements are needed to keep Uganda on its democratic path. It requires pursuing the economic diversification. The government and the state institutions need enhanced legitimacy through more transparent and accountable politics, and a real and far reaching reform agenda. The rule of law should be strengthened and the functioning of the judiciary system should be improved. Enhanced human, financial, and technical capacities will be of great importance in this regard, but most important is the formal and de facto independence of the judiciary. The fight against corruption has to be a top priority not only for the government but also for donors' programmes. Enhanced transparency and accountability is needed in all areas to Uganda's political, social and economic life.

The government should allow for an electoral reform process. A more proportional representation and more inclusive politics are necessary. In this context,

an improved system of checks and balances is also needed. Only then, will the state institutions be strengthened. It will therefore be of great importance to build capacity within parliament to counterbalance the massive power of the executive. Also, major improvements are needed with regard to understanding the role and working of the political opposition. There is a need of leadership change as well as the change of current regime, so that the government can show a better political set up and good governance. It can truly help the oppositions and other political parties to feel the reality of multiparty democracy. The political parties should also commit themselves to designating more women to their decision-making bodies, as women activists and women with responsibility in politics may become more aware of their civil rights. There is need for a transition for a veritable multiparty democracy with a strong opposition, especially, with regards to the question of success of president Museveni after the end of his term.

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