

Democracy and Dictatorship in Uganda: A Politics of Dispensation?

by

Sabina Sharan Singh  
MA, Queen's University, 1999  
BA, University of Victoria, 1996

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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Dr. Gregory Blue (Department of History)  
**Outside Member**

## **Abstract**

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Many scholarly and policy evaluations of governance in Uganda have blamed limited commitment to democracy in the country squarely on the shoulders of state leaders. This dissertation considers a broader range of explanations and raises questions about the limited understanding of democracy expressed in the prevailing literature. It does so by considering historical contexts, international and global structures, and the relationship between local political cultures and the contested concept of democracy. Claims about democracy and good governance, it suggests, are used to justify very narrow procedural prescriptions for the domestic state on the basis of a systematic neglect of Uganda's specific political history and the structural contexts in which the Ugandan state can act.

More specifically, this dissertation engages with one of the key controversies in the literature on the politics of development, that concerning the degree to which accounts of democracy favoured by the most powerful states should guide attempts to create democratic institutions elsewhere. It argues that at least some of the factors that are often used to explain the failure of democracy in Uganda can be better explained in terms of two dynamics that have been downplayed in the relevant literature: competition

between different understandings of how democracy should be understood in principle; and the international conditions under which attempts to impose one specific account of democracy - multiparty representation – have marginalized other possibilities. These dynamics have undermined processes that arguably attempt to construct forms of democracy that respond to very specific socio-cultural conditions.

Fundamental disputes about how democracy should be understood are already familiar from the history of democracy in Western societies, where struggles to impose some forms of democracy over others have defined much of the character of modern politics. The importance of the international or global dimension of democratic politics has received less attention, even in relation to Western societies, but is especially significant in relation to Africa's political history and its position in the world. After reviewing the history of struggles over forms of governance in Uganda, this dissertation explores a series of unique open-ended interviews carried out in 2009 with important political actors in Uganda. On this basis, it argues for the ongoing centrality both of the always contested character of democracy and of attempts to impose particular accounts of democracy through internationalised and globalised structures. An appreciation of both dynamics, especially in the historical context that has been downplayed in much of the literature, offers a better scholarly ground on which to evaluate contemporary politics in Uganda than the choice between multiparty systems and dictatorship that remains influential in discussions of the Ugandan case. Such an appreciation is in keeping with important recent attempts to think about the possibilities of democracy in Uganda in postcolonial terms and to resist the forms of neocolonial politics that are examined here as a 'politics of dispensation.'

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## **Dedication**

To my children Joss Mathew Singh Arnott and Cella Mahendra Singh Arnott. Without your brilliance and encouragement this degree would not have been possible.



## Chapter 1: Democracy and Dictatorship in Uganda

Far more than most other places, questions about peace, security, health and economic development on the African continent are firmly embedded in questions of democracy and democratisation. Although by the year 2000 Amartya Sen and others pronounced a positive correlation between indicators of development and democracy, the relationship between democracy and development has not always been seen this way.<sup>1</sup> Throughout much of the modern era of African development, beginning with formal sovereign independence, the question of how to develop the continent economically was considered constrained by an open democratic framework. This caused authors like Samuel Huntington to suggest that “order” must often trump “democracy.”<sup>2</sup> Such authors saw the potential instability of democratic constitutional arrangements as detrimental to long-term development. Now, however, even though poverty and security problems persist and even worsen (the continent is home to most of the world’s “bottom billion”<sup>3</sup>), the possibility of development has been wedded to the concept of democracy.

Democracy, in many current conceptions, is meant to be a system that can help to alleviate all levels of stress. For example, as Sen argued, these systems can avert famines, at least far better than dictatorships, because they can facilitate communication of many levels of the populace. Despite this general support for democracy, looking at specific cases in Africa shows that the creation of democracy is far from simple. This dissertation is specifically concerned with the procedural push towards multiparty democracy in

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<sup>1</sup> Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> S.P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

<sup>3</sup> Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poor Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Uganda. Far from being a simple case of either dictatorship or democracy, Uganda has been a quagmire of both systems throughout its recent history. Uganda has also experimented with procedural alternatives to democracy in novel ways. During the 1980s and 1990s, it challenged the claim that procedures of democracy must be similar or identical to democratic systems in the West.

Most provocatively, Uganda created the ‘no-party’ electoral system, which required candidates to run for political office on ‘individual merit’ alone. Though it no longer has this system in a pure form, Uganda’s political experimentations have highlighted a fundamental importance of democratic procedures throughout the African continent. Many states, including Rwanda and Ghana, have supported a similar no-party model of democracy. Although their systems were often considered *de facto* one-party states, no-party systems are different in theory from their one-party counterparts, and the case of Uganda highlights some of these differences. Uganda is a good example of the contested nature of procedural systems on the African continent.

Uganda further demonstrates the tendency for multiparty political systems to be imposed upon countries through international preferences and donor-country directives. Universal models of multiparty political systems, imposed through various kinds of international conditionality, have tended to lack attention toward contextual and historical factors which can better explain the no-party system and the debate over political procedures. The case of Uganda offers an especially telling demonstration of this tendency.

Democratisation theory has many different strains within the political science literature. Theoretical discussions may often journey as far back as Plato and before.

Topics within the literature range from deliberative and communicative theories to systems and representative theory. This dissertation looks at the specific debate surrounding political parties in both theory and practice. Even more specifically, it considers the political party debate within the development literature framework. In theories of development the imperative of democracy has a very specific history. In many ways, this is a story of how one procedural system, the multiparty system, has come to be taken as the only possible procedural assumption. USAID and other aid agencies have largely equated it with the essence of democracy itself. In political science theory, multiparty systems have similarly sustained a dominant place particularly in recent years.

In Africa, in the 1950s and 1960s and at the beginning of independence, almost all states adopted multiparty systems, with universal suffrage and mass nationalisation programs. For various reasons, instability and violence turned most of those systems into one-party or military states. As those governments began to fall towards instability and military *coups* became as much the norm as the exception, development theorists turned toward understanding the procedures and functions of democracy in countries in the ‘Global South’ more seriously. At the end of the Cold War and in the midst of International Monetary Fund (IMF) restructuring, the good governance turn in development meant that an international agenda for restructuring the domestic state was legitimised.<sup>4</sup> African states were almost demonised as corrupt and wasteful. Much of the blame for the lack of development on the continent was placed at the doorstep of the African state itself. Many options for power-sharing were developed, as were proposals

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<sup>4</sup> Gilbert Khadiagala, “State Collapse and Reconstruction in Uganda” in I. William Zartman, ed., *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, ed. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995).

for how to accommodate distinct minorities within the sovereign democratic framework. The most common perception of Africa's states today is that they are semi-authoritarian, patrimonial or hybrid. As I will further specify, this literature has often focussed on domestic factors affecting democratisation in one specific country but is limited in its attention to specific contexts and international conditions that can impact domestic decision-making.

Therefore, although complaints about democratic deficits are common enough, discussion of the Uganda case has revolved less around questions about what democracy could mean now, under changing historical conditions, than around whether Uganda ought to be called a democracy or not. Specific debates regarding Uganda, which I will look at in some detail, have been reduced to concerns regarding elite leadership and national-level characteristics of the system. The assumption seems to be that by sorting through these national, state level problems, multiparty politics will be able to flourish. As I will elaborate, in this context, the procedural meaning of democracy is crucial. Exactly who gets to decide on this meaning is even more crucial. Political systems can support either the general populace or elite level leadership. Shaping and constructing these systems is an important component of democratisation and indeed of state legitimacy itself.

Uganda has been a place of much political turmoil for the past sixty years. The unimaginable violence of the early independence years still haunts and taints contemporary political developments. The country has had at least three distinct political systems since 1962 and has now transitioned back to the first of those. Many complications have arisen as a result of these political transitions, but the appropriate

form of procedural system itself remains highly contentious. The no-party system that Uganda had in its third phase since independence, from 1986–2005, attempted to address many of the procedural problems experienced in African countries. Understood in historical light and in relation to changing international conditions, the no-party system presents itself in a different light. Although the no-party system is not generally understood or accepted as legitimate by the international donor system that influences Uganda, there is reason to believe that the no-party system may be a desirable procedural alternative to multiparty democracy for countries in Africa such as Uganda.

The numerous ‘successes’ during the period of the no-party system, particularly in health and economic development cast doubt on the standard political literature, which tends to disregard differences between no-party and one-party systems. Since the era of Idi Amin, and then Obote II, Uganda’s indicators of success on the whole have changed toward the better. These positive shifts primarily occurred under President Museveni’s no-party system. Indicators including women’s political advancement, economic development, reduced political violence and democratic constitution building, have been heralded as achievements of this time period.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, about a decade ago, general perspectives on Uganda’s political regime began to switch, and critiques of the political leadership began to emerge. In particular, Aili Tripp, Joshua Rubongoya and Giovanni Carbone, in important books on the country’s political system published in the last few years, have argued that President Museveni in Uganda has solidified his leadership, and

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<sup>5</sup> For example, Aili Tripp, “Women’s Movements, Customary Law, and Land Rights in Africa: The Case of Uganda,” *African Studies Quarterly* (1998), <http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v7/v7i4a1.htm> and Devra C. Moehler, *Distrusting Democrats: Outcomes of Participatory Constitution Making* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008).

in doing so has shifted the country towards a “hybrid” or “semi-authoritarian” regime.<sup>6</sup>

In 2005, Uganda switched its electoral system from a no-party system to a multiparty system through a referendum. At the same time, the parliament voted to lift presidential term limits to allow Museveni to run for a third term. The main authors on Uganda have argued both that the Ugandan people encouraged the shift to multiparty politics and that Museveni is holding on to power by using his office to solidify his position.<sup>7</sup> The evidence to support this view is somewhat contradictory in a way that has stimulated this study into the no-party system, which is simultaneously an enquiry into whether authors such as Aili Tripp, Joshua Rubongoya and Giovanni Carbone are correct in their assessment of President Museveni and the political system in Uganda.<sup>8</sup> These

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<sup>6</sup> Giovanni Carbone, *No-Party Democracy? Ugandan Politics in Comparative Perspective* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008), Aili Mari Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda: Paradoxes of Power in a Hybrid Regime* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010), Joshua B. Rubongoya, *Regime Hegemony in Museveni's Uganda: Pax Musevenica* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> It is not possible to fully engage the question of Northern Uganda in this dissertation and anyone interested in the region will note the absence. The issues raised in this dissertation speak to the overall conditions in the militarization and technological approaches to development in the Gulu region, but they cannot address them in detail. I maintain that the concerns raised in this paper are similar for all areas of the country although the war in the North has been especially problematic. It is not possible to address the details of that conflict for several reasons. The in-depth quagmire of government power and competing authority has wreaked havoc on the region. The fact that South Sudan and Northern Uganda have been in a war-like situation of border control since the Egyptian Empire makes the conflict historic. Museveni asked the International Criminal Court to address the war sustained by Joseph Kony when it first opened in 2003 and they turned him down due to procedural issues. See Mohamed M. El Zeidy, “The Ugandan Government Triggers the First Test of the Complementarity Principle: An Assessment of the First State’s Party Referral to the ICC,” *International Criminal Law Review*, 5 (2005): 83–119. Then for a time the government forces were accused of factionalism because the area was home to Idi Amin and because the army was said to be operating corruptly. On the other hand, the National Resistance Movement (which I will explain later) has had strong electoral support in the North and Museveni responded to accusations of corruption by cleaning up the army which was somewhat effective. Then the army became further embroiled in the war in Congo. That Joseph Kony was on South Sudanese territory meant the Uganda was involved in Sudan’s war also. It did not help when the revered rebel John Garang died in Museveni’s helicopter after visiting him. Now the international community and International Criminal Court have joined Uganda’s fight against Kony and in doing so have legitimated Museveni’s army which while perhaps better than before in the North has not been totally supported by the people. Accusations of the army’s looting the Congo are rampant. So in essence, to really discuss the war in and around Gulu requires, in my view, detailing relationships with at least four governments on the continent, another four or five off the continent and as many international agencies. Furthermore, Gulu district is now home to many NGOs and private actors. The patterns of government I discuss in this paper are relevant to Gulu although there are unique attributes in every region of the country.

three established scholars focus their analysis on the potential for development of a multiparty system while notably omitting consideration of alternative political choices, historical traditions and challenges of multiparty democratisation in Uganda. Furthermore, they neglect to discuss the international dynamics which circumscribe Uganda's political options.

The contested nature of the meaning of democracy is familiar to many societies in the world and has been a defining characteristic of debates about modern politics. However, both the contested nature of multiparty procedures and the significance of the international or global dimensions through which particular democratic procedures are applied to politics in recipient countries have received less attention in the literature. The importance of the international dimensions of Uganda's politics, in for example its political party financing, legal structures and security systems, is a theme that recurs through the following reading of the relevant development literature and then through the study of Uganda's history and finally from the interviews I conducted with key political actors in the country. An historical appreciation of the limited and contested procedural choices in Uganda's politics and consideration of the international conditions which have both nurtured and derailed particular procedural options for democracy is a better scholarly ground on which to evaluate contemporary politics in Uganda than the framing of political problems as simply a domestic account of leadership styles or problems that have been summed up as "semi-authoritarian" and "hybrid" by leading scholars in the field.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda*.

### **Synopsis of the Dissertation: Chapter Overview**

Uganda is a land-locked country on the shores of Lake Victoria and on the Nile River, with a young population of roughly 37 million people. It has been the focus of much development literature in the past, including such classics as David Apter's *The Politics of Modernization*.<sup>10</sup> It has been a country that political scientists and other scholars have focused on in order to understand many complexities in the so-called Global South. Today's politics in Uganda are also redolent of many of the debates regarding political systems on the continent. Informally, this study provides an historical investigation into the no-party system in Uganda and contrasts this with the current multiparty system. Through this reading of history, this dissertation further explores the international dimensions to politics and considers how these have influenced state building and contests over democracy. Even though these influences are often heavily determinate in Uganda's politics, I argue that authors such as Tripp, Rubongoya and Carbone, probably the most cited experts on Uganda, have largely overlooked both the historical and international dimensions of politics there.

In the next chapter, chapter 2, I look at literature surrounding questions and models of no-party and multiparty systems. In order to do that, I investigate some of the developmental and comparative politics literature from the 1950s until now because it is the source for much theorising on democracy in the Global South. Chapter 2 shows that frameworks for democracy and democratisation have been a central conceptual focus throughout the history of development theory. Could poor countries be democratic? Could countries industrialise while having democratic constitutions? On the one hand,

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<sup>10</sup> David Apter, *The Politics of Modernization*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).



economic development was a central focus of postcolonial economies and on the other hand, universal suffrage and freedom had important political weight.

The focus of this development literature has shifted overtime. I trace some debates about the role of the state in development because this is the main origin for how political party development was conceptualised. At the end of the Cold War, with the rise of small state or corporate state theory and global markets, questions of procedural democracy came to the fore in international circles and began to solidify and take shape. I look at these debates because they set the framework for promoting multiparty systems today. I first look at American development literature to show how problems of group-oriented versus individual-oriented politics have been understood, how pluralism and minority accommodation within democratic states has been framed, and how the role of the ‘political party’ fits into these questions. My investigation highlights that no-party systems have had little support or attention in the Western literature but in Africa they have been taken more seriously both in theory and practice. Alternative procedures to multiparty democracy have been largely ignored off the continent. Furthermore, potential problems with multiparty democracy are much less frequently discussed in this literature.

Drawing on Giovanni Sartori in particular, the literature review in chapter 2 looks at specific theory on multiparty democracy and at how it is understood in contemporary scholarship. Many persistent problems in Africa, in terms of elections, political representation and political participation, are elucidated in Sartori’s work.<sup>11</sup> In the 1970s, he introduced scholars to key distinctions within political party systems, such as the difference between parties and factions, and the differences between African authoritarianism and European regimes like Hitler’s Germany. His perspectives have

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<sup>11</sup> Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

important consequences for how we understand democratic development and the differences between party and no-party systems. Various authors looking at electoral politics in Africa have developed Sartori's framework and some have shown that elections on the continent have often been violent and that partisan political representation is often elitist or based on ethnic, religious or other identity-defined politics.<sup>12</sup> This literature regarding political parties in Africa demonstrates the difficulty of implementing Western-style party-systems even when a genuine desire to do so may be present.

The literature review also reveals that in Africa more generally few scholars have problematised the significance of sovereignty or the historical context of state-building on the continent. By contrast, this dissertation attaches considerable importance to both factors. Following scholars such as Claude Ake and Mahmood Mamdani, I stress the need to take a long historical view of the history of Africa's democracies and the many influences on the African state since independence. These authors have argued that an historical overview, though necessary, is often neglected in contemporary literature. Since Africa's history has been distorted by Western interpretations,<sup>13</sup> the development of less deductive and more historical understandings of Africa is a continuous and necessary project. Scholars like Ake and Mamdani have shown how the traditions of democracy across Africa are often difficult to reconcile with Western concepts of centralised systems and political party development. In general, support for alternative procedural approaches to development and democracy are most evident from African scholars who have

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<sup>12</sup> Martin Meredith, *The Fate of Africa: From the Hopes of Freedom to the Heart of Despair: A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*, (London: International African Institute, in association with James Currey, Oxford and Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1999).

considered the impact that historical processes have on current politics.

The *long durée* is also advocated by postcolonial theorists who have highlighted misrepresentations of history as an important basis for misguided policy assumptions and recommendations.<sup>14</sup> Achille Mbembe especially brings this to the forefront of his theories on African politics. Problematising sovereignty and the international influences on the continent, Mbembe helps develop a new approach to understanding the challenges to governance structures and democratisation in Africa. I look at Mbembe's work in some detail at the end of chapter 2 and then again in chapter 5. Mbembe sets the framework for the concept I am calling the 'politics of dispensation,' which emerges from my interviews and from secondary data collected for this dissertation.

During my interviews, every person began by setting the historical context for the no-party system. It was not a system they felt could be understood or analysed without first being aware of the context in which it emerged. Their views support conclusions drawn from my literature review as well, and therefore, a relatively long view of the history of Uganda is taken in this study in order to understand the political transitions and the problems inherent in both multiparty and no-party systems in Uganda today. This is the topic of chapter 3.

Because kingdoms and ethnic groups are and have long been a vibrant aspect of Uganda's political life, this historical chapter begins by tracing these phenomena in the era of colonialism and 'colonial encounters' and then brings the discussion through to 2009. It also presents the history of Uganda by incorporating the role of international

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<sup>14</sup> Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), and Jean-Francois Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009).

governments and agencies on political developments. This is often missing from accounts of the political history of the country. Chapter 3 also explains the no-party system in Uganda and the specific history of its development and implementation, which has not been highlighted in recent literature. Information I have gathered is mostly derived from more historical or sociological studies of political developments during the no-party era. The chapter will also discuss the nature of the political referendums and the multiparty transition in 2005. I will show how, when interpreted historically, the system reveals a different interpretation of Uganda's recent political transitions than interpretations given by Tripp, Rubongoya and Carbone.<sup>15</sup>

Chapter 4 presents the empirical data collected for this study in Uganda. Simply, the field research question that guides this dissertation concerns the relative strengths and weaknesses of the no-party and multiparty systems. This general approach allowed for a range of possible answers to how party systems work in Uganda and steered my research toward a broad contextual view of democratisation. My field work substantiated the claim that to understand the contemporary era in Uganda, it is necessary to be cognizant of the distinct phases of government throughout its history as an independent sovereign nation. As I will further detail in the methods section of this introduction, chapter 4 presents some of what each of the political experts I talked to had to say about the recent transition. I asked them about the strengths and weaknesses of each system, no-party and multiparty.

My interviewees, who had experience in both political systems, spoke at considerable length about their experience. After giving me a sense of the history and

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<sup>15</sup> Carbone, *No-Party Democracy?*; Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda*; Rubongoya, *Regime Hegemony in Museveni's Uganda*.

nature of the no-party system, each of these people discussed the transition to multiparty politics in Uganda in 2005. The interviews reveal different conclusions about the nature of multiparty politics in Uganda than those drawn by Tripp, Rubongoya and Carbone. Specifically, the interviews highlight serious sub-system and procedural complexities with the multiparty system which these authors do not take into consideration in their analyses. Most notably, neither Tripp, Rubongoya nor Carbone mention that the change toward a multiparty system was instigated under pressure from international actors. Rather, they all argue that the system changed in Uganda simply as a consequence of people's desires and organised opposition. My interviews suggest that the multiparty system was introduced under pressure exerted by international donors, and the consequence has been a rushed introduction of new procedures at best.

My interviews presented in chapter 4 also suggest that in the context of international pressures, a lack of state capacity, a lack of ideological development and problems connected with new technology and rampant militarisation, democracy in Uganda has been highly constrained. This is true for both the no-party and multiparty systems. My interviews indicate there were indeed strengths and weaknesses in both systems in Uganda and that the historical and international context of Uganda affected and impacted the quality of democracy as well as the choices available to political representatives and citizens.

In chapter 5, then, I discuss this multi-dimensional context and why it is important in understanding the governance structures in Uganda today. Here I draw on the concepts of "extraversion" and "fractionated sovereignty" developed by Jean-

François Bayart and Achille Mbembe.<sup>16</sup> Then, I develop these concepts further by incorporating key insights noted from my interviews. Specifically, I introduce the concept the politics of dispensation as a response to conditions related to the international nature of politics. The politics of dispensation refers to a condition of politics in which the choices for citizens are heavily embedded in the international nature of the domestic state. I demonstrate the significance of this in Uganda's politics through four key analytical concepts - state capacity, militarisation, technocratic proceduralism and ideological development - which highlight fundamental areas that are influenced by international forces in Uganda and which have shaped resolutions to fundamental problems of governance.

Chapter 5 further develops these key concepts derived from my interviews to show that the politics of international relations and its relationship to domestic state structures has a strong impact on Uganda's capacity to become more or less democratic in terms of governance. Studies that have not highlighted the international dimension are unable to adequately evaluate the relationship of a Ugandan citizen to his or her government. Furthermore, history and social ties beyond the state are very important in many African countries. Through examining the historical developments of political systems in Uganda we can see how this history impacts on politics today.

On the basis of this interpretation of the political space in Uganda as one of international dispensation, I argue that a president in Uganda today is in a significant sense a 'dispenser' of international policy and that the political party is one of the political arms of the international machinery that drives democratisation projects. This is

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<sup>16</sup> Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); and Bayart, *The State in Africa*.

not to say that a president lacks all agency, but the conditions of his/or her governance are heavily based on the influences of international support. As Achille Mbembe has suggested more generally, Uganda is an example of how these new global efforts at democracy-building may actually entrench centralised despotism and perpetuate undemocratic systems of control, even while formally claiming to do the opposite. On the basis of my interviews, I suggest that the transition to multiparty democracy in Uganda in 2005 was a complex illusion of global and domestic political manoeuvring best described by Mbembe as *hallucinatory* politics.

In many ways, the ideas developed in this dissertation, from the simple question about the strengths and weaknesses of the no-party and multiparty systems in Uganda, echo insights formulated by R.B.J. Walker in a much broader context. He has written,

It has not been possible to entirely erase a sense that there has been no clear line between democracy and dictatorship in our experiences with the modern sovereign state, even while the sovereignty of the modern state remains the regulative ambition of societies everywhere, whether already supposedly modern and democratic or still modernizing and thus supposedly more prone to dictatorship.<sup>17</sup>

Walker's formulation follows from his claim that *the system* of sovereign states has often been a more important determinant of political life in the last fifty years than any particular type of domestic sovereign arrangement. The recent turn towards every state assuming democracy, especially in the Global South, is almost paradoxical in this historical and structural context of the global system. Sovereignty and democracy can be both unrelated and related. A democracy occurs somewhere, but sovereignty and the sovereign structure may itself be democratic or undemocratic. The international system, as I think Walker and many other theorists of international relations are suggesting, has

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<sup>17</sup> R.B.J. Walker, *After the Globe Before the World*, (London: Routledge, 2010), 147.

an impact on how these structures of the domestic state are formed internally. Elements of democracy and dictatorship are to be found in almost every country in the world as well as in the state system itself. However, the era of democratisation is upon us and what we find in Uganda is an example of how democratisation frameworks articulating a single universal procedural option across Africa makes Western governments and donor countries at least as responsible for the shape of democracy as the people who may actually vote in elections. This is not a simple donor-client relationship from which either party can withdraw, but an embedded and interrelated system of democratisation that has real consequences for the average citizen. I will look at some of these broader consequences briefly in my conclusion, Chapter 6.

### **Methodology or Approach**

In 2009, I went to Uganda with a series of questions that are reproduced in the Appendix. I wanted to begin to understand some of the claims which countered the prevailing approach to democratisation made by leaders who are often portrayed as authoritarian in scholarship and the international press. Rather than dismiss political leaders such as Kagame in Rwanda and Museveni in Uganda or even Gaddafi in Libya on ideological grounds, I thought we should try to understand what they meant when they defended their anti-party views and political structures. After all, the default choice of authoritarianism if not multipartism is not the only option. Raul Castro in Cuba said recently, for instance, “giving up the principle of one party would simply amount to allowing the party or parties of imperialism on national soil.”<sup>18</sup> Museveni in Uganda

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<sup>18</sup> I do not support human rights abuses by any political regime, however, none of the justifications for no party systems here are framed as denying human rights or democracy and in Uganda’s case the no-party



similarly defended his continuation as leader and support for no-party politics by “anti-imperialism.”<sup>19</sup> In the 1970s, theorists of political systems, particularly Giovanni Sartori and C.B. MacPherson, addressed the legitimacy of no-party systems in general theoretical terms, but these debates have been more or less side-lined by claims about the need to create multiparty systems, at least one day, across the African continent.<sup>20</sup> It has been widely assumed that the choice of no-party state simply reflects a patrimonial African trait or that Africans are somehow unable to share power. This assumption is dubious. I especially suggest that the current literature has not given enough attention and weight to the differences between the one-party and no-party states. This inattention probably results from the relative lack of detailed empirical research.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, in 2009 I journeyed to Uganda to try to understand what political leaders had to say about these systems, in order to understand the reasoning behind competing claims about politics.

Through a series of guided but open-ended interviews with politically active elites, I targeted a specific group of people that could respond to my questions. Having no connections in Uganda and a very limited budget, meeting them was a challenge. My target group, therefore, consisted of politicians and political experts who had experience in both political systems, no-party and multiparty. In this way, each person was able to share their view on the similarities and differences, strengths and weaknesses, based on

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system involved a marked development in pluralism, as we shall see. “Raul Castro defends Cuba’s one-party system,” *BBC News*, January 29, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-16782264>. Although Cuba is obviously not Africa, Cuba’s role in the development of Africa and its defense of African states has been very influential. Gaddafi’s theory can be found in Muammar al-Qaddafi, *The Green Book* (London: Martin, Brian & O’Keeffe, 1976), and “Gadafi: Africa’s King of Kings,” *BBC News*, August 29, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7588033.stm>.

<sup>19</sup> “Uganda Election: Amnesty International violence concern,” *BBC News*, February 11, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12428969>, and “Uganda’s Yoweri Museveni in profile,” *BBC News*, May 12, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12421747> (see voice recorded interview on this site).

<sup>20</sup> Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*.

<sup>21</sup> Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*. The authors produce an extensive criticism of the lack of historical research in African studies in their introduction.

some extensive experience of how the systems operated. Furthermore, each person acted as a kind of control for the data collection because that same person had worked in both systems and had experience in both.

As Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz have written, politicians are an excellent focus for how the democratic space functions. First, they write, a politician represents a constituency. Second, a politician must be a recognized and respected member of the community as it defines itself, whether in terms of identity, ethnicity or religion. Third, a politician must visibly display the “symbolic and material markings” of a community. Finally, the representative must embody the potential and future “becomings” of the community.<sup>22</sup> A political representative ideally has the ear of the community. All of the people I interviewed were in Uganda’s capital city Kampala, although I tried to ensure they represented diverse communities and regions. I also wanted to ensure that I interviewed members of both the majority government and of Uganda’s newer opposition parties. In addition to political representatives, I interviewed one Justice of the Supreme Court, one Political Editor at a major newspaper, who also happens to be one of Uganda’s popular political talk show hosts, and three professors of Political Science. At least one of the professors, and the Justice, had run for political office in the past. These interviews were all possible due to the assistance I received from Stuart Bigarenkya from the Centre for Basic Research in Kampala.<sup>23</sup>

As already stated, the question I was looking to answer was how the multiparty system and no-party systems were similar and different. In comparative perspective two time frames were compared: 1986 -2005, the no-party era; and after the 2005 referendum,

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 53

<sup>23</sup> The Centre for Basic Research, <http://cbr-ug.net/>.

when the multiparty system was adopted until 2009. This is what James Mahoney has described as a “within-case comparison.”<sup>24</sup> My question was derived from claims that Uganda’s leader, Yoweri K. Museveni, was entrenching authoritarianism. Given that Uganda had curbed political violence, increased GDP and improved life expectancy during the no-party decades, it was unclear if or how the quality of leadership was related to the political system.<sup>25</sup> Indicators of development had been improving, and although it seemed that Museveni was hanging on, it was not clear that the multiparty system was the appropriate response, particularly given complaints about “electoralism” throughout the continent.<sup>26</sup>

The timing of my research was important. 2009 was the year between the multiparty referendum in 2005 and the first multiparty election in 2011. Therefore, Ugandans were gearing up to re-shape their politics through these new procedures. It was therefore an opportune time to reflect on both systems before the complete transition was underway. It was a good time to observe new challenges that the Ugandan electorate and experts were facing in trying to operate within a multiparty system and also a good time for them to remember what was positive or negative about their old system before time took the memories away.

The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended. The answers I received, partly displayed in chapter 4, touched extensively on problems identified in the existing

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<sup>24</sup> James Mahoney, “Strategies of Causal Inference in Small-N Analysis,” *Sociological Methods and Research* 28 (2000): 387–424.

<sup>25</sup> Arne Bigsten and Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa, *Is Uganda an Emerging Economy? A Report for the OECD Project Emerging Africa* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2001), 95.

<sup>26</sup> John Mukum Mbaku and Julius Omozuanvbo Ihonvbere, eds., *Multiparty Democracy and Political Change: Constraints to Democratization in Africa* (Burlington: Ashgate, 1998). “Electoralism” refers to the existence of elections without the accompanying and supporting institutions and practices of democracy such as freedom of speech, assembly, secret ballot, etc.

literature. The interviewees did discuss patrimonialism, hegemony, state centralisation and coercion, for example. Yet, it did not always appear that the cause of these problems was necessarily the party-system itself. Some opposition members certainly felt their political freedom to be curtailed under the no-party system, but for others the multiparty system made democracy more difficult to sustain. Indeed, the fact that this new procedural system was being introduced in Uganda seemed to be somewhat difficult to reconcile with the existing academic frameworks on democratisation. Consequently, my interviews contained a second question about where the impetus to change the multiparty system had come from. Although, as the questionnaire in the Appendix shows, I had initially intended to ask each interviewee where they stood on party-systems and how they voted in the 2005 referendum on the ground, I thought it better on the spot to ask where the transition came from generally. Important literature on Uganda, including the studies by Tripp, Rubongoya and Carbone cited above, portrayed domestic pressure as the main catalyst for the shift to multiparty politics. Yet other authors suggested otherwise, and my own interviews supported their views.<sup>27</sup> Although a definitive answer on this subject is not possible, this dissertation suggests that the positions of Tripp, Rubongoya and Carbone are contestable and that both the international and historical political context has a great impact on Uganda's domestic democratic choices. These three recently published authors pay very little attention to these fundamental contextual factors affecting Uganda today.

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<sup>27</sup> Louise Muriaas Ragnhild, "Reintroducing a Local-Level Multiparty System in Uganda: Why Be in Opposition?" *Government and Opposition* 44, no. 1 (2009): 91–112, doi:10.1111/j.1477-7053.2008.01277.x, and Kwasi Wiredu, "Democracy and Consensus in African Traditional Politics: A Plea for a Non-party Polity," *Forum for Intercultural Philosophy* 2 (2000), <http://them.polylog.org/2/fwk-en.htm#s1>.

In chapter 5, I highlight problems within the Ugandan political context identified by the people I interviewed. Though Museveni as a leader has become troubling for many people, the way out - that is, the alternative to his leadership - is by no means self-evident. I will describe this using the concept the politics of dispensation. I highlight four accelerations in the politics of Uganda which deepen and complicate its relationship with the international system and shape its ability to define democracy. The no-party system was, in certain ways, quite well-supported by political actors and people in Uganda, as I will demonstrate, while the transition to multiparty politics today is more complex than is often imagined.<sup>28</sup> The concept of the politics of dispensation, I think, begins to describe how the political space has been shifting and challenging Uganda's politicians and citizens alike. Dispensation speaks to what Achille Mbembe describes as the active "informalisation" of African economies and states. This is not the same as merely privatisation or the austerity measures of the IMF, but it does involve the active erosion or destruction of formal state institutions and of political accountability. Mbembe's work allows us at least to begin to conceptualise the international influences in the political context of Uganda today and explore how they shape its processes of democratisation.

### **International perspectives on domestic politics**

Walker gives us a sense of how the particular conception of governance as multiparty democracy has become universalized through claims about modernity and how we have come to form an international system based on norms that have a long and

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<sup>28</sup> This notion that the people did not really support the change, despite the election results, was a common sentiment in my interviews; more on this toward the end of chapter 2 and in chapter 3. See also, Nelson Kasfir, "No-Party Democracy in Uganda," *Journal of Democracy* (April 1998): 49–63, and Bigsten and Kayizzi-Mugerwa, *Is Uganda an Emerging Economy?*, 95.

contested history in every part of the globe. Trying to merge states and form a structured international system has produced very particular discriminations in order to facilitate universal values.

Many discriminations have been made, over a long period and through massively contested practices, to enable claims about the capacities of modern reason to be able to discriminate universally, even neutrally and peacefully. Many discriminations have been subverted so as to permit modern forms of discrimination to claim the status of neutrality, even universality, the only possible ground for judgment.<sup>29</sup>

In this sense the universal conception of multiparty democracy is a “discrimination” and is a particular expression of “modern” thinking born from a particular view on society emerging from European contests for power. Politically, economically and structurally, however, the system has been and is still contested and the character of the international system matters for democracy in Uganda.

That the most powerful states continue to control the agenda of the United Nations through the Security Council, or that the IMF and World Bank continue to have a weighted voting system that ensures that the most needy nations will have the least say in finance structures of development projects that are approved, or that poor countries do not have the means to contest cases in the WTO,<sup>30</sup> are democratic considerations that shape procedural responses in African populations. International law, particularly in Africa, has proven to be arbitrary and often times *ad hoc*. Courts are set up for all purposes including the exercise of international and local laws, and all seem to bear weight without precedent. International systems can be used to pressure domestic politics in a wide variety of ways. In 2011, the African Union cried “neo-colonialism” when they

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<sup>29</sup> Walker, *After the Globe Before the World*, 97.

<sup>30</sup> Theodore H. Cohn, *Global Political Economy*, (Don Mills: Pearson, 2011).

were refused consultation over the NATO attacks on Libya.<sup>31</sup> All this is to say that a global governance structure has been emerging that applies to African politics in the political, economic, military and legal realms. Although I only highlight some possible aspects of the politics of dispensation, chapter 5 will show that it is difficult to understand domestic relations without the international level, as theorists such as Rubongoya, Tripp and Carbone have done. Perhaps not surprisingly, therefore, not everyone understands today's movements toward democracy the same way. The stakes are very high, and new democracy movements are further preparing the ground for vibrant contests over democracy's meaning.

This moment of celebrating democracy is historical and a result of a particular historical trajectory. Although democracy has been a central concept of political history, it has not been celebrated all over the world nor embedded in powerful international organisations. We can see in political movements in Greece and Egypt, in the Occupy Movement and Idle No More, that expressions of the *demos* to be heard in this global environment are varied but not silent. Walker's account of the basic structural problem here remains relevant:

If there are dangers that the new majority of states, as they seek to reform international society to take account of their own interests, might strain its rules and institutions to breaking point, so are there dangers that the European or Western minority might fail to see that it is only by adjustments to change that the international society they created can remain viable.<sup>32</sup>

This highly contestable and contradictory space of democracy which is global and universal will be explored in this dissertation through the particular case of Uganda. With

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<sup>31</sup> Franz Wild, "African Leaders To Snub Nato Libya Campaign From Dictator's Luxury Resort," *Bloomberg*, June 30, 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-06-30/african-leaders-to-snub-nato-s-libya-campaign-from-qaddafi-s-luxury-resort.html>.

<sup>32</sup> Walker, *After the Globe, Before the World*, 134.

the most powerful countries in the international system straining to exert the authority to extend their version of democracy onto all other states, the global structures of democratisation require increased examination with a specific focus on their broad assumptions and on the structural realities that create deep fissures in our global political system and affect domestic state structures.



## **CHAPTER TWO: Contested Concepts of Political Parties and Democracy in Africa**

Literature on African democratisation has conflicting elements that shape the discourse on multiparty democracy in Uganda today. For the most part, international dimensions of domestic democratic development in Uganda flow through development theory. This chapter addresses core debates in development theory literature over the past fifty years that pertain to democratic structures with a specific focus on Africa. It is roughly divided between literature written about the continent that is highly deductive and party-focussed, and literature written that critiques the idea that democracy in its Western version is applicable to democratic movements on the African continent. We can see from this particular way of dividing the material, that the latter literature has more of an emphasis on the difficulties with multiparty politics than the former. Primarily, literature that came to understanding democracy through the discourse of development, and that theorised about the role of the state in the abstract, forms a core of literature and debates about democracy evolving from this historical trajectory. Furthermore, departing from its Cold War emphasis on large global structures and systems, this group of literature has become highly statist and tends to focus on democracy within one country or nation.

Democratisation literature deriving from development theory, mostly established and expanded in the United States, but building on European conceptions of history and progress elaborated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, has been challenged by a second group of thinkers who are studying people searching to define themselves through political institutions, and who tend to be more contextually and historically grounded. In

the African context especially, they are challenging the new proceduralism of democracy in a variety of ways. It is in this literature, with its focus of recording the details of the practices of multipartism historically within the context of Africa, that we find a very different view from that in American literature. In short, these two very different orientations toward where democracy comes from and what it may be creates a problem for analysis and has caused much of the divergence in democratisation theory.

Examination of this literature leads me to conclude that two theorists, Mahmood Mamdani and Achille Mbembe, are particularly instructive in the current context. Mamdani and Mbembe are able to explain how it is that a country, like Uganda, can have so many conflicting alternatives in developing a democratic structure. In particular, Mbembe is able to contextualise the state in Africa in a more global way. This literature review shows the dearth in attention to historical and international influences on democratisation in Africa, as well as offers some light in terms of theoretical positions that are better placed to view Uganda's challenges today.

### **Development, the State and Democracy**

In the 1950s, the study of development was launched in the United States as a way to understand and manage the emergent states that were rapidly joining the United Nations.<sup>33</sup> Nineteenth century claims about progress and evolution were vigorously institutionalized as the study of development. The basic assumptions around the meaning of this term had become more or less normalised within the societies of the Global North and West that had come to understand themselves as developed and the formal study of

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<sup>33</sup> Gabriel Almond, "A Developmental Approach to Political Systems," *World Politics* 17 (1965): 183–214.

development was turned especially upon the former colonies of the Western states claiming to have achieved this status. The USA, where the production of the study of development was most active, was in the especially privileged position of being able to claim to be relatively free of the colonial heritage of European states while enjoying a broadly admired status as the most powerful and developed of all states.

In this context, as a discipline, Political Science turned from descriptive analysis of government types and historical events towards a process oriented systems analysis that was concerned with predicting and transforming political society. The thrust of American development theory, spearheaded, for instance, by Gabriel Almond, David Apter and Samuel Huntington was how to integrate new states into world economic development. The “functions” of political systems became fundamental to the study of developing countries all over the world mostly in order to understand how to stabilize these countries for the development of a world trading system.<sup>34</sup> This general approach to the study of politics became known as modernisation theory and some scholars attempted to generate a universal theory of development that could satisfy the US policy makers that employed them.<sup>35</sup> Through development, the USA and its partners in the UN Security Council, World Bank and IMF, would be able to guide the emerging world order towards democratic, and perhaps even liberal-democratic statehood.

The systems nature of modernisation theory slowly led to an increased number of debates about the role of democracy in development. Atul Kohli argues that at first modernisation theorists had attempted to separate political and economic functions in a

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Samuel Huntington, “The Goals of Development,” in *Understanding Political Development: An Analytic Study*, eds. Samuel Huntington and Myron Weiner (Boston: Little, Brown, 1987), 3–32. These papers were in large part expressly written for USAID or Congress as noted in the last paragraphs of this essay.

given country in order to isolate the components of development generally.<sup>36</sup> Although the tendency was to understand liberal-democracy as the pinnacle of development, these theorists were reluctant to suggest that the creation of democracy would foster development in economic, political or social terms.<sup>37</sup> In fact, these early thinkers tended to view the problems of democracy as a cultural problem in that they believed democracy was not an ambition to which all societies were suited. Still, it was thought that countries might be pushed towards liberal democracy if they were given the right incentives and institutions.<sup>38</sup> Modernisation theory had essentially been concerned with gross indicators of development, such as GDP and literacy, but these theorists eventually agreed, even within their own camp, that social cultures, the desire for democracy, and the role of political institutions had been neglected in their studies.<sup>39</sup>

The positions of powerful states in the new international structures of governance meant that less powerful countries in the system were immediately affected by such conceptualisations of development. In due course, this largely American understanding of development was challenged by the dependency school. In the later 1950s and 1960s, dependency theory emerged from Central and South America and refined certain ideas of Lenin as well as the views and theories of neocolonialism.<sup>40</sup> These theories suggested that modernisation had underestimated the role of the state elite and the international system

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<sup>36</sup> Atul Kohli, ed., *The State and Development in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 3–21.

<sup>37</sup> Samuel Huntington, “Political Development and Political Decay,” *World Politics* 17 (1965): 386–430.

<sup>38</sup> Myron Weiner, “Political Change: Asia, Africa, and the Middle East,” in *Understanding Political Development: An Analytic Study*, eds. Samuel Huntington and Myron Weiner (Boston: Little, Brown, 1987), 33–64.

<sup>39</sup> Samuel Huntington, “The Goals of Development,” in *Understanding Political Development: An Analytic Study*, eds. Samuel Huntington and Myron Weiner (Boston: Little, Brown, 1987), 3–32.

<sup>40</sup> Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People’s History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2008).

in economic development.<sup>41</sup> Although modernisation theorists had begun to take up structures of the state and its functions in their analysis, dependency theorists suggested that they had not acknowledged that the state was handicapped by forces beyond the local realms. Rather, dependency theorists argued that there was a hierarchy of states in which small and medium-sized states helped the flow of international capital through elite networks. Small states were dependent on big states for markets and economic growth and would be unable to industrialise or modernise given their global position. Therefore, dependency theorists argued that the international system actually caused the underdevelopment of peripheral states and that in these conditions development was not possible. André Gunder-Frank, foremost among dependency theory's foundational members, autobiographically communicates the origins of dependency theory to his studies of Keynesian economics.<sup>42</sup> Internal markets in the third world would have to surpass foreign market dominance if economic development were to occur locally. Attempts to develop policy responses to such conditions often led to strong and even authoritarian statist intervention, in order to provide some protection from the vagaries of the international system.

An important shift in dependency theory came with the work of Brazilian economist and later statesman Enriqu  Cardoso. He argued that despite the inequalities of the international system, states could actually develop using a dependent-development model.<sup>43</sup> Like other *dependencia* authors, he saw that the state could be used as an

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<sup>41</sup> Samuel J. Valenzuela and Arturo Valenzuela, "Modernization and Dependency: Alternative Perspective in the Latin America Underdevelopment," *Comparative Politics* (July 1978): 535–57.

<sup>42</sup> Andr  Gunder-Frank, unofficial autobiography, <http://rrojasdatabank.info/agfrank/underdev.html>.

<sup>43</sup> Enrique Cardoso, "Associated Dependent Development: Theoretical and Practical Implications," in Alfred Stepan, ed., *Authoritarian Brazil* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

instrument to expand economic development and protect local markets. They would not be worker-states as in Marxist or Bolivarian conceptions, but rather the state could be developed to foster industry and shift international markets in favour of domestic systems. Tony Smith furthered Cardoso's line of thought when he explained that both modernisation and dependency theorists had been deterministic and had tended to neglect the role of individual people in development. Instead, he suggested that forms of development differed depending on context and on how people used their own traditions to shape state institutions and their own local opportunities.<sup>44</sup> Peter Evans continued this thinking and broke down industrial sectors in India and Brazil and showed how institutions can indeed transform outcomes for workers and local income development.<sup>45</sup>

Although the authors in both of these early camps on development and democracy were sensitive to the need for political participation, equality, distribution and political freedoms, they disagreed on how to achieve and foster those ideals. In many ways, self-determination and democracy had been neglected in favour of nationalist industrialisation by the dependency school and the development of international trade by the modernisation school. By the mid-1990s, Colin Leys suggested that development theory had "fallen." He was supported by others who suggested an "impasse" in development theory.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, according to Stephen Krasner, the theory of isolated state functions was not well developed by modernisation or dependency theories. He argued instead that the state itself should actually be considered an "actor" and not simply as a

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<sup>44</sup> Tony Smith, "The Underdevelopment of Development Literature: The Case of Dependency Theory," *World Politics*, 31(2)(1979): 247–288.

<sup>45</sup> Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 207–226.

<sup>46</sup> Colin Leys, *The Rise and Fall of Development Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996). Frans Schuurman, *Beyond the Impasse: New Directions in Development Theory* (London: Zed Books, 1993).

pawn in the relations of international capital (dependency) nor as a neutral agent in their dealings with corporations and private actors (modernisation).<sup>47</sup>

These critiques, primarily in the 1990s, suggested that early theories of development had claimed an over-determinant place for international politics and had not gone far enough in understanding how state institutions themselves can shape and transform key conditions of development such as public participation and levels of equality. Despite doomsayers such as Leys, development theory has still flourished and development institutions continue to expand their influence. However, development theory is now often subsumed into discussions of domestic democratic development while macro-concerns about negative conditions within the international system have largely subsided.

In Samuel Huntington's view, a "third wave" of democratisation began in 1974, when the army in Portugal forced a democracy. The significance of this event for Huntington was that it showed that democracy was a goal that the people generally wanted. Huntington argued that after the second wave of democratisation marked by decolonisation, democracies had taken a backwards slide towards military dictatorships in many parts of the Global South. Those "dictatorships of the people," as he called them, were no longer satisfactory to ordinary citizens.<sup>48</sup> This third wave, then, was accompanied by a firm belief that there was no substitute for procedural mechanisms of

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<sup>47</sup> Stephen Krasner, "Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamics," *Comparative Politics*, 16, no. 2, (1984): 223–246.

<sup>48</sup> Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991). To be clear this work explains the concept that democracy moves in waves throughout the globe ebbing and flowing, the first wave in the 1900s with mass enfranchisement, the second with decolonisation and then the third with the Carnation Revolution in Portugal and then the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc and end of the USSR.

democracy, and though they may not be enough to satisfy the conditions for a vibrant and healthy political society, they were essential nonetheless.<sup>49</sup> By 2005, Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino were able to argue that a democracy is a state “that provides its citizens with a high degree of freedom, political equality, and popular control over public policies and policy makers through the legitimate and lawful functioning of stable institutions.”<sup>50</sup> By the turn of the millennium then, it had become widely assumed that not only can nationalism and industrialisation occur under a democracy but it may be essential given demands for influence and equality in political matters. In many cases, such as with Sen, it was argued that democracy was in fact a more expedient and efficient system than it had been considered to be historically. The parameters of the procedural state were set, the vision of democracy in place, and theorists such as Huntington and Diamond and Amartya Sen confirmed the possibility of democracy for every person, and every state in the world.<sup>51</sup>

### **Pluralism and Proceduralism**

There are indeed many procedural forms of democracy and creating a universal model has been an exciting challenge for many people in the social sciences. The problem that has confronted theorists today is the lack of success with democratisation

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<sup>49</sup> Philippe Schmitter and Terri Karl, “What Democracy is ... And What it is Not,” in *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

<sup>50</sup> Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino, “Introduction” in *Assessing the Quality of Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), ix–xlili.

<sup>51</sup> Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).



movements.<sup>52</sup> Although Huntington suggested that democracy moves in waves and that social scientists should avoid being alarmed by the occasional slide into dictatorship and/or revolution that we are witnessing in some places today, others have been less convinced and are rather occupied with understanding the protracted nature of conflict and the persistence of poverty in places like Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia and the Congo.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, ethnic fighting, as in Kashmir, Spain, Iraq and Zimbabwe to name just a few places, continues to raise concerns about the effects and effectiveness of elections or even democratic politics generally.<sup>54</sup> At best, it is difficult to gage whether Huntington was right about his predictions of eventual liberal-secular modernisation in the world and the acceptance of liberal-democracy by every society on the planet.

In 1992, Bhikhu Parekh challenged to the foundations of this literature. He argued that liberal-democracy could not be a universal ideal. Parekh suggested that pairing of liberalism (referring to overall liberal values not economic methods in particular) and democracy into one concept had made democratisation less attractive to many people in the rest of the world. Instead, he argued that democracy should be understood on its own. Liberalism, as a concept based on individualism, private property and free markets, was limiting and foreign to certain cultures, and did not necessarily fit with non-Western societies where these traditions of individualism had not been developed.<sup>55</sup> Parekh's view

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<sup>52</sup> "Current Challenges to Democracy," World Movement for Democracy, January 2008, <http://www.wmd.org/about/current-challenges/current-challenges-democracy>. This is an example of one organisation that argues there is a "backlash" to democracy in many places.

<sup>53</sup> William Reno, *Warlord Politics in African States*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

<sup>54</sup> Cyril I. Obi, "No Choice, but Democracy: Prising the People out of Politics in Africa?," in *Claude Ake Memorial Papers No. 2*, (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University and the Nordic Africa Institute, 2008).

<sup>55</sup> Bhikhu Parekh, "The Cultural Particularity of Liberal Democracy," *Political Studies*, Volume 40, Issue Supplement 1 (August 1992): 160–175. Parekh's work is in large part a derivative of work by Rajni Kothari, for instance, *Politics and People* (Delhi: Apex Press, 1989).

that Western values and systems could not be translated to other cultures is one that was repeated throughout the development literature.<sup>56</sup>

Accommodating minorities within the framework of majoritarian democracy has been another major theme developed by other authors in the literature, particularly because many nations in the world were divided either without consideration of minorities within their borders or in order to ensure balkanization of these countries.<sup>57</sup> Where ethnic minorities have been historically persecuted, the realisation of sustainable universal models of democratic institutions has been an enormous conceptual challenge.<sup>58</sup> Minority accommodation and political pluralism are relevant to the perennial problem of groups versus individuals in political science. Many cultures have refused, even in the modern world, to deliver their culture to the doorstep of liberal modernism. In Canada, Will Kymlicka revamped a strong historical argument that the group did not detract from democracy, and that when members of groups (such as Sikhs wishing to join the Royal Canadian Legion wearing turbans) maintain their cultural heritage at the same time as they join in nationalist organisations such behaviour was not counter to liberal principles but rather indicative of them. Therefore, protecting group rights is a way of establishing and securing the foundations of a vibrant liberal society. Others have argued, however, that this perspective would entrench parochial thinking and destroy the foundations of individualism, forcing people to ascribe to identities that they did not choose to identify with.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Review* No. 30 (Autumn, 1988) 61–88, Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*.

<sup>57</sup> Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A Peoples History of the Third World*.

<sup>58</sup> Parekh, "The Cultural Particularity of Liberal Democracy."

<sup>59</sup> Brian Barry, *Culture and Equality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 292–328.

In the Netherlands, protracted ethnic/religious differentiation had been the source for a novel procedural arrangement known as consociationalism. The system allows for sharing of executive powers and other key institutions in the state. It is a form of mandatory recognition for all large and historic minority groups in one territory.<sup>60</sup> Often it is associated with minority vetoes, grand coalitions and perhaps presidential rotation. Arendt Lijphart, in his recommendations for constitutional development in divided societies, develops his thinking on consociationalism with adding consensus democracy to a range of possibilities, which may include proportional representation systems and vibrant political parties that share executive power. Because Africa as a continent has been politically divided in a way that forestalled ethnic homogeneity in any one state, the system of power-sharing, as consociationalism is often called, has been raised in Kenya and Zimbabwe as a way to avert violence in elections.<sup>61</sup>

As David Apter put it in the 1960s, the fundamental problem in democracies, especially new ones, has been the balance between “equity *or* authority.”<sup>62</sup> In attempting to generate authority, states have to listen to the demands of both individuals and groups and mobilise policy from those demands. Several arrangements for authority can be made, but not all are able to ensure equity. The tendency in less bureaucratic societies, Apter argued, was the maintenance of a monopoly of political power by the majority

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<sup>60</sup> Brendan O’Leary, “Debating Consociational Politics: Normative and Explanatory Arguments,” in *From Power Sharing to Democracy: Post-Conflict Institutions in Ethnically Divided Societies*, ed. Sid Noel (McGill-Queens University Press, 2005), 3–44. Arend Lijphart, *Thinking About Democracy: Power Sharing and Majority Rule in Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>61</sup> Nic Cheeseman and Blessing-Miles Tendi, “Kenya/Zimbabwe: Power sharing for peace: not political change,” *The Africa Report*, September 1, 2010, <http://www.theafricareport.com/News-Analysis/kenyazimbabwe-power-sharing-for-peace-not-political-change.html>.

<sup>62</sup> Apter, *The Politics of Modernization*, 36.

group. In such contexts, the tendency for the “sacred-collective” to entrench itself against the “libertarian-individual” opens a wide ideological divide.<sup>63</sup>

In some contexts, federalism has been advocated as a means to stabilise divided societies. As Reeta C. Tremblay has argued in the context of Afghanistan and the state of Jammu-Kashmir in India, federalism may be more successful than consociationalism because of the latter’s tendency to entrench cultural differences and sequester power-sharing among elites rather than involving broad groups of the populace.<sup>64</sup> Asymmetric federalism, for instance, may include arrangements for non-territorial groups as well as regions and diversify representation at the national and regional levels.<sup>65</sup> This way, the rights of religious groups, women and minorities can be protected theoretically even within a framework of negative individual rights and without a specific geographical representation.

As procedural systems of democracy were being debated in post-Cold War political science, Robert Putnam brought forth a study of Italy and later a theory of “social capital” in which he argues that vibrant democracies are essentially sustained through vibrant civil society organisations.<sup>66</sup> Some argued in response that civil society may in fact deter democratic development,<sup>67</sup> and others, such as Partha Chatterjee, argued that many people in the world either cannot or will not participate in such organisations

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Reeta Chowdhari Tremblay, “Afghanistan: Multicultural Federalism as a Means to Achieve Democracy, Representation, and Stability,” in *From Power Sharing to Democracy: Post-Conflict Institutions in Ethnically Divided Societies*, ed. Sid Noel (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press: 2005), 198–214.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., and Reeta Chowdhari Tremblay, “Kashmir’s Secessionist Movement Resurfaces: Ethnic Identity, Community Competition, and the State,” *Asian Survey*, 49, no. 6 (November/December 2009): 924–950.

<sup>66</sup> Robert Putnam, “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital,” *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (1995): 65–78.

<sup>67</sup> Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, “Civil Society and the Realm of Freedom,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 13, 2000, 1762–1769.

given the nature of their government.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, Putnam had at least reminded scholars that in the absence of supporting social organisations, democracies would be limited. In other words, the procedural systems of democracy would remain silent without democratic voices to fill them.

Participants in the debate about procedures of democracy had to confront immediately the problems of democratising societies that are divided, unequal and laden with unstable boundaries and identities. Having to confront a universalised Western notion of the nation-state and liberal-individualism within a system of sovereign states, did not appeal to every state, group or citizen. The contested nature of democratic procedural choices has shown itself throughout the history of international sovereign states and development theory. Theories of proceduralism have evolved to suggest that constitutional arrangements may be shifted or adapted in order to accommodate the needs of diverse places, yet the limits on these possibilities are contained within some specific notions of what a democracy must entail and what traditions of governance must be respected in their design. Specific historical political traditions of an area are not generally factored into these new approaches as they attempt to develop universal templates of democracy with a limited procedural toolbox.

### **Political Parties**

In the debate over procedural systems that can generate, sustain and consolidate democracy, political parties have been a central institution under consideration. A thin

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<sup>68</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

sheaf of literature on no-party systems also takes up this question. It is not difficult to pin the crux of political party literature on one theorist, Giovanni Sartori, whose comprehensive 1976 book *Parties and Party Systems* is still consistently referenced as the source of knowledge on the nature of political parties.<sup>69</sup> Sartori's book gives a taxonomy of systems in the world and focuses on very precise underpinnings of party systems. Many of his categories are important, but I would like to highlight a few that are crucial given the centrality of his theories even today and their relevance to visions of political party development throughout the world. Furthermore, the prescribed role of the political party in democracy-building has become so integral to development policy that it warrants a careful examination here.

By the time the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were launched in 2000, the Western literature on democracy essentially expressed one procedural option for countries everywhere, multiparty democracy. In the context of Uganda in particular and Africa in general, as we shall see, this evoked a heated political choice, but among Western development specialists it appears to have had no doubters. USAID, Canada's International Development Agency,<sup>70</sup> the OECD with Sweden as a leading donor,<sup>71</sup> international think-tank IDEA,<sup>72</sup> Finnish Development Assistance,<sup>73</sup> the British and Irish

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<sup>69</sup> Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*, and for a contemporary reference see Rubongoya, *Regime Hegemony in Museveni's Uganda*, and Susan Botha, "South Africa's Party System," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 8, no. 2 (1996), 209–225.

<sup>70</sup> *USAID Political Party Assistance Policy* (Washington: USAID, 2003),

[http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/pdaby359.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pdaby359.pdf),

[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/democracy\\_and\\_governance/publications/pdfs/pnacr216.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/pdfs/pnacr216.pdf)

*CIDA Estimates 2007–2008, Part III: Report on Plans and Priorities* (Gatineau: CIDA, 2007), 11,

<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rpp/2007-2008/cida-acdi/cida-acdi-eng.pdf>.

<sup>71</sup> OECD, [http://www.oecd.org/LongAbstract/0,3425,en\\_33873108\\_33844437\\_36219521\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00&&en-USS\\_01DBC.html](http://www.oecd.org/LongAbstract/0,3425,en_33873108_33844437_36219521_1_1_1_1,00&&en-USS_01DBC.html).

<sup>72</sup> OECD, 16, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/governancedevelopment/For%20WEB%20Accountability%20and%20democratic%20governance%20Orientations%20and%20principles%20for%20development.pdf>.

<sup>73</sup> In Finland see <http://www.demofinland.org/index.php/en/>.

development agencies, and the World Movement for Democracy<sup>74</sup> among others, all claimed that despite some difficulties among donors, for instance in supporting undemocratic parties or unduly influencing elections, the vehicle of the political party unquestionably strengthens the development of democracy. The policy push towards multiparty systems among donor institutions is a direct response to the perception of poor governance and leadership in Africa and other places as well. It arrives in the wake of IMF-fostered structural adjustment in the 1980s and 90s, when all aid-receiving governments were considered too large and lacking in effective governance. Good governance, that is, became tied to political party development in the policies of the most predominant development sponsors.

Huntington's third wave of democratisation, if one accepts this notion, has been accompanied by increased technical assistance and supervision of governance structures in Africa by the international development policy community. Multiparty systems have been a centre-point of this community's designs. For instance, the USAID Democracy Assistance Program seeks to strengthen political parties in all democracies in the following ways:

- 1) the establishment and organizational development of viable, competing democratic parties at national, regional, and local levels;
- 2) the provision of organized electoral choices to citizens through political parties;
- 3) the democratic governance of societies facilitated by political parties in government and opposition.<sup>75</sup>

USAID defended this particular program through an analysis using Gabriel Almond's structural-functional approaches of political systems.<sup>76</sup> "Interest aggregation" and

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<sup>74</sup> "Current Challenges to Democracy," World Movement for Democracy, (January 2008), <http://www.wmd.org/about/current-challenges/current-challenges-democracy>.

<sup>75</sup> *USAID Political Party Assistance Policy* (Washington: USAID, 1999), <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2496/200sbd.pdf>.

“socialisation” are considered key primary functions of parties and electoral competition, and choice is considered a key outcome. In this sense, parties are the primary conduit for establishing political competition, which is the key indicator of democracy according to mainstream policy bodies that tend to follow the line of USAID.

According to USAID, political parties are “primary political actors responsible for legitimizing and sustaining the laws and norms that govern political participation and competition.”<sup>77</sup> Although USAID reports show that funding for political party support is only a small portion of the USAID democratisation budget, they emphasise that while the USA cannot be shown to unduly influence particular parties, party platforms are heavily scrutinised by Congress and are a cornerstone of USAID’s democracy programs.<sup>78</sup>

Theoretically, therefore, budgets are guided by considerations of neutrality in supervising the development of political parties and not by those parties’ importance to US foreign policy plans.

Sartori’s work complicates this simplistic notion of developing political parties considerably. To start with, he sees voting systems, electoral systems and party systems as distinct but mutually relational entities. For instance, a political system is said to be multiparty when the electorate is conditioned or coerced into voting along patterns established by significant political players.<sup>79</sup> The party system is a *system* insofar as the parties remain relational, and, as Sartori suggests, not too distant ideologically.<sup>80</sup> This

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<sup>76</sup> Gabriel Almond, “A Developmental Approach to Political Systems,” *World Politics* 17, no. 2 (1965): 183–214 and J.C. Johari, *Comparative Politics* (New Delhi: Sterling Publications, 2008).

<sup>77</sup> *USAID Political Party Assistance Policy*.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>79</sup> Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*.

<sup>80</sup> Giovanni Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited* (New Jersey: Chatham House Publishers, Inc., 1987).



point is crucial. Parties that operate in one system but that are drastically different in ideology change political competition into political violence in many cases.

It is by this reading of the role of the political party in conditioning the electorate for participation and representation that makes parties integral to a variety of forms of voting systems. In fact, reading the experts suggests that in many ways the analytical separation between parties, the voting system, and the electoral system generally, has been difficult because of their mutually reinforcing and changing effects. Duverger,<sup>81</sup> for instance, was able to suggest in 1976 that the first-past-the-post voting system had a direct effect on the number of parties. Others were able to show that in parliamentary electoral systems, for instance, the number of parties has a direct effect on the way the parliament or president are able to function.<sup>82</sup> At first glance, therefore, it appears that advocating simply for political parties underestimates the nature of these relationships.

As Robert Dahl suggested in 1982, a democracy is best understood at its sub-system levels because the ability of the *demos* generally to understand and participate in agenda definition and direction occurs not only through central government directives, but even more importantly from below the national and elite-party levels.<sup>83</sup> Participation and representation are a necessary part of any inclusive political system. Party systems are embraced because they are said to be the most effective means to establish political competition and channel the mass participation of people into their governments.<sup>84</sup> This participation and broad representation, furthermore, generates the ability for a system to

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<sup>81</sup> Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* (London: Methuen, 1976).

<sup>82</sup> Juan J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000).

<sup>83</sup> Robert Dahl, *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy: Autonomy vs. Control* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

<sup>84</sup> *USAID Political Party Assistance Policy*.

keep all of its institutions in check through the constant watch of a diverse group of people, the *demos*. The Sartorian view allows us to capture the play between representation and participation, which together embody the dynamics of the internal workings of a political system, no matter the particular executive structure or constitutional arrangement. This relationship is what Sartori called political “channelling” or the “*political canalisation of society*.”<sup>85</sup>

Within the party-system literature, participation and representation are mutually enforcing concepts. As Sartori suggested, a political party is not a social movement or lobby group, precisely because its aim is to generate representation within the government. Therefore, party members more or less expect their views to be represented or they can seek political office themselves. This is represented in Sartori’s category of “sub-system autonomy.”<sup>86</sup> Political parties are known to be both highly centralised and decentralised. To capture the ability of a party to be inclusive both in participation and representation, we have to look below the executive and into each sub-system where representation is promised.

David Apter’s 1966 study had already captured the importance of the party as an institution that manages and conditions the relations of the government and society. He argued, therefore, that the political party was at the very least one of the most important “intervening variables” in a democracy. He had also noted, however, that parties can simultaneously be “dependent variables” in the sense that they are able to capture and define the ability of the population to participate and be represented in government.<sup>87</sup> In that sense, parties are both representations of democracy and indicators of political

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<sup>85</sup> Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*, 37.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>87</sup> Apter, *The Politics of Modernization*.

divisions. Like Dahl and Sartori's conditions of sub-system autonomy, Apter's theory placed the focus of the concept of democracy below the national level and stressed the sub-units and their inner workings instead.

Besides sub-system autonomy, two other concepts developed by Sartori as crucial to political parties and democratic systems are relevant to concerns around development and democratisation. First is the difference between a political party and a "faction." The crucial element in identifying a political party is related to the function and role it plays in a political society. According to Sartori, parties and factions historically and etymologically are seen as concentric circles. Parties are often made up of factions, the latter defined as interest-groups that are by and large self-regarding. By contrast, parties must be able to aggregate factions into their fold, which are then regarded merely as a part of the competitive political system. A party is only a part of the system as a whole, and ideally all parties are loyal to the same system of governance. If a particular faction takes over a political party, Sartori argues, then the body ceases to be a party.<sup>88</sup>

Sartori was deeply concerned with refining definitions. He did this with the qualification, however, that precise definitions and typologies cannot be everything in a theory and should not be taken as static. Parties are part of a whole political system, they cannot represent a particular image of a certain group but they must claim to represent the whole in a better way than another part(y). Giving birth to such ideas as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, this distinction was very important to theorists of the post-1688 British parliaments like Bolingbroke and Burke, and they are currently very potent distinctions to be used in multicultural and divided societies like those in Africa.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*, 92.

<sup>89</sup> B.W. Hill, ed., *Edmond Burke on Government, Politics and Society* (London: Fontana, 1975).

The third of Sartori's concepts that is relevant to this study is the ideological positioning of parties. Related to factions, party-systems are considered central to nation-building because they are meant to generate alternatives for governing and shaping political possibilities within a broad and participatory ideological framework. When dissecting the existence and effects of political parties, Sartori argues that we need to be able to understand and establish the crucial ideological element within the parties. He calls a party "hegemonic" if it tends towards the centralisation of opinion and agenda setting, and if it is unable to generate a wide enough ideological basis to encompass as much of the population as possible. Without a broad ideological base, the party ceases to act as "part of the whole" and tends to reinforce the dominance of factions at the helm of the system.<sup>90</sup>

No-party systems are rarely discussed in the literature on democracy since 1945 and especially not in North America. Yet, because Sartori examines a vast number of types of democracy, he dedicates a main section of *Parties and Party Systems* to the discussion of no-party democracy. Here he substantiates a claim that no-party systems might be democratic by focusing on their degree of sub-system autonomy. He distinguishes them from one-party states arguing that no-party systems are "pre-party

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<sup>90</sup> Sartori discusses how ideologies within parties are fundamental in "perceiving and conceiving politics." pg. 121. In terms of 'hegemonic parties', Sartori does not invoke any Gramscian notion as far as I am aware. He argues that parties become what they are by means of their process of obtaining power. He distinguishes party-systems as either 'monopartism' or 'polypartism.' These two categories he describes as set in the *values* of societies. He quotes Apter who reported that most modernizing nations in the 1970s were dominated by either many political parties or by one-dominant party. In Sartori's view this was better described by the categories "monopartism" and "polypartism" because these categories could capture the level of support by the population as a whole and they showed whether or not the choices related to political parties were either unsupported or undeveloped within the country in question. Under monopartism, a system where the main political parties lack sub-system autonomy and the society generally lacks value for political pluralism, Sartori calls parties "dominant authoritarian" or "dominant non-authoritarian" (following Gabriel Almond's 1965 categories). Hegemonic systems occur if under a dominant-authoritarian system the main contenders merge. If the main contenders do not merge, but rather take power by force, Sartori calls this a "one-party dictatorship." The difference in hegemony or non-hegemony is the way in which power is taken by political parties in a non-pluralistic (monopartist) society. Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*, 229–231.

states” that can most likely exist only in non-modern or “traditional” societies. The notion of “one-party pluralism,” he argued, is wishful thinking.<sup>91</sup> The “one-party state,” according to Sartori, came last in the history of the Western world because the “one-party state is an advanced stage of organisational differentiation and specialisation.”<sup>92</sup>

Turning, however, to what Sartori called “the African Labyrinth” he gave a slightly different argument. In part, stemming from his conception that African societies in 1976 were “pre-modern,” Sartori undertook a deep investigation into questions posed by comparative politics about the difference between, for instance “parties of representation” and “parties of solidarity” as David Apter defined them.<sup>93</sup> Essentially, Sartori argues that these various conceptions of parties did not apply to Africa’s situation in general, particularly because “parties of solidarity” were often more conjecture than reality. “When political scientists began their landings on African soil, they had given little thought as to when, and under what conditions, political groups become parties, and subsequently parties of different kinds.”<sup>94</sup> Nation-building in Africa revealed different concerns that political science had not captured in part because analysts mistook indicators such as the “number of parties” to be “an indicator of the structural consolidation of the party system.”<sup>95</sup>

Sartori argued in 1976 that in Africa governments were so varied that any attempt to categorise them using Western concepts of pluralism and standard party-systems

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<sup>91</sup> Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*, 36.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

would amount to “conceptual stretching.”<sup>96</sup> The result, he argued, was a boomerang effect. In the case of pluralism, for example,

We have simply *stretched* the category into an empty universal, and indeed into a mere word whose conceptual substance is watered down to a point of meaninglessness. In its all-inclusive global application pluralism compounds the everythingness of nothingness.<sup>97</sup>

Maintaining this line in subsequent work he wrote, “[d]emocracy still has its foes; but it is now best evaded in its own name and by means of its own name.”<sup>98</sup> Specifically in Africa, Sartori suggested that the polities were so “fluid” that Western understandings of the mechanisms at work there were often inappropriate, leading to gross generalisations and comparisons in regards to understanding when a political party exists or does not, and when typologies are appropriately used in terms of the difference between what he called “formed” and “fluid” polities.<sup>99</sup> Sartori was not himself a defender of the concept of a “no-party democracy,” yet still, his theory did shape the categories for understanding party formation and the importance particularly of three areas, sub-system autonomy, ideological coherence (party-platform for a contemporary term) and the difference between parties and factions.

No-party democracies are not often defended in the Western literature. In 2008, Robert Goodin wrote that no-party democracies cannot generate the rationale and normative foundations to constitute authoritative law.<sup>100</sup> In other words, they cannot satisfy the condition of generating cohesive yet competing ideologies. In a similar vein,

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>98</sup> Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited*.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 217.

<sup>100</sup> Robert Goodin, *Innovating Democracy: Democratic Theory and Practice After the Deliberative Turn* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 206.

Aili Tripp suggests in her analysis of Uganda that no-party states are mechanisms for patronage and therefore increase corruption and centralisation.<sup>101</sup>

A possible pre-cursor perhaps to Bhikhu Parekh's philosophy on liberal-democracy discussed in the previous section was C.B. MacPherson who detailed some of the problems inherent in conceptualising democratic institutions in so-called underdeveloped societies as "competitive liberal-democracy."<sup>102</sup> He argued that neither the liberal nor the Marxist, class-based variations of democracy were relevant in many of these areas. For him, the "real-world of democracy" was a world with three variants. In MacPherson's account of the Western world, the liberal market-based polity, relatively distinct political parties are a central component and citizens essentially purchase political goods from among competing options. The Marxist view, on the other hand, required a class-based and labour-centred foundation to justify its historical-structural analysis of class-struggle, which many "peasant" or pre-modern economies in the world were not able to generate without elitist Bolshevik-style tactics that were often violent. In the third world, Macpherson argued that conceptions of political parties as either markets or interest-based associations were irrelevant as there were "too few political goods to offer."<sup>103</sup> In his view, the "one-party state" was one obvious choice for these governments that were in the midst of nation-building and that were commonly focussed on regaining and maintaining pre-colonial practices which were often consensus based. "Their traditional culture was generally not attuned to competition. They generally saw no intrinsic value in wealth-getting and gave no respect to the motive of individual gain.

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<sup>101</sup> Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda*.

<sup>102</sup> C.B. MacPherson, *The Real World Of Democracy* (Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1965).

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

Equality and community, equality within a community, were traditionally rated more highly than individual freedom.”<sup>104</sup>

It seems that Macpherson’s conception of the “one-party state” at the time was more akin to a consensus democracy. He argued strongly during his career that democracies are contextual and not easily translated from one country to another. Like Parekh, he argued that liberalism and its related system, multiparty democracy, were not universals. His account of the differences between state-systems was advanced in hopes of pushing theorists towards understanding at least three-variances in democratic conceptions, Western, Communist and, I suppose, “traditional.”

For both Sartori and Macpherson, the political party is equated with a culture of ‘modernity.’ The political party is both a condition of modern (Western) polities and an expression of individualistic interest and participation. Both theorists espoused the idea that party systems are not straightforwardly translatable across societies and that the roots of any multiparty democracy are particular and complex. Attempting to replicate these systems in societies with other political systems was far more complex than simply a matter of changing constitutions. Notably, both theorists accepted at base the differences between parts of the world and drew clear distinction between political systems in the ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ areas.

### **Perspectives on Democracy and Political Parties in Uganda and Africa**

Africanist theories of political parties are generally inconsistent and portray a wide variety of evidence. The next two sections of this chapter will show that this literature, which shares a focus on the possibilities for democracy in Africa specifically,

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 24.



shows a significant divide in terms of what democratisation might mean. The nature of the African state itself is heavily contested as are the procedures for democracy for moving forward. The movement to generate political parties across Africa has been a central focus of western states and many domestic groups precisely because parties are said by some to provide a nexus for relations between the people and the state. As David Apter suggested, they can be read as a vital aspect of a modernising civil society.<sup>105</sup> Parties are often regarded as the vehicle for the politics of government. Yet, the tendency for elite party structures to subsume or seek to subsume popular politics is a lesson not lost in the theoretical debates.

Despite the conceptions today of authoritarianism in Africa, at independence countries on the continent, by and large, chose (or more accurately tried to choose) to model their new states after the British and French systems which were developed during colonial times. Most states adopted systems with universal suffrage, constitutional democracy and competitive political parties.<sup>106</sup> Many leaders across Africa turned toward self-government supposedly with the democratically derived support of the people. Yet, universal suffrage and popular self-government were difficult to equate with conceptions of the state as republican or of freedom as an individualistic condition. They were indeed seriously challenged by the need to create a truly domestic state where none had existed before. The trappings of democracy were in play but institutions to support this politics were not. In this internationalised context of democratic state building and political freedom, one concern in the 1950s and 1960s that still plagues almost every African state,

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<sup>105</sup> Apter, *The Politics of Modernization*, 143. For instance, Apter argued that political parties act as a leveller in society through non-discriminatory mass membership, while the ‘vanguard’ of the party often act as “social reformers” that have “sought to legitmate their roles by making modernity into an ideology.”

<sup>106</sup> Carlene Edie, *Politics in Africa: A New Beginning?* (Belmont: Wadsworth Thomson Learning, 2003), 63.

is this: how can political parties, mass parties, competitive and national parties be formed and survive in conditions of violence, mass scarcity, balkanisation, neo-imperialism and corruption, to name a few of the troubles?

Often, the analysis of African governance has been distinguished by using the neo-Weberian category neo-patrimonial, which is taken up by several contemporary scholars.<sup>107</sup> Neo-patrimonial theory posits a form of centralised governance based on a relationship between the people and leadership that is sustained on patronage, gift-giving and personal ties. Because of this, private and public spheres lack separation and politics becomes personalised through the leaders. Max Weber argued in *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* that a particular form of economic ethics enabled Protestants to accumulate private wealth. Patrimonial cultures, he argued, were steeped in mysticism, fatalism and/or superstition, but Protestantism's emphasis on individual salvation and individual work coincided with and shaped the ethics of capitalism as part of effecting a "systematic rational reordering of moral life as a whole."<sup>108</sup>

The rise in intra-state warfare after the Cold War, and international acknowledgement of the Rwandan genocide in 1994, have elicited responses from across disciplines and perspectives. Re-shaping the basic framework of Weber's neo-patrimonial position, various Western scholars have been suggesting that there is a lack of democracy in independent Africa and even posit many reasons (cultural, religious, economic, historical) why Africans allegedly have a propensity towards dictatorship and centralised

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<sup>107</sup> Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*, William Reno, *Warlord Politics in African States* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda*.

<sup>108</sup> Max Weber, *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 126.

“clientelistic” governance.<sup>109</sup> Under these conditions, Political Science has elaborated new categories of “war-lordism,”<sup>110</sup> “hybridism,”<sup>111</sup> “hegemonic,”<sup>112</sup> “authoritarian-multiparty,”<sup>113</sup> and “quasi-democratic,”<sup>114</sup> attempting to theorise how politics functions in a state of competitive authority. These terms suggest not only that government structures are unstable in Africa but also that governments compete with other hierarchies of power such as churches and clans. The contested nature of the state itself and international conceptions of democracy that abounded in order to avert situations such as that in Rwanda, became almost irreconcilable. What systems could be created that would be legitimate to all people given a lack of belief in the benign authority of state power?

The work of influential American political scientists provides some telling examples of the contested nature of basic democratic concepts.<sup>115</sup> Despite quantifying and projecting their understanding of democracy upon African polities through development, this group of theorists often simultaneously admit democracy has no definition let alone objective form. Their analyses are steeped in statistics about Africa and other places that are designed to merge with models of democracy that have been generated using Western experiences of democratic development. David Collier and Paul Levitsky have called the elasticity of contemporary democratic theory “democracy with

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<sup>109</sup> Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*.

<sup>110</sup> William Reno, *Warlord Politics in African States*.

<sup>111</sup> Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda*.

<sup>112</sup> Rubongoya, *Regime Hegemony in Museveni's Uganda*.

<sup>113</sup> Larry Diamond, “Thinking about Hybrid Regimes: Elections Without Democracy,” *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002).

<sup>114</sup> Susan Dicklitch, *The Elusive Promise of NGOs in Africa: Lessons from Uganda* (London: MacMillan, 1998).

<sup>115</sup> American Political Science Association. Press Release. <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/senate-delivers-a-devastating-blow-to-the-integrity-of-the-scientific-process-at-the-national-science-foundation-199221111.html>.

adjectives.”<sup>116</sup> For example, Larry Diamond finds that “in proportional terms, authoritarian forms of multi-party electoral competition have increased during the third wave much more rapidly than democratic ones.”<sup>117</sup> In other words, authoritarianism and democracy are often blended in the given analytical frameworks making the push toward multiparty electoral competition a matter of teasing out authoritarian elements of the domestic system while charging up electoral competition.

Most often, literature regarding democracy in Africa considers democratic transitions against the standards of liberal-democracy and multipartism. That is, authors push what Mahmood Mamdani has called “democracy by analogy.”<sup>118</sup> For instance, theorists such as Aili Tripp and Larry Diamond in the United States, Richard Sandbrook in Canada,<sup>119</sup> and Paul Collier in England, have argued that where democracy is failing there needs to be a focus on how to move countries from authoritarian regimes towards democratic ones. According to this strain of theorising established procedures of democracy will pave the way for the emergence of liberal democracy even if they need to be fostered in a framework of “security” at first.<sup>120</sup> The broad assumptions of these theorists are that the sovereign state is the site of the theory and practice of democracy and that the “modernity” of individual citizenship rights and capitalist trade will eventually work for everybody.

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<sup>116</sup>David Collier and Steven Levitsky, “Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research,” *World Politics* 49 (1997): 430–51.

<sup>117</sup> Larry Diamond, “Thinking about Hybrid Regimes.” Juan Linz calls this the difference between “hard-liner” multiparty regimes and “soft-liner” authoritarian ones. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*.

<sup>118</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

<sup>119</sup> Richard Sandbrook, *Closing the Circle: Democratization and Development in Africa* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2001), 313. Sandbrook writes of neopatrimonialism, “The practices of personal rule clearly erode bureaucratic norms and practices, thereby introducing massive waste and indiscipline into the public sector.”

<sup>120</sup> Paul Collier, *War, Guns, Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009).

The President of the African Studies Association in the United States and Uganda specialist, Aili Tripp, following Larry Diamond, depicts “hybrid” or “semi-authoritarian” regimes across Africa as characterized by violence and patronage coupled with ineffective democratic institutions and frustration among civil society groups.<sup>121</sup> She argues that broad-based coalition governments in Africa eventually fall toward authoritarianism because “the need to hold onto power trumps other considerations.”<sup>122</sup> Leaders such as Yoweri Museveni in Uganda eventually fall toward clientelistic politics even if the rhetoric of the government is nationalistic. “One of the main constraints on democratization is the divisive politicization of ethnicity, religion, caste and other identities.”<sup>123</sup> Although she writes that the term hybrid is a challenge to “linear and teleological march of democratization,”<sup>124</sup> there is in reality only two options presented in her most recent book and her analysis clearly positions the notion of hybridity between the concepts of authoritarianism and liberal democracy.<sup>125</sup>

In this context, entrenched leaders, such as Uganda’s President, Yoweri Museveni, embody a central and important procedural debate about appropriate length of term in office and tendencies toward dictatorship.<sup>126</sup> As Giovanni Carbone argues, the problem of moving a hybrid regime into a multiparty democracy is difficult because of the strength of the executive office. At what point does liberator turn to dictator? How long is too long to rule, particularly during phases of crucial political developments? In Juan Linz’s terms, when does a “hard-liner” regime become a “soft-liner” regime and

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<sup>121</sup> Tripp, *Museveni’s Uganda*, 3.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 25

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 3

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 12

<sup>126</sup> Carbone, *No-Party Democracy?* .

turn toward democracy?<sup>127</sup> Both Carbone and Joshua Rubongoya have written that Uganda's political system should be considered a "hegemonic party system," which, they argue, follows Sartori's analysis based on "one party dominance."<sup>128</sup> I will evaluate these claims throughout this dissertation, but for now we can see that none of these authors take up the claims of the no-party system in Uganda and only understand it as a guise for neopatrimonial or one-party dominance.

International dimensions of democratic development in Uganda are related both to theoretical objectives discussed here as a systemic analogy to Western history and culture and direct donor-client interactions. Aili Tripp highlights the deep problems involved in so-called hybrid aspects of Uganda's system and its relationship to foreign aid.

The stronger the economy has grown, the more it has helped illegitimate, undemocratic aspects of the system. Donors have reinforced this pattern by focusing on economic and social policy while ignoring the political and patronage dimensions of policy as well as human rights abuses.<sup>129</sup>

Authoritarianism and democracy are indeed complicated by contextual factors and by problems of institutionalised legitimacy and capacity in Africa. Neo-patrimonial theory, however, works against a dynamic view of the many levels of African politics in and beyond the state and it does not address a range of alternative institutions available to Africans.<sup>130</sup> In other words, neo-patrimonial theory does not complicate the nature of sovereignty in African states and remains a highly domestic analysis despite the development of African nations within a global framework stemming from colonialism and moving into the United Nations system. The lens of development theory largely

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<sup>127</sup> Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*.

<sup>128</sup> Carbone, *No-Party Democracy?*, 105.

<sup>129</sup> Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda*, 194.

<sup>130</sup> Bayart, *The State in Africa*.

erases the historical development of states in Africa and the way in which the lack of control over territories of the state has impacted state development. Neo-patrimonialism further suggests that there are clear lines of patronage in African states and clear lines of loyalty within populations which is someone suspect when unravelling the complicated social ties in a country such as Uganda. Although Tripp recognises that donor countries have been boosting undemocratic elements of Uganda's system, she presents this as a passive relationship in which donors could be more vigilant. The history of Uganda's international political relationships discussed in the next chapter should give some pause to reconsider the nature of donor relations raised by Aili Tripp and the limits of neo-patrimonial theory.

Although discussions of order versus democracy in the developing world revolved around discussion of military states in the early days of development theory, Paul Collier, has revitalised some of this discourse in his book *Votes, Guns and Violence*. In it he suggests that the "policy position" of the development community has bred inconsistency and allowed donors to be perceived as fickle and "neo-colonial."<sup>131</sup> He suggests a consistent "governance position" for donor institutions, which would move African societies toward an accountable relationship between domestic governments and inhabitants of the state they govern. Collier argues that the struggle is ultimately domestic for these countries (he writes that development aid has only been a small portion of global exchange and only actually began since the end of the Cold War because all aid

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<sup>131</sup> Paul Collier, "Assisting Africa to Achieve Decisive Change," Centre for the Study of African Economies, Department of Economic, Oxford University, 2006, <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~econpco/research/pdfs/AssistingAfricatoAchieveDecisiveChange.pdf>.

was strategic before then) and that the matrix of “security, aid and trade” will in time right the path of wayward states.<sup>132</sup>

Other theories of African governance in general terms have provided slightly more nuanced views of governance regimes on the continent. These theories highlight problems in translating Western systems into Africa’s context. One such position comes from Patrick Chabal, Chair in African Politics and History at King’s College, London. He argues that the question of the legitimacy of politicians in Africa is intimately connected with the concept of political representation. Social scientists, he argues, must tackle the complexities of a “blend” between so-called traditional and modern aspects of government, and not focus solely on how to change neo-patrimonialism or drive it out.<sup>133</sup> He suggests that traditional and modern elements co-exist in African societies and traditional and modern forms of statehood reinforce and shape each other. With the introduction of political parties after the period of one-party dominance experienced in various places in the 1980s, Chabal argues that states across the continent “re-traditionalized,” rather than “modernized.” “Political competition between rival politicians brought about increasingly frantic resort to patrimonial largesse as a way of securing votes.”<sup>134</sup> In several areas of political life, Chabal shows that notions of good governance on the ground in Africa did not necessarily equate with modernisation. Loyalties toward community did not reorient themselves toward “modern” constituencies or toward the central institutions of government. Chabal’s work helps scholars to get out

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<sup>132</sup> Paul Collier Munk Debate on Foreign Aid. “Be it Resolved the Foreign Aid Does More Harm Than Good,” 2009, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBzMmggxFso&feature=watch\\_response](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBzMmggxFso&feature=watch_response).

<sup>133</sup> Patrick Chabal, *The Politics of Suffering and Smiling* (London: Zed Books, 2009).

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.



of the simplistic track of ‘authoritarianism or multiparty democracy’ offered by many experts.

Chabal notes that many scholars have argued as Paul Collier does, that protracted warfare in Africa today is due to the failure of government structures to accommodate the many domestic forces that challenge incorporation into a central state, as for example in Somalia, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Such analyses often resort to the convenient category of ‘ethnic warfare.’ Chabal has argued that these patterns continue precisely because of the need to build domestic state structures upon the existing realities and beliefs of the people if these structures are to be sustainable.<sup>135</sup> For instance, Chabal and his co-author Jean-Pascal Daloz suggest in their 1999 book, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*, that Africa cannot be understood without including the extent to which gift-giving, reciprocity and supernatural obligations are present in daily life, and without grasping how these areas often merge into the public political space or are at least as integral to society at large. This line of argument reflects the fact that liberal theories prioritising rational bureaucrats cannot capture how Africa actually works on the ground and then cannot understand how to facilitate a politics of reconciliation and cooperation between communities in Africa.<sup>136</sup>

International dimensions of the problems with democratisation in Africa have been traced back before formal sovereign independence. Uganda-expert Nelson Kasfir focuses on the notable link in African politics generally between ethnicity and political participation. Kasfir reminds us of the colonial ethnic legacies that allowed political party development in two main cases, Uganda and Ghana, to be linked directly with ethnicity.

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*.

He writes, “ethnicity becomes politically important when people are mobilized on the basis of objective characteristics such as culture, language, territory and the like.”<sup>137</sup>

Political parties were developed in order to modernise political participation in post-independence Africa, but in fact they were primarily based on a conscious connection to an ethnic group. Largely, Kasfir argues this was because of the racial ideological basis that pervaded the colonial structure of the state. Much of people’s relation to ethnicity was to ensure that they had some form of security after the evacuation of British power rather than as some real expression of cultural or political connection. This led Kasfir to develop an argument that ethnicity is a fierce and fluid force in African politics that has been tied to political parties formed as an expression of tribal identity. “The fluidity of ethnic political action makes it highly unpredictable and thus frightening to African governments. Ethnicity is felt to be more the tidal wave of African politics than the tidal ebb and flow.”<sup>138</sup> In this context, Kasfir suggests that “departicipation” is a strategy used by African leaders as a form of “political engineering available to African leaders who are intent on reducing the uncertainties they face and redirecting the political energies of the people they rule.”<sup>139</sup>

Kasfir’s analysis suggests that neo-patrimonial theory has several drawbacks as a concept to express political relations in Africa. As he suggests, ethnic lineage in and of itself is a very fluid concept that does not capture large political majorities. He expresses ethnic relations almost as an attempt to subsume cultures into the western nation-state framework. Lineage lines would then always be strategic and not different in Africa than anywhere else. The lineage lines of ethnic groups in Africa have never equated with

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<sup>137</sup> Nelson Kasfir, “No-Party Democracy in Uganda,” *Journal of Democracy* 9, no. 2 (April 1998), 48.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

nation-states in the modern era suggesting at the very least that significant patronage lines would cross borders. The public/private crossovers inherent in neopatrimonialist conceptions of African politics are not without interest or merit, but how this occurs and which public and private spaces are significant in this blending has not been considered or made clear for the most part.

Literature that has focused on the working of multiparty politics in Africa reveals the highly unstable and contested nature of the system. Matthias Basedau's analysis in "Do Party Systems Matter for Democracy? A Comparative Study of 28 Sub-Saharan Countries,"<sup>140</sup> employs Sartori's typology but highlights interesting and understudied categories. Basedau does this by looking at levels of fragmentation developed by Sartori in 1976 and then comparing systems that are "non- democratic" multiparty and "democratic" multiparty. His results suggest that where a system has a high degree of fragmentation, the multiparty system is undesirable and likely to lead to violence. Michael Cowen and Liisa Laakso similarly found that typically the ruling party had control over elections and that multiparty democracy, in particular, was perhaps nothing more than elite democracy or elective dictatorship: "Elite democracy, it can be argued, has been foisted upon reluctant non-elective dictatorships by economically dominant classes, international donors and financial institutions."<sup>141</sup>

Looking at just a few theories shows that concepts of governance and multiparty

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<sup>140</sup> Matthias Basedau, "Do Party Systems Matter for Democracy? A Comparative Study of 28 Sub-Saharan Countries," in *Votes, Money and Violence: Political Parties and Elections in Sub-Saharan Africa*, eds. Matthias Basedau, Gero Erdman and Andreas Mehler (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Durban: University of Kwazulu-Natal Press, 2007).

<sup>141</sup> Michael Cowen and Liisa Laakso, *Multi-Party Elections in Africa* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 24. It may be interesting to note here that some European studies have suggested that political parties are in "decline" all over the world. See Phillip Schmitter, "The Changing Politics of Organised Interests," *West European Politics* 31:1-2, (2008), 195-210.

democracy have more complexity in Africa and Uganda than in broader Western debates. Typologies of governance derived from Western experiences of government, however, such as those from Tripp, Carbone and Rubongoya, Collier and Sandbrook, are still often regarded as a template for what African democracies will eventually become. The resultant blending of concepts has generated a proliferation of new “adjectives” to define democracy in Africa, but they have not necessarily captured all of the problems with good governance or with shifting donor-support towards democratic state-building. Chabal and Daloz, Nelson, Basedau, Cowen and Laasko, showed that a close reading of particular societies across the continent reveals the troubles with multiparty democracy, and perhaps even liberal democracy, in many situations.

### **The African Debate: Critical Perspectives**

Few contemporary Africanist authors question the spectrum between multiparty democracy and dictatorship. Caught in this troubled typology, African states, no matter their kleptocratic tendencies, have been stalemated with a dual option that has not yielded a stable state on either end. The number of political parties in a country has become one of the principle defining factors of democratic display in Africa but with distinctly mixed results. Very little literature has been developed around alternatives to this classification and to multiparty systems. This section will survey some of the main critics of multiparty systems in Africa, authors who have examined claims that democratic systems in Africa have produced divisive factions, destructive competition, centralisation through alienating forms of representation and vulnerability to international manipulation.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Samuel Massey, *No-Party Parliamentary Democracy: The Ideal Political System for a New Age* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2005); and Yoweri Museveni, *What is Africa's Problem* (Minneapolis:

These authors help provide the basis of the rest of the dissertation and for the interviews with leaders in Uganda who had experience working in both the no-party and multiparty systems and who were familiar with these historical debates.

Kwasi Wiredu writes that the majoritarianism inherent in the multiparty system has been intractable given the diverse ethnic make-up of every one of Africa's nations. We can see in his view that one of the principle problems of imposing centralised political systems in Africa has been the instability that they can cause. He says,

One of the most persistent causes of political instability in Africa derives from the fact that, in ever so many contemporary African states, certain ethnic groups have found themselves in the minority both numerically and politically. Under a system of majoritarian democracy this means that, even with all the safeguards, they will consistently find themselves outside the corridors of power. The frustrations and disaffections, with their disruptive consequences for the polity, should not have caught anybody by surprise.<sup>143</sup>

Mbaku and Ihonvere argue that contradictions in multiparty governance in Africa have led people to vote less even as their countries' constitutions become more liberal and democratic.<sup>144</sup> Tribal loyalties have become stronger in recent decades at the same time as individual human rights have increasingly been promulgated.<sup>145</sup> Mbaku and Ihonvere captured this situation in their 1998 volume, which surveyed a number of multiparty democracies in Africa,

[T]he opposition programs have not made it possible for popular constituencies and communities to struggle for *democratization* – the steady and systematic empowerment of the people, their organizations and communities in a manner which empowers them to dictate and determine the content and context of politics.<sup>146</sup>

This rather comprehensive study showed that multiparty elections in the previous two

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University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

<sup>143</sup> Wiredu, "Democracy and Consensus in African Traditional Politics."

<sup>144</sup> Mbaku and Ihonvere, eds., *Multiparty Democracy and Political Change*.

<sup>145</sup> William Reno, *Warlord Politics in African States*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

<sup>146</sup> Mbaku and Ihonvere, eds., *Multiparty Democracy and Political Change*, 2.

decades of African history succeeded in effecting one regime change but not many thereafter.<sup>147</sup> An interesting correlation made in the same 1998 study is that an increase in voter apathy accompanied multiparty democracy in these same decades, thereby making the idea of elections as a source of legitimacy questionable.

Given these types of problems with multiparty politics on the continent, it is not surprising that alternative systems of democracy have been explored. “While accepting that democracy is a universal value that is good for everyone, it should be recognized that local conditions and realities have a place in modifying and particularising the universal,” writes Cyril Obi.<sup>148</sup> The suggestion he makes in his lecture is that a particular form of democracy has been foisted on African states without regard to their specific needs. “How African people can use the openings offered by multipartyism to take power over the democratic project will constitute the greatest challenge of the 21st century.”<sup>149</sup> Positions challenging the *status quo* like this have set the stage for the debate over multiparty democracy on the continent and showcase the international trends that affect African nations as they attempt to make political systems of their own.

The international nature of Africa’s political choices in theory and practice has a long history. The charismatic and the traditional domains that categorise Africa in the Weberian view fall between tradition and modernity and by default definition between dictatorship and democracy. These categories are useful to separate different forms of leadership and authority in some societies, but they do not highlight the situation in Africa on at least two major fronts. The first, is that the expression of democracy that has

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Obi, “No Choice, but Democracy: Prising the People out of Politics in Africa?”

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

emerged since independence has been complicated by the presentation of only one model of Western democracy and modernisation to the African electorate, and therefore, the rather simplistic impression of governance in most states as somewhere between dictatorship or multiparty democracy. Rather pessimistically, Nigerian Claude Ake reminded us there is a real grassroots democracy across Africa but it is not something purposefully created by or even associated with the state. “If one is a Leninist and believes that “the worse, the better,” one may indeed welcome their [International Financial Institutions] tenacity in pursuit of adjustments, for the escalation of political repression associated with it has helped to spawn the democracy movement in Africa.”<sup>150</sup> Second, the separation of these categories remains containerised in the context of the domestic state. The intense international context and obligations enforced on Africa through the process of gaining independence, and that in many ways influence the fact of either development or non-development today, are absent from these binary conceptions of political possibilities. Not only are the actual borders of African governments difficult to maintain (the territorial aspect of sovereignty), domestic conditions for politics are also heavily influenced by external politics.

The governance dichotomies of late colonialism play into the trouble identified by Ugandan theorist Mahmood Mamdani. African countries, he argues, are affected by the persistence of “colonial constitutions.” Mamdani’s analysis stands out among theories on African governance because he dissects the nature of the African state concretely within its colonial context and begins to tease out the institutional difficulties that have plagued

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<sup>150</sup>Claude Ake quoted in Samuel Huntington, “The Goals of Development.” *Understanding Political Development: An Analytic Study*, eds. Samuel Huntington and Myron Weiner (Boston: Little, Brown, 1987).

countries since independence, rather than focussing on objective indicators or subjective cultures as other theories are wont to do.

Mamdani argues that decentralisation in Africa often fuels a system of indirect rule by local leaders who can abuse their unelected positions. Although there is a play between democracy and dictatorship, modernity and tradition, it is heavily influenced by residue from the colonial constitutional framework. In order to control local leaders, countries have often centralised control through the executive at the national level. Yet, because local areas of governance across the continent were often highly undemocratic and centralised in the position of the chief during colonialism (created mostly by French and English governors who needed rural associates) national leaders could control and coordinate with leaders in these areas rather than having to win the hearts and minds of the people.<sup>151</sup> The fusion of the local *and* national level “tyrants,” as Mamdani calls them, also meant that decentralisation as a tactic for enhancing democratisation was often unsuccessful.

Through kingdoms and chiefdoms set up and/or rationalised by the colonial powers for control of rural areas and clarity in the system, Mahmood Mamdani argues the so-called Native Authority system even created tribes and chiefs where none had existed. The colonists were thus able to manage the variety of African peoples in such a system cheaply and still give at least the illusion that some degree of native governance remained in place. Today, many similar colonial-era structures remain intact according to Mamdani who argues that most countries in Africa have “de-racialized but not democratized” in the post-colonial era.<sup>152</sup> In many instances, where chiefs were given governance powers in

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<sup>151</sup> Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*.



postcolonial Africa, Mamdani argues their rule remained an artificial creation left from colonial times, and though the Native Authority is no longer called such its effects are often similar to what they were when the British and French ruled.

In *Citizen and Subject*, Mamdani writes about the Resistance Council System (RCS) which was institutionalised in Uganda's constitution after Yoweri Museveni's 1986 *coup*.<sup>153</sup> Uganda, he explains, was one of the only countries to seriously disengage the colonial structures of power by means of the RCS. Mamdani argues that in Uganda, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) did address some of the structural imbalances and impediments left over from colonial rule particularly in two ways. First, by abolishing the position of the chiefs within government and second by devising a pact between migrants for controlling the state and broadening the basis for domestic government.<sup>154</sup> Mamdani argues that colonial state structures must be transcended. Shifting leadership at the top or centralising public participation through nationalist political parties does not necessarily do much to engage the daily needs of people nor their political views. Although Uganda did not succeed in Mamdani's view, it moved forward by attempting to address the colonial basis of governance. Because local-level leaders continue to have great influence in people's lives for a variety of reasons, both legal and social, the possibility of destabilising the central state through decentralisation still remains, as does the possibility of creating factions instead of political parties that seek the good of the nation as a whole.

The philosophical source of much of the rejection of multiparty systems in Africa lies in cultural heritage, that is, with "communitarians," to use Mamdani's terms. For this

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<sup>153</sup> A complete account of this history is the subject of the next chapter.

<sup>154</sup> Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*. 201 and 208.

reason, the debate about multiparty competition has been heated. Several theorists have argued that traditional societies in pre-colonial Africa were anarchic, yet orderly; they achieved their goals without submitting to majoritarian rules but by always seeking consensus.<sup>155</sup> Mamdani argues similarly in his account of the Zulu in the south of the continent, maintaining that Western attempts to centralise tribes were thwarted by the inability and unwillingness of groups to accept a central head with wide-ranging powers. The concept of centralised power, in other words, was antithetical to these groups' conceptions of good governance.<sup>156</sup> Immaculate Kizza has said in her study that democratisation projects often assume that Africa has no history of democracy and that Africans can be taught to become democratic. She argues that significant studies, for instance by Ali Mazuri and L.J. Teffo, trace the history of African consensus-style democracy and show clearly that the alleged lack of democratic traditions is a misconception.<sup>157</sup> Teffo calls the precolonial system "communocracy" a form of governance rooted in the communal pan-African philosophy known as *Ubuntu*.<sup>158</sup> Kizza holds that "efforts to implement democracy in African nation-states should include serious consideration of the role of indigenous democratic systems and institutions in those nations' political systems." She argues that this type of authentic connection to governance structures is the only basis for democratic legitimacy.<sup>159</sup>

The historical dimensions of the study of African governance discussed by Wiredu, Kizza, Teffo and Mamdani are important to understanding the contemporary

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<sup>155</sup> Wiredu, "Democracy and Consensus in African Traditional Politics."

<sup>156</sup> Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

<sup>157</sup> Immaculate Kizza, "Africa's Indigenous Democracies: The Baganda of Uganda," in *The Secret History of Democracy*, eds. Benjamin Isakhan and Stephen Stockwell (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2011).

<sup>158</sup> Nonceba Nolundi Mabovula, "The erosion of African communal values: a reappraisal of the African Ubuntu philosophy," *Inkanyiso, Journal of Human and Social Science* 3, no. 1 (2011).

<sup>159</sup> Kizza, "Africa's Indigenous Democracies."

situation in Uganda and Africa generally and they reveal the impacts of international thinking and policy related to domestic governments. In many ways, particular systems of governance in Africa could be read as a response to the international system.

International pressures have strained and shaped the conditions of democracy. For instance, reporter Geoffrey York has been mapping the disdain for American-led democratisation movements particularly in the southern part of the continent. When President Obama was first elected, many Africans had great hope that his presidency would change the nature of foreign influence over Africa. York reports that “Obama fever” has faded with his continuing support of some of the worst political regimes on the continent. York quotes Patrick Bond, a political economist at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, “If you are a sub-regional power, help hunt al-Qaeda or have substantial oil reserves, you may commit horrendous crimes and still get the prized White House photo op.”<sup>160</sup> Such general feelings of distrust toward systems of Western governance have ebbed and flowed throughout Africa’s history of engaging with democracy.

Since the beginning of Africa’s era of independence after WWII, the system of multiparty democracy has been problematic. The lines have already been drawn by many of Africa’s leaders. Multiparty politics is elite and not necessarily representative. It is not, in other words the polar opposite of dictatorship.<sup>161</sup> This is deeply complicated by the nature and context of the state in Africa itself. In many ways, the eloquent words of J.F. Bayart speak to the overall weakness of governance in Africa since the 1950s: “In short,

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<sup>160</sup> Geoffrey York, “Africans’ Obama fever fades to disappointment,” *The Globe and Mail*, October 24, 2012.

<sup>161</sup> This was one of Libya’s chief crusades since its inception for example. Al-Qaddafi, *The Green Book*, and “Gadaffi: Africa’s King of Kings,” *BBC News*, August 29, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7588033.stm>.

it could be said that the most distinctive contribution of Africa to the history of humanity has in fact been the civilised art of living in a reasonably peaceful way without a state.”<sup>162</sup> Bayart’s quotation reminds us that binary categories of democracy and dictatorship, modern and traditional, which most contemporary theory leans on, speak only to the relatively undeveloped nature of the state, if it appears in any form that is not steeped in rational-legal authority. Arturo Escobar argued in 2004 that the state itself may rightfully be contested by many countries as a means to escape “imperial globality.”<sup>163</sup>

As Mamdani and Partha Chatterjee well describe, champions of universal democracy since the 1990s have focused, on non-governmental organizations and civil society in order to create a check on the power of authoritarian regimes, reduce corruption, and generate the basis for special-interest groups that can guard the interests of their own sections of society. Given a pluralist conception of the state this makes perfect sense. A state cannot be a state without citizens who fight for their own rights.<sup>164</sup> Mamdani and Chatterjee both reject the assumption, however, because the conception of the state in Uganda (and India in Chatterjee’s case) is not valid in the eyes of some or even most citizens. Therefore, to join competitive civil society would jeopardise their own versions of community or contravene their own aversion to the state given its potential for violence and isolation. The state in Africa was often turned against portions of the people in the early years of postcolonial multiparty democracy, as I will describe in the next chapter, and therefore scepticism about involvement with the state is wide-

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<sup>162</sup> Bayart, *The State in Africa*, 35.

<sup>163</sup> Arturo Escobar, “Beyond the Third World: Imperial Globality, Global Conditionality and the Anti-globalisation Social Movements,” *Third World Quarterly* 25, no.1 (2004), 207–230.

<sup>164</sup> Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*.

spread. There cannot be a vibrant, fully articulated civil society in the absence of authentic political authority.

The fact that democratisation in Africa has been carried out as a development strategy, and that democratisation policies are often tied to economic development programs, such as Structural Adjustment Programs and austerity measures called for by the IMF, has had a major impact on the capacity of African states to govern. Through structural adjustment, for example, Uganda lost much of its civil service, and widespread unemployment has remained a constant problem ever since.<sup>165</sup> In 1992, Uganda's total outstanding debt was 102 per cent of GDP.<sup>166</sup> Writing recently for the Franz Fanon blog, Mamdani notes what is happening in Uganda today is not exceptional in a global sense. He says that the country's obstacles to democracy and development are related to conceptions of the market and international influence. The methodological separation of the state and market is not really accepted by social activists in Uganda, he says, who rather see the state and market as a locked-in "diabolical pact."<sup>167</sup> By creating the impression of a separation between market and society, African communities are in danger of ensuring that the market will not be socialised by domestic values and will continue to marginalise people rather than include them. This may lead, he argues, to a "Europe-type crisis" where democracy is sidelined by market integration and state

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<sup>165</sup> Gilbert Khadiagala, "State Collapse and Reconstruction in Uganda," in I. William Zartman, ed., *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995).

<sup>166</sup> Alma Lucía Romero-Barrutieta, Aleš Bulír and José Daniel Rodríguez-Delgado, "The Dynamic Implications of Debt Relief for Low-Income Countries," IMF Working Paper (2011), <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2011/wp11157.pdf>.

<sup>167</sup> Mamdani Mahmood, "The state, private sector and market failures: A response to Prof. Joseph Stiglitz Pambazuka," *Pambazuka News* 595, July 28, 2012, <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/83875>.

structures are used to ensure this dissociation between markets and people's continue. He writes:

Is the lesson of the Structural Adjustment era simply that we need strong states to defend ourselves from the Washington Consensus? Or does the experience of the SAP era also raise a second question: what happens if developing countries are forced to push open their markets before they have stable, democratic institutions to protect their citizens? Should we be surprised that the result is something worse than crony capitalism, worse than private corruption, whereby those in the state use their positions to privatize social resources and stifle societal opposition?<sup>168</sup>

As far as Uganda's tasks ahead he writes, "[t]he challenge is not how the state can regulate the market, but how society can regulate both the state and the market."<sup>169</sup>

Therefore, questions of democracy are inextricably tied to international markets.

Mamdani gives readers at least two very important additions to the literature.

First, he reminds us that analysis of the state in Africa must be contextual. While there are comparisons to made on the continent they cannot be fruitfully made simply "by analogy" to what pertains to states in Europe or North America. African political orders are unique and were heavily influenced by the logic of colonialism and decolonisation. Second, the state in Africa is embedded in a global economy, and this has deep implications for the prospects of democracy and the possibility of action for individuals within the state.

Most recent in the trends of Africanist literature is a general focus on agency and agent-centred theory. Previous treatments of factors in development and democracy eventually came under fierce criticism from champions of postcolonial, poststructural and subaltern studies, all of whom recognized by the 1980s that analysis of the world system, no matter how it was categorised in theory, lacked an adequate sense of agency. The last

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

section of this literature review takes up the thoughts of one such theorist Achille Mbembe, because his approach is unique and speaks to some of the troubling conditions in democratisation that other theorists have not.

Mbembe regards the literature on Africa today as lacking an understanding of how African people actually experience power on a daily basis. He rejects Weberian theorising because it has not engaged the kind of power that he finds evident in his primary case study of Cameroon and type of politics it engenders. He has written that Cameroon and other countries in Africa are in a state of “zombification” which is enabled by what Mbembe calls “private indirect government.” In essence, “private indirect government” reduces the practices of all state and non-state actors into political immobility or “zombifies” them.<sup>170</sup> Through analysing the privatisation of sovereignty and forms of coercion in Africa generally, Mbembe shows how the conditions for democracy in Africa differ from systems of power that we know here in the modern west. He argues that Africa is generating new systems in new conditions.<sup>171</sup>

Mbembe engages an alternative vein of thinking using French post-structuralism that has deep roots in Africa.<sup>172</sup> He refuses to be trapped in an “Afro-pessimism,” which sees the peoples and states facing huge and insurmountable hurdles to development. Neither does he fall for an “Afro-optimism” that suggests that the traditions of Africa will save it from the vagaries of the global forces of capitalism. Following the roots of poststructuralism and cultural imperialism, he tries to push toward a new space which would enable Africa to reject the political “mimicry” that Frantz Fanon castigated in

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<sup>170</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, in particular Chapter 2.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 79–94.

<sup>172</sup> Pal Ahluwalia, *Out of Africa: Post-structuralism's Colonial Roots* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

some measure in 1961.<sup>173</sup> Mbembe's analysis takes into consideration many possible levels of meaning associated with structures of democratisation but also incorporates the informal aspects of governance in Africa which are gaining increasing attention and weight in the literature. Mbembe suggests his case study is applicable to other parts of the African continent and I want to argue that it is applicable to Uganda.

Mbembe situates the form of "private indirect government" he sees in Cameroon within a macro-level notion of governance that is rich with chauvinism and "hallucinatory" powers, which he calls "*commandement*." In his analysis, *commandement* is exemplified by the imaginary and fantastical rule of the dictator over the people. Mbembe argues that the general context of African governance has been misunderstood because the relations of power and the conditions for political legitimacy have been at best an enigma. Power acts as a fetish. It is hallucinatory. The source of power for many leaders in Africa, he argues, is not really based on the material resources stressed by both the modernisation and dependency theories of development studies. The source of power is partly in negotiating privatisation, and for the most part the strengths and weakness of African governments are tied up in international contracts and the successful propagandizing of the domestic citizens. Some theorists have suggested that the debt/aid relationship is a form of *rentier* economy that has stalled Africa's development.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Just to get a sense of the weight of Fanon's thoughts and arguments let me quote from what has been known as "the third world manifesto:" "We must leave our dreams and abandon our old beliefs and friendships of the time before life began. Let us waste no time in sterile litanies and nauseating mimicry. Leave this Europe where they are never done talking of Man, yet murder men everywhere they find them, at the corner of every one of their own streets, in all the corners of the globe. For centuries they have stifled almost the whole of humanity in the name of a so-called spiritual experience. Look at them today swaying between atomic and spiritual disintegration." Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Paris: Présence Africain, 1963).

<sup>174</sup> Schmitter and Karl, "What Democracy is ... And What it is Not" and Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There is Another Way for Africa* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009).



Mbembe would suggest, I think, that this is rather an economic formation that keeps Africa weak strategically in order to “informalise” the structures of power. What Mbembe describes as the “active informalisation” of African economies and states is not simply the privatisation or austerity measures of the IMF but rather a conscious destruction of both formal state institutions and of effective political accountability.

A democratic citizen in this informalised condition has few means to develop relations of reciprocity with the state. Mbembe tries to understand how power is experienced from the perspective of the people and how people understand their political environment. Dictators certainly abound. They have gathered state power and turned governments into sycophantic systems of arbitrary pillage for the rule of the few, if not the one. For Mbembe, however, this occurs particularly in weakened and fragile states, those which manifest a condition he calls “fractionated sovereignty.”

Mbembe begins to deeply engage in the basic problem of sovereignty in Africa and he conceptualises the strains on African governments to forge viable political systems. The state system itself that emerged in Africa at the end of the 1950s enabled a form of independence in which democracy could thrive, but it simultaneously embedded Africa in a system of sovereign states that is now regulated by international laws and institutions. This state-system provided the structural context for the flow of global capital as well. This was well understood at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, which set up the major institutions for financing trade and development with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades in 1947, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (later the World Bank and its five agencies) and the International Monetary

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Fund (IMF). Africa as a concept of 54 plus sovereign nations was forged both materially and conceptually through this emergence.

The formal concepts of state and economy are shifting their meaning in these contexts. For this reason, this study employs the work of Achille Mbembe and particularly his book *On the Postcolony*, by applying his analysis of private indirect government and *commandement* to the context of Uganda. In doing so, I build on his concept of *commandement* to develop another concept, dispensation, which I use to characterise the current system of politics in Uganda and its relationship within the global political economy in chapter 5. This concept of dispensation is meant to articulate the corruption of the state in Uganda, but it contextualises this corruption and its alternatives within the historical matrix of globalisation and what Mbembe calls the *multiple dureé*. The conditions of dispensation directly affect the political choices available in Uganda and the country's ability to articulate systems of democracy. These conditions are relevant in Africa today for both dictators and democrats. The conditions of the global order structure the political choices available in Africa as they have done for centuries, although not necessarily in the same way.

Mbembe claims African states face a “new political economy and invention of new systems of coercion and exploitation.”<sup>175</sup> In these conditions, he argues it is better to understand the political landscape in global terms and to interpret representations of democracy as expressions of either an adoption or a rejection of the “time-space” of a particular expression of democracy. The procedural nature of the global push toward democratisation hides the enormous challenge that these often technical solutions pose in different contexts across the world. Standard academic distinctions between democrats or

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<sup>175</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 93.

dictators in one particular state or another cannot capture the global extent of the dominant approach to democratisation, the foundational structures of development and the deeply embedded nature of Africa in the global economy.

The literature reviewed in this chapter has shown that much of the writing regarding democracy and political parties has difficulty resolving, theorising, or framing the key drawbacks to multiparty politics on the African context. Primarily, it seems that this is due to a tendency to assume politics occurs within a domestic state where people can organise into to clear political groups and can develop civil society akin to Western societies. These theories neglect to frame the deeply contested nature of political systems even in the history and development of Western democracies and the formative nature of choice over procedures of the state. Problems of party politics, political factions and lack of ideological development in Africa are similarly absent in most analyses except to say that regimes there are most often hybrid.

Other literature, on multiparty politics in Africa and Uganda specifically, has focussed on problems inherent in multiparty systems including ethnic division, international interference and Western analogies of what democracy can and should look like on the continent and reveal that the multiparty project itself is inherently contested. In this chapter, I looked to Mahmood Mamdani who has developed the historical dimensions of African and Ugandan constitutions and helped to further the understanding of why African constitutions are often difficult to democratise and why multiparty politics may be difficult to foster from a structural perspective. Finally, I looked to Achille Mbembe to understand the international nature of the African state today and the effects of global politics there. These historical and international dimensions of the

political party literature are often understudied. This study will go on to show that these historical and international dimensions really help to illuminate Uganda's current politics.

## CHAPTER THREE: A Brief History of Uganda in Global Context

Contemporary political texts focussed on development in Uganda often lack historical context. The dominance of modernisation theory in development practice, in particular, has distracted scholars from incorporating historical considerations into development analysis. Modernisation theory, as Colin Leys and other have said, often disregards the history of an area and attempts to build new social relations from fresh ground.<sup>176</sup> Although this is appealing and parsimonious in theory, it often ignores reality and social ties that are very strong.<sup>177</sup> Processes of colonisation, independence and structural adjustment in Uganda still have a strong resonance in contemporary politics. Similarly, divisions in the population in large part stem from earlier periods in Uganda's history. Though there are many levels at which governance can be analysed in Uganda, the point to be highlighted here is that the context for democratisation, the space for government, has been strained and indeed internationalised at every stage of history since the nineteenth century. A review of Uganda's history and the international dimensions of this history, therefore, is instructive for understanding current politics there today. Theories that do not incorporate international and historical perspectives into their analysis of state-building miss important aspects of the political landscape that shape political struggles, policy decisions, political structures and outcomes related to democracy.

What follows in this chapter is a history of Uganda that stresses the international dimensions to state-building and development. This will ultimately illustrate the nature of

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<sup>176</sup> Leys, *The Rise and Fall of Development Theory*.

<sup>177</sup> Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*.

divisions that continue into the present day. This history sets the stage for discussing today's multiparty democracy in chapter 4 and illustrates many of the challenges Ugandans face with the new multiparty system. The discussions I had in Uganda regarding different political systems and the international setting of current Ugandan politics is the subject of the following two chapters. The contexts for those discussions and for understanding the international dimensions of "private indirect governance" in Uganda, however, depend heavily on understanding the country's historical background. The view of history presented here suggests that Tripp's concept of "hybridity" and Carbone and Rubongoya's concept "hegemony" discussed in the last chapter do not quite capture the current challenges to democratisation in Uganda.

### **Colonialism**

David Livingstone is famous for his expeditions in Africa that paved the way for European annexation of the south-central territories of the continent. In the late 1800s the explorer Henry Morgan Stanley followed the routes of the explorers Speke and Livingstone and landed on Lake Victoria's northern shores. Here he helped the Kabaka of Buganda (the 'king' for lack of a better term) secure his territory against a threat he perceived from Egypt, which then controlled the Sudan.<sup>178</sup> Tim Jeal reports that the deal landed both Stanley and the Kabaka enthusiastic responses from European fans of Livingstone's expeditions.

Until the 1880s, Ugandan territory, like much of the continent, had not been exploited by Europeans in terms of economic development. For the most part, only

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<sup>178</sup> Tim Jeal, *Livingstone* (London: Pimlico, 1993).

missionaries, inspired by the explorers, were eager to settle and engage with the area. Both the Anglicans and French Roman Catholics set up Africa offices on the territory of the Kingdom of Buganda. Right away the question of alliances became paramount and the missionaries armed themselves with weapons to avoid invasion by rival Christians, Kabaka forces, and Muslims who had long established communities in the region. The missionaries emigrated with their own divisions and coupled them with those they found in the new environment they were entering.<sup>179</sup> Already, therefore, pre-colonial Uganda was an internationalised space represented by entrenched groups from throughout Christendom, India and the Middle East.

When the British Imperial East Africa Company arrived in the early 1890s, the Kabaka was concerned with competing imperial interests throughout East Africa. His eye at that time was particularly on British forces who were in Egypt and who were pushing into Ugandan territory during the Mahdist revolution in Sudan (1891-1898) after the rule of their agent Emin Pasha.<sup>180</sup> Under Lord Salisbury, Britain wanted to solidify control of the Nile River so as to better control trade through the Suez canal.<sup>181</sup> The Protestants in the country formed an alliance with the British agent Fredrick Lugard and managed to force the Kabaka into forming a pact with the company that acknowledged British suzerainty.<sup>182</sup> However, the Lugard pact also caused the French Catholics to align with the German East Africa Company in neighbouring Tanganyika and in effect brought

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Roland Oliver and Anthony Atmore, *Africa Since 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 40.

<sup>181</sup> Jordon Guthrie, *State-Society Relations in Uganda: The Search for Security, Development and State Legitimacy* (Halifax: Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, 1983).

45. An interesting website regarding religious interactions at this time is *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*, <http://www.dacb.org/history/a%20history%20of%20christianity%20in%20uganda.html>.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 4.

disruptive European conflicts to the door-step of the Kabaka.<sup>183</sup> Britain signed an agreement in 1894 with Germany to ease the rivalry and consequently took control of the territories around Lake Victoria and up the Nile River. As for the Kabaka, his relations with the foreigners ebbed and flowed but in 1886 he had numerous Catholics killed.<sup>184</sup>

When British Colonial Commissioner Harry Johnston arrived in 1899 he had a difficult job formalizing the British Protectorate.<sup>185</sup> By 1898, the year Britain gained control of Sudan and most of the Nile, a one-year old Kabaka, Daudi Chwa, the son of the first such ruler, was in power. Over the years, he was pressured for alliances amidst the intense squabbles between the Catholics, Protestants and Muslims. The missionaries had started an English literacy program in Buganda at that time, and four agreements were formed between the company and the Kabaka. According to Low and Pratt, the complications of colonising at such a late date and with so many different peoples were many, and it was doubtful, they argue, that Buganda or any other kingdoms in the area could have averted invasion by either Egypt or the Europeans.<sup>186</sup> The power of the early British Protectorate of Uganda was “sporadic,” however, and many deals were made with “insufficient paper work” between British companies and the three main kingdoms.<sup>187</sup>

Besides the Baganda,<sup>188</sup> two other main groups in Uganda were said to have highly sophisticated forms of government: the Bunyoro and Toro peoples of Bantu-

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<sup>183</sup> George Padmore, “Empire ‘Gauleiters’ Greet Each Other,” *Left Forum* 52 (1941):

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/padmore/1941/gauleiters.htm>, and Oliver and Atmore, *Africa Since 1800*.

<sup>184</sup> Uganda Martyrs’ Shrine, <http://www.ugandamartyrsshine.org.ug/details.php?id=8>.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> D. Anthony Low and R. Cranford Pratt, *Buganda and British Overrule 1900–1955: Two Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960).

<sup>187</sup> Ibid. These authors discuss the many “chiefs” in Buganda who came from the many “districts” or *ssazas* that composed the Kingdom. There were and still are many groups or kingdoms beyond these three including Ankole, Koki, Ssinga and Kyaddondo.

<sup>188</sup> “Buganda” refers to a territory and “Baganda” to the people of that ethnic group; “Ganda” is often used as an adjective.



Hamitic decent. The ‘Ugandan people,’ far from being unitary, represent four major linguistic groups that span five countries. Their dialects differ dramatically and, though Swahili has become a common language, it is a composite language and not native in a literal sense. The Bunyoro, in particular, who also housed the large Muslim settlements, were defeated by Colonel Colville in 1884, and Britain formally subsumed some of their lands and privileged Buganda over other groups with the 1900 Buganda Agreement.<sup>189</sup> Low and Pratt argue that all of the early deals between Britain and Uganda favoured increasing the size of the Buganda Kingdom (to secure their alliance) and therefore changed the nature of the Buganda in relation to the other kingdoms. The Buganda Agreement gave the Kabaka an elevated level of protection and sense of superiority over the other major kingdoms in the jurisdiction.<sup>190</sup> According to Colin Leys, through the Buganda Agreement, “Ganda principles of administration, often implemented by Ganda agents, were adopted by the British for the rest of the country; the Baganda quickly entered the cash crop economy and developed the country’s most advanced school system.”<sup>191</sup> The Baganda, who made up about one quarter of Uganda’s population in 1900, however, remained religiously split along Protestant and Catholic lines.

The Mutesa court of the Buganda was the main focus of the British, and despite the accompanying assumptions of ‘primitiveness,’ upon his visit in 1907, Winston Churchill regarded it as the “pearl of Africa.” “In fact I ask myself,” he wrote, “where there is any spot in the whole earth where the dreams and hope of the negrophile, so often

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<sup>189</sup> Britain declared a protectorate over Buganda by a publication in the *London Gazette* in June 1894. “Uganda: Report of a Commission of Privy Counsellors on a Dispute between the Buganda and Bunyoro,” <http://www.ilmcdigital.org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/docdisplay.aspx?textid=43687557&type=PDF>.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Leys, *Politicians and Policies*, 4.

mocked by results and stubborn facts, have ever attained such a happy realization.”<sup>192</sup> In the mind of Winston Churchill, authority among the Buganda had three dimensions.

Three separate influences, each of them powerful and benevolent, exercise control over the masses of the Buganda nation. First, the Imperial authority, secular, scientific, disinterested, irresistible: secondly, a native Government and feudal aristocracy, corrected of their abuses, yet preserving their vitality: and thirdly, missionary enterprise on an almost unequalled scale.<sup>193</sup>



Source: Robert Kaplan, <http://cominganarchy.com/2009/03/13/the-constituent-kingdoms-of-uganda/>

In fact, the borders of the country Churchill called Uganda would at various times shift to the benefit of Germany, France and Britain through the many agreements that constituted the so-called carving up of Africa by imperial powers. Lands on the frontiers of Tanganyika, Kenya, Sudan and the Congo in particular would continue to fluctuate

<sup>192</sup> Winston Churchill, *My African Journey* (London: Heron Books, 1962), 60.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

possession until the end of World War II.<sup>194</sup> Churchill's fanciful visions of the fairy-tale that would become Uganda unfortunately disintegrated after the arrival of Uganda's independence.<sup>195</sup>

By the time World War II ended, independence for Uganda was imminent. Britain attempted to set up a unitary state, but this would have meant a loss of influence for the Kabaka. Rumours circulated that Britain may also have intended to set up an East African economic union which would have further reduced the Kabaka's powers. In 1953, after negotiating extensively with British Colonial Secretary Andrew Cohen, the Kabaka went into exile, or according to some reports, was deported by the British to Europe.<sup>196</sup> In 1955, King Freddie, as he was popularly known at the time, signed a new Buganda Agreement with Britain that renounced the unitary state option. The agreement built on previous Buganda pacts. Section 7(1) provided the Buganda Kingdom the right to fill one quarter of the (native) seats to the British Protectorate's Legislative Assembly which would be granted in 1961.<sup>197</sup> Many Buganda had already immersed themselves in colonial government and served in the colonial army in exchange for the building of the railway inland from Mombasa.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> David Sseppuuya, "Churchill's Pearl of Africa more than today's Uganda," *The Daily Monitor*, October 2, 2012, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/OpEd/OpEdColumnists/Davidsseppuuya/Churchill-s-Pearl-of-Africa-more-than-today-s-Uganda/-/1268850/1522558/-/b2u5qoz/-/index.html>.

<sup>195</sup> Divisions via language, belief and culture were exacerbated by territorial encroachment on Lake Victoria in the 1880s, which was caused mostly by the spreading of disease and the tsetse fly through European cattle that were brought to the continent by German settlers. The "sleeping sickness" that resulted destroyed African cattle and forced a huge amount of the Buganda to relocate off the shores of Lake Victoria. New vegetation was also introduced at the time that has put huge pressure on the natural viability of the lake.

Terry Pearson, "To Slay the Dragon of African Sleeping Sickness," UVic Lectures, November 17, 2000, <http://communications.uvic.ca/releases/release.php?display=release&id=417>.

<sup>196</sup> Yoga Adhola, "UPC and the Elections of 1961 and 1962," Uganda Peoples Congress, [http://www.upcparty.net/history/election\\_61and62.htm](http://www.upcparty.net/history/election_61and62.htm).

<sup>197</sup> *The Buganda Agreement 1955*,

<http://www.wdl.org/en/item/7775/zoom/#group=1&page=11&zoom=2.1724&centerX=0.3708&centerY=0>.

<sup>198</sup> Oliver and Atmore, *Africa Since 1800*.

The basis of many of Uganda's contemporary political divisions stem from political formations developed during colonialism through to the end of World War II. During the inter-war period, the Cambridge-educated Kabaka had absorbed anti-colonial sentiment then growing throughout the world. He initially rejected participation in the British Legislative Assembly as a means of protest against British rule.<sup>199</sup> The Baganda, with a Kabaka converted to Protestantism, were themselves split between conservative Catholic Bugandans (following the original French Catholics) and many of the rural areas were divided between followers of French Catholic chiefs (*bafranza*) and English Protestant ones (*baingereza*).<sup>200</sup> The King had formed a political grouping called *Kabaka Yekka* (King Only). Mikael Karlstrøm suggests the *Kabaka Yekka* was an “anti-party party” expressing loyalty to traditional kingdoms rather than the new government.<sup>201</sup> He argues that one of the fundamental reasons for weak party structures in Uganda prior to independence was the strong loyalty to kingdoms.<sup>202</sup> Colin Leys supports this with his research on the North Eastern borders of the country in the 1950s. “These were segmentary societies, to which the hierarchical chiefly structures of the interlacustrine Bantu was quite alien.”<sup>203</sup> In the Acholi region (now called the Gulu District after the main city), he reported an eclectic mix of clan politics, church politics and resistance to political centralisation.

Between 1954 and 1956 Catholics formed a political party in Buganda called the Democratic Party (DP) built mainly on mission school support. According to Leys, the

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<sup>199</sup> Low and Pratt, *Buganda and British Overrule 1900–1955*.

<sup>200</sup> Leys, *Politicians and Policies*, 5.

<sup>201</sup> Mikael Karlstrøm, “Imagining Democracy from Africa,” in *Reading in African Politics*, ed. Tom Young (Oxford: James Currey, 2003), 218, 219.

<sup>202</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> Leys, *Politicians and Policies*.

1959 census reported 62.4 per cent of Christians in Buganda as declared Catholics. The international nature of both the religion and DP were witnessed at the party's inception. "The fact that it was originally to have been called the Christian Democratic party indicated the analogy with European Christian Democratic parties which guided the early thinking of the DP," observes Leys.<sup>204</sup> Wherever Protestants put up churches and schools so too would Catholics. Many DP candidates were school teachers from the Catholic school system. In 1961, the Catholic DP won the pre-independence election surprising the Kabaka and the nationalist up-and-comer Milton Obote. Worried about the DP wins, and having about one million followers in 1961, the Kabaka knew he could not rule Uganda but he could still become a major force.

### **Independence**

A "radical populist party,"<sup>205</sup> the Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC) was created in the mid-1950s and led by Milton Obote. The UPC was formed primarily by challenging DP support in non-Ganda areas. Electoral politics being as they are, Milton Obote's UPC party seized the opportunity to create an alliance with the King's party Kabaka Yekka, which allowed him enough votes to form a coalition against the DP and win power at independence in 1962. In this context, he made the Kabaka the ceremonial head of state.<sup>206</sup> T. Satyamurthy argues that a secure social basis for Milton Obote's Uganda People's Congress (UPC) did not emerge until independence, and he solidified it by violence and militarism against Buganda afterwards.<sup>207</sup> Four years after making the pact

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 5

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 6

<sup>206</sup> Francis A.W. Bwengye, *The Agony of Uganda: From Idi Amin to Obote* (London: Regency Press, 1985).

<sup>207</sup> T.V. Satyamurthy, "The Social Base of the Uganda Peoples' Congress, 1958-70," *African Affairs* 74,

with Buganda, Obote severed ties with the Kabaka and declared himself the sole president of the country and the UPC the only legal party.<sup>208</sup> Leys has argued that this occurred due the decisions of many MPs from both the DP and the KY to cross the floor to the UPC. Furthermore, Obote forced a referendum that effected the release of Bunyoro lands occupied by the Buganda thereby undermining a large basis of the latter's political territory and releasing non-Ganda voters into the electorate.<sup>209</sup>

Between 1962 and 1969, Mamdani reports that despite a doubling of Uganda's coffee production, peasants grew worse off than before independence, and a shortfall of foreign exchange developed. This can be attributed, he argues, to the foreign monopoly over Uganda's production lines and the export of "huge sums of money through simple over-invoicing or under-invoicing of transactions" via parent companies that were difficult to trace.<sup>210</sup> Real independence was therefore curtailed by an economically weak state and little control over foreign exchange. Irving Gershenberg argues that Obote as a "friend and disciple of Nkrumah and Nyerere" began in 1969 to move the country "to the left through a series of declarations."<sup>211</sup> Obote published *The Common Man's Charter*, in which he laid out a socialist path for Uganda and the UPC to follow. This centred on re-education and anti-elitism more than on the agricultural transformation characteristic of Nyerere's version of African socialism in Tanzania. Diversification of the domestic

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no. 297 (1977).

<sup>208</sup> "1971: Idi Amin Ousts Ugandan President," *The Guardian*, January 25, 1971, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/january/25/newsid\\_2506000/2506423.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/january/25/newsid_2506000/2506423.stm)

<sup>209</sup> Leys, *Politicians and Policies*, 7.

<sup>210</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1983).

<sup>211</sup> Irving Gershenberg, "Slouching Toward Socialism," *African Studies Review* 15, no. 1 (1972), 79. Ali Mazrui dismissively called this "documentary radicalism," in *Cultural Engineering and Nation Building in East Africa* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972).

economy and less reliance on foreign capital were meant to be important aspects of Obote's plan.<sup>212</sup>

Uganda's early multiparty system was wrought with difficulties. It eventually led to the notorious rule of Idi Amin. Obote speculated that military revolts were going to occur from minority populations as in Ghana and Kenya. His move to depose of the Kabaka's position as President was partly a response to these perceived external threats.<sup>213</sup> With large international commercial contracts and increasingly powerful military commanders in his administration, however, Obote was still vulnerable. In 1971, the military under General Idi Amin, who had been trained as part of the King's African Rifles in the colonial era, ousted Milton Obote when he was away in Singapore. Amin became notorious for controlling political life through violence and closure of political dialogue. He had an antagonistic approach to international relations. His vision of national unity was steeped in violence and exclusion: for instance, in 1972, he ousted all South Asians from Uganda an alleged effort to take back the country for indigenous people.<sup>214</sup> Even Amin's nationalism, however, was international. According to both Bwengye and Mamdani, Amin was quite likely financed by foreign governments and corporations in Europe, the United States and Israel, and then eventually by Libya.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Leys, *Politicians and Policies*. According to Colin Leys, Obote was said to have looted the Congo for gold and split the spoils with Amin.

<sup>214</sup> At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, roughly 14,000 South Asians controlled most of the region's cotton ginning enterprises and their markets were primarily in Japan and Asia. To be fair, Obote ousted Kenyan workers before Amin did this, but Mamdani argues this had little press because of the imperial desire to control the labour force and therefore to not instigate questions regarding Kenyan labour. Britain remained in control of the press at that time. Mamdani, *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda*.

<sup>215</sup> Bwengye, *The Agony of Uganda*, Mamdani, *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda*.

## **Idi Amin and Obote II**

In Mamdani's analysis, the genesis and sustenance of the regime of Idi Amin are both attributable to the conditions of neo-imperialism.<sup>216</sup> Mamdani argues that Amin maintained strong pacts with Israel and Britain for his first year in office. According to Mamdani, the British considered Amin the "finest product of the colonial army"<sup>217</sup> and as soon as Obote showed signs of being influenced by Tanzania and embracing notions of nationalisation, "the army came down like a sledge-hammer."<sup>218</sup> The pacts between Amin and foreign interests initially secured the dominance of British banking and commodity production in Uganda. According to Mamdani, it helped the British and the Israelis check the power of Sudan by helping them to continue the civil war in south Sudan and thereby destabilise Khartoum. The basic financial and economic control of Uganda's economy by Britain is part of what Mamdani defines as neo-colonialism, but also, in the 1960s and 1970s, tension between Israel, Arab states and the Palestinians had reverberations for many African nations. According to Mamdani, Colonel Bar-Lev of Israel admitted to having asked Amin to bring members of his tribe to Kampala in order to train them to take control of the government in 1971.<sup>219</sup> Although Amin was tied to British and Israeli military interest through personnel in the officer and intelligence ranks, when Israel would not support Amin's radical plans to invade Tanzania, Amin joined the Arab League and began to pursue his own sovereign vision. The Israelis in turn side-stepped Western pressure to deal diplomatically or multilaterally with any state that harboured pro-Arab political activities. When Amin wanted Israel to release jailed Palestinian

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<sup>216</sup> Mamdani, *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda*.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.



terrorists in exchange for kidnapped hostages who had landed on his territory (as the kidnappers requested), the response was independent Israeli action and the subsequent international abandonment of Amin and his regime.<sup>220</sup> Ideologically, alignment was always a condition of international support.

Amin's lack of domestic and international support and his aggressive politics eventually had him ousted in 1979 by neighbouring Tanzania. According to Tindigarukayo, 28 disparate groups met in 1979 at Moshi in Tanzania to discuss the best strategy to oust Amin under the banner United National Liberation Front.<sup>221</sup> Following Amin's overthrow, Uganda had several governments in rapid succession. Yusuf Lule, supported by Tanzania, was in power for three months in June of 1979; then for one year, Godfrey Binaisa, member of the Queen's Council and former Attorney General of Uganda during the Amin era, was in power. Next Paulo Muwanga was in power for a few days, and for the rest of 1980 Uganda was governed by a President's Council.

At the end of 1980, however, Milton Obote returned for a full second five year term with the help of Julius Nyerere who had been his host in exile.<sup>222</sup> The *Guardian* newspaper in Britain had this to say about the 1980 election; "In elections marred by widespread and blatant irregularities - to their lasting discredit pronounced fair by a team of Commonwealth observers - Obote's UPC won."<sup>223</sup> In 1981, Tanzania still had 10,000

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<sup>220</sup> William Stevenson, *90 Minutes at Entebbe* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1976).

<sup>221</sup> Jimmy Tindigarukayo, "Uganda, 1979- 85: Leadership in Transition," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 26, no. 4 (1988), 607-622. Three main components of this collective according to this author were, Obote's group, Museveni's group and another "intellectual group" the Save Uganda Movement (p.607).

<sup>222</sup> Charles T. Powers, "Army Ousts Uganda's President: Mutiny in North Spreads to Capital; Obote, Aides Flee," *Los Angeles Times*, July 28, 1985, [http://articles.latimes.com/1985-07-28/news/mn-5387\\_1\\_uganda-army/2](http://articles.latimes.com/1985-07-28/news/mn-5387_1_uganda-army/2).

<sup>223</sup> Julian Marshall, "Obituary – Milton Obote: The first leader of an independent Uganda, he imposed virtual one-man rule, but was twice overthrown," *The Guardian*, October 12, 2005, <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2005/oct/12/guardianobituaries.hearafrika05>.

troops in Uganda and the country was “awash with arms.”<sup>224</sup> Though Amin himself was in exile in Saudi Arabia, he had many supporters left in Uganda, especially unemployed members of his former armed forces, who perhaps caused many of the frequent and violent disturbances.<sup>225</sup> This is called the Obote II era in Uganda and is also known for its extreme violence, partly because Obote took revenge on the Acholi people in the North who had supported Amin. An estimated 500,000 people are said to have lost their lives to political violence in the two decades after independence.<sup>226</sup>

Military commander Tito Okello (part of the Acholi dominated officers corps) deposed Obote in another coup in 1985.<sup>227</sup> Yoweri K. Museveni had been part of the initial independence government in Uganda, but he was at university in Dar-e-Salaam until 1970. Museveni began working with new political parties and organizing political action. Both he and Okello had been in Tanzania together and were part of the movement to oust Amin.<sup>228</sup> In the 1980 election, Museveni’s own political party known as the Uganda Patriotic Movement lost against Obote. In the 1985 election, Museveni declared

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<sup>224</sup> John Worrall, “Fresh Uganda Violence Laid to Amin Supporters,” *Christian Science Monitor*, February 19, 1981.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> CIA World Factbook claims that around 300,000 people died in political violence during the Amin era and at least another 100,000 during the Obote II regime. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2028.html>, <http://www.buganda.com/crisis66.htm><http://www.buganda.com/crisis66.htm><http://www.buganda.com/crisis66.htm>, also according to BBC, June 19, 2013 500,000 deaths occurred from the time Amin assumed power to the end of Obote II <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14107906>, and Uganda Independence, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/uganda1.htm> has the same number.

<sup>227</sup> Obote remained head of the UPC party in Uganda from exile until 2005 and now his wife is the leader after his death in 2005.

<sup>228</sup> Jimmy Tindigarukayo, “Uganda, 1979–85: Leadership in Transition,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 26, no. 4 (1988), 607–622.

that he and his band of men would start a revolution upon concluding that elections had been rigged.<sup>229</sup>

### **Yoweri K. Museveni**

Museveni's military strategy was to accumulate territory one area at a time. He entered the central Luwero Triangle and by 1986 controlled the capital in Kampala, and most of Uganda in general.<sup>230</sup> From Fidel Castro, who was already very influential on the African continent, he adopted the 'foco' method of warfare, and he was careful to bring as many villages as possible into his fold as he approached the central capital city, gathering many supporters for his revolution along the way.<sup>231</sup>

Since then, the Ugandan political system has undergone complex and comprehensive change. Presented as a military commander with an extensive political vision, Museveni transformed Uganda's political institutions. His promise was to rid Uganda of ethnic division and civil violence by changing the way Ugandans could access and influence power by promoting a form of nationalism that was broad and inclusive. The system became known as the National Resistance Movement (NRM). It espoused the ten-point programme which Museveni would explain in detail in his 1992 book *What is Africa's Problem?* In it he claims that multiparty democracy failed Uganda in the first decades of independence because all African countries tended to divide their political parties along ethnic lines. Museveni does not come from a dominant ethnic group, and he claimed this actually furthered his ability to be broadly based. Structurally, he said, the

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<sup>229</sup> There were initially 27 NRM fighters "in the bush." Museveni actually overthrew Okello's short government, but the movement was initially aimed at Obote. Okello attempted to capitalize on the existence of the movement to oust Obote.

<sup>230</sup> Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

<sup>231</sup> Museveni, *What is Africa's Problem*.

NRM was a movement not a political party, and therefore it did not favour anyone based on ethnic identity. Furthermore, he said, “the NRM is neither pro-East nor pro-West, it is pro-Uganda.”<sup>232</sup> This signalled the relationship Museveni developed between anti-imperialism and the political system he was to create.

One of the declared pillars of his ten-point plan was to open up the country’s political space by eliminating political parties since these were said to be divisive. As a proclaimed mass movement, Museveni’s new system was meant to allow Ugandans to disregard division and competition and to enable them to develop a kind of democracy based on cooperation and unity. Formally, political parties were allowed to exist under Museveni’s regime but they would no longer be able to contest elections. The NRM’s ten points were as follows: restoration of democracy; restoration of security; consolidation of national unity and elimination of all forms of sectarianism; defending and consolidating national independence; building an independent, integrated and self-sustaining national economy; restoration and improvement of social services and rehabilitation of war ravaged areas; elimination of corruption and misuse of power; redressing errors that have resulted in the dislocation of some sections of the population; cooperation with other African countries; following an economic strategy of a mixed economy.<sup>233</sup>

By instituting a countrywide constitution-building process in the late 1980s, Museveni attempted to bring everyone into the political order and even allowed the return of Indians whom Idi Amin had kicked out of the country.<sup>234</sup> Restoring the property of both the Indians and the Kingdom of Buganda created a solid economic base and established a pact of cooperation in the centre of the country. The result was the first

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<sup>232</sup> Thomas Ofcansky, *Uganda: Tarnished Pearl of Africa* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996).

<sup>233</sup> Museveni, *What is Africa's Problem*.

<sup>234</sup> Moehler, *Distrusting Democrats*.

stage of a new constitutional order which curtailed the rights of political parties, but championed mass participation. A new electoral system was instituted in which all candidates for any level of government would stand on individual merit.

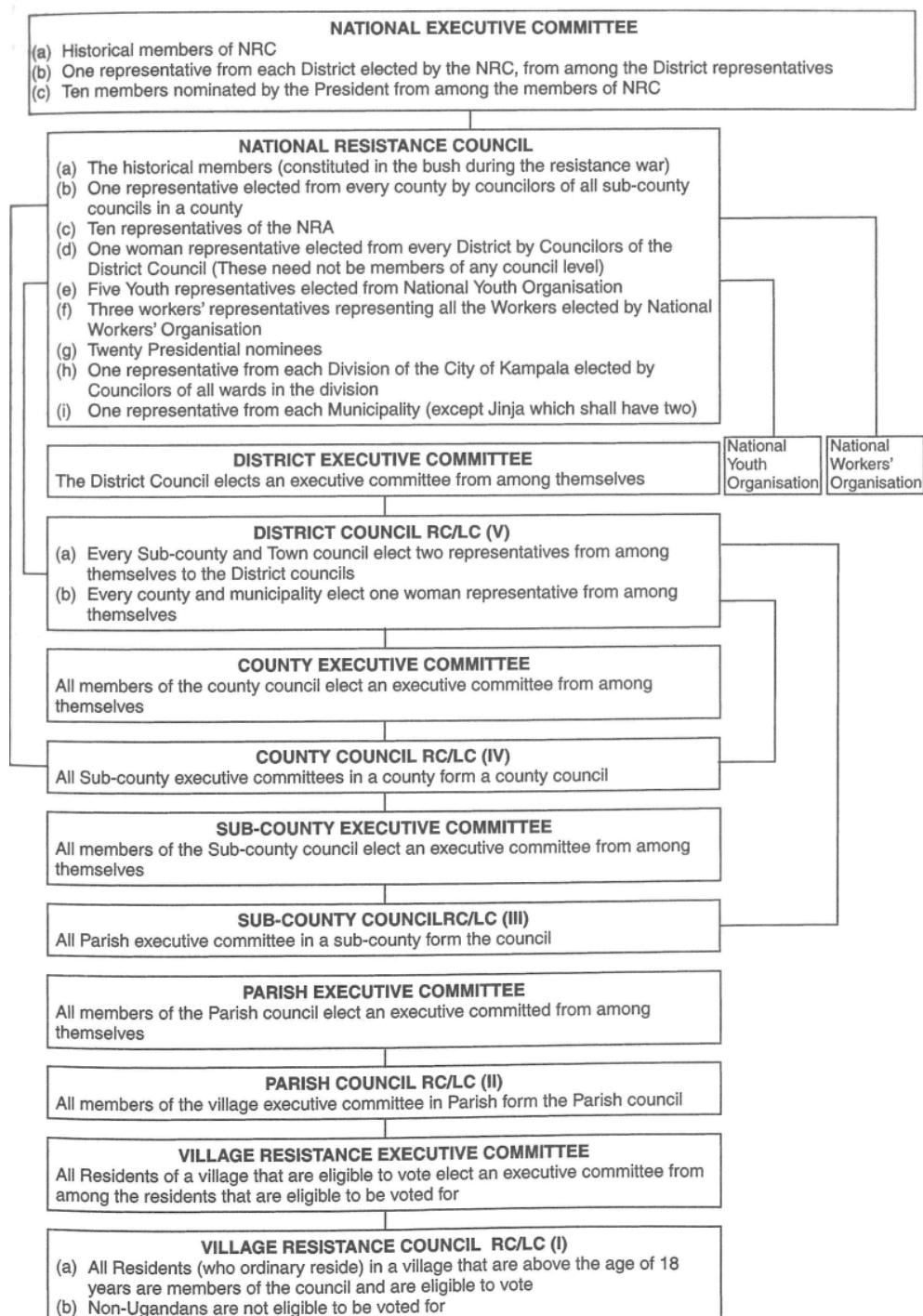
How was Museveni's system different from a one-party state once political parties were banned from seeking political offices? In the first stage, Museveni's "people's government" was said to be based on individual merit and the Resistance Council System (RCS). In this new framework, tiered bodies of representatives were created alongside distinct chambers for freedom fighters, women, the disabled, youth, and traditional leaders. The tiers were supported by the local council electoral system. Village-level governments, of which Uganda has thousands, voted representatives up from their areas towards the central tiers. In North American terms, this would be similar to having voting politicians from non-partisan municipal councils elect colleagues into the next highest level based on their performance below. The LCV is the controversial level that has changed over time between being an elected body and a council appointed by the national government, which I further discuss in the next chapter. Through this system, the villages were said to be able to connect their political views to the national level without the need for political parties.<sup>235</sup> All candidates were to present themselves for election to political office on individual merit alone. The village level is usually comprised of less than one thousand voters and the unpaid councillors have historically had an incumbency rate of less than 30 per cent.<sup>236</sup> The City of Kampala was given special municipal status and the traditional Kingdom of Buganda was granted increased

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Interview, Patrick K. Mutawbire, Kampala, Uganda, July 13<sup>th</sup> 2009, page 118 of this paper. Ministry of Local Government Uganda (<http://molg.go.ug/>).

powers by Museveni and reinstated as a traditional kingdom with a separate parliament.



**Uganda's Resistance Council System.** Source: Susan Dicklitch (1998: 77) from the NRM Secretariat, Kampala Uganda (year not stated).

The success of the early Museveni regime was evidenced by statistics that are widely available. Economic development occurred quite rapidly in the early days. Even international donors did not suggest that the government change to a multiparty based democratic system, even though they were pestering neighbouring Kenya to make a more comprehensive switch.<sup>237</sup> The liberalised Ugandan economic system was gaining great praise from the IMF.<sup>238</sup> The judiciary was developed and expanded, and gradually the press enjoyed increased freedoms. Museveni was one of the first leaders to openly encourage testing for HIV, and in the 1990s successfully moved the country from a 15% infection rate to one of the lowest infection levels on the continent.<sup>239</sup> The increased rate of women's participation in parliament, largely due to specific quotas of seats set aside for women, was also unparalleled on the continent, although it was certainly not without problems.<sup>240</sup> The country-wide constitution-building exercise in 1992 was said to bring the population together and increase ownership of the governance strategy.<sup>241</sup> For the first fifteen years of Museveni's rule, therefore, he had considerable leeway from donors to develop his own political system, even though it was perhaps because he had less ability or was little inclined to go against the international grain in economic affairs.<sup>242</sup>

In *Citizen and Subject*, Mamdani highlighted how Museveni's government abolished the artificial position of the chief as the vehicle of local governance and

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<sup>237</sup> Nelson Kasfir, "No-Party Democracy in Uganda," *Journal of Democracy* 9, no. 2 (1998), 49–63, Museveni, *What is Africa's Problem*, and Dicklitch, *The Elusive Promise of NGOs in Africa*, 93.

<sup>238</sup> Bigsten and Kayizzi-Mugerwa, *Is Uganda an Emerging Economy?*, 95.

<sup>239</sup> "Call for Ugandan Virgin Census," *BBC News*, December 2, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4061779.stm>.

<sup>240</sup> Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda*; and Tripp, "Women's Movements, Customary Law, and Land Rights in Africa."

<sup>241</sup> Moehler, *Distrusting Democrats*. Paradoxically but perhaps not uncommon, Moehler argues that even while more Ugandans were participating in government processes, they were "trusting" their government less.

<sup>242</sup> Alison J. Ayers, "Demystifying Democratisation: The Global Constitution of Neo-Liberal Polities in Africa," *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (2006): 321–338.

replaced it with elected local councils. This was not the same as the abolition of the chief imposed by Obote on the Buganda, but was a restructuring of the institutions and their mechanisms of participation.<sup>243</sup> As discussed in chapter 2, this constituted a structural change that attacked the root of the colonial structure in Mamdani's terms and thus began a broad process of democratisation.

By 1995, the new constitution was adopted through a referendum that was carried out throughout the country. As for political systems, the 1995 constitution says in Section 69(1) "the people of Uganda shall have the right to choose and adopt a political system of their choice through free and fair elections or referenda." Section 69(2) says "the political systems referred to in clause (1) of this article include (a) the movement political system; (b) the multiparty political system; and (c) any other democratic and representative political system."<sup>244</sup> Section 75 outlaws one-party states in the country. This constitution laid out several rules for political parties, should they be formed, showing that the NRM anticipated eventual alternatives to "the movement." Should Ugandans vote for a party system, the constitution attempted to set boundaries in terms of ensuring parties would have a national character, be non-sectarian, have transparent finances, be non-coercive and be comprised of Ugandan representatives.

Perhaps because of the decade of constitution-building, already in 1995 the movement system began to show signs of change. The new set of institutions was called the Local Government System (LGS) and was named such because there was no longer need for the so-called resistance. Despite the simple nomenclature change, the switch was evident in the structures of power as well. The new direction of Museveni was most

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<sup>243</sup> Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

<sup>244</sup> *Constitution of the Republic of Uganda* (As at February 15, 2006).



obvious in increased control at the District Council Level or LCV where the top job became a position appointed by the central administration once the Resistance Councils were reformed.<sup>245</sup> In general, however, it seemed as if Museveni himself remained in control of many of these political appointments throughout the parliament, bureaucracy and military. This centralisation of the state led Mamdani to argue in *Citizen and Subject* that the Resistance Council System had given way to social conservatism.<sup>246</sup>

In 1996, the country had its first presidential election in 16 years. Museveni won approximately 74% of the vote and voter turn-out was about the same. By this time, the opposition groups had launched their own candidates for President. Kizze Besigye, who had been Museveni's doctor in the initial resistance movement, headed the largest opposition political party, Forum for Democratic Change (FDC). Besigye argued that the tactics of the presidential campaign were unfair, and the FDC therefore boycotted parliamentary elections in the same year. The next parliamentary and presidential elections were held in 2001. Although there were accusations of violence and intimidation, Museveni won the presidential election again with a generally accepted majority. The FDC boycotted the 2001 elections as well, however, and Kizze Besigye went into exile in South Africa after being repeatedly jailed by government and police members on accusations all of which were later dismissed.<sup>247</sup> Interestingly, according to some statistics, Museveni's electoral power had been declining as had voter turn-out since 1996.<sup>248</sup> Nevertheless, by the 2011 elections, Uganda's voter turn out was

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<sup>245</sup> Interview, Prof. Charles Mwanbustya, Centre for Basic Research, Kampala, July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009, page 132 of this paper and Government of Uganda, *Report on the Commission of Inquiry into the Local Government System* (1997).

<sup>246</sup> Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 216–217.

<sup>247</sup> *Uganda Presidential and Parliamentary Elections: Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group, February 18, 2011* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2011), 4.

<sup>248</sup> African Elections Database, Elections in Uganda, <http://africanelections.tripod.com/ug.html>.

increasing again, and Museveni doubled the number of votes received by Besigye, according to the Commonwealth Observer Group.<sup>249</sup>

By the time Museveni was entering his second decade as leader, and there was no sign of his losing power through elections, there was serious domestic and international discontent. In 2005, the newspapers were all too happy to print the views of British rock star activist, Bob Geldof, “Get a grip Museveni. Your time is up, go away,” he said.<sup>250</sup> The UK and Ireland, followed by a few others in the OECD, decided to take up the cause of the opposition groups in Uganda and began to pressure Museveni to lift the ban on political party electoral activities.<sup>251</sup>

Two referenda regarding a possible transition to multiparty politics in Uganda were held in the first decade of the new millennium. In 2000 the question read, “Which political system do you wish to adopt, Movement or Multiparty?”<sup>252</sup> In that case roughly 91% of the population voted in favour of Museveni’s movement system.<sup>253</sup> Ugandans were sceptical of the return to multiparty politics, and their views were reflected in overwhelming support for the individual merit system or Local Government System. Yet, opposition members and party activists were being denied access to the mechanisms that would allow them to present their case, including through media sequestering and continued intimidation of opposition leaders by the police and courts.<sup>254</sup> Only five years later however, in 2005, the BBC had different news to report, “[a] huge majority of

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<sup>249</sup> *Uganda Presidential and Parliamentary Elections: Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group, February 18, 2011* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2011), 12.

<sup>250</sup> “UK aid cut pressures Uganda,” *BBC News*, April 29, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4498381.stm>.

<sup>251</sup> *Uganda Presidential and Parliamentary Elections*, 4.

<sup>252</sup> African Elections Database, [http://africanelections.tripod.com/ug.html#2000\\_Referendum](http://africanelections.tripod.com/ug.html#2000_Referendum).

<sup>253</sup> African Elections Database, Elections in Uganda, <http://africanelections.tripod.com/ug.html>, and *Uganda Presidential and Parliamentary Elections*.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*

Uganda's voters - 92.5% - has supported restoring multi-party politics.”<sup>255</sup> A different referendum question had triggered an about-face result. The referendum questions was as follows: “Do you agree to open up the political space to allow those who wish to join different organisations/ parties to do so to compete for political power?”

Multiparty? Perhaps, but another view suggests that with intense pressure from donors, Uganda attempted to find a way to have *both* systems.<sup>256</sup> In the constitution, as cited above, there is a clear choice that Ugandans can make in regards to their electoral system: no-party, multiparty or any other democratic system of government.<sup>257</sup> Yet, in the 2005 referendum we see a manipulation of wording in order to solidify the individual merit basis of the system, while managing to appease donors and apparently accommodate their desire to see multiparty democracy. Interpreted this way, parties would be able to compete, but they would remain outside the “political space” created by the NRM movement. In this case, it has been argued by all the politicians I have interviewed and the students to whom I spoke in Kampala, that the no-party system did not end with the last referendum, as the BBC had boldly announced. Rather, the system expanded in order to incorporate the multiparty system into the LGS or at least to blend and confuse elements of both systems.

Contrary to the report of the BBC, the wording was such that in the second referendum, the movement system was *solidified*, by suggesting that those who were

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<sup>255</sup> “Uganda backs multi-party return,” *BBC News*, August 1, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4726419.stm>.

<sup>256</sup> This becomes evident in the next chapter which highlights the transition from the no-party to the multiparty system in Uganda. My interviewees account for the transition and suggest the main impetus was ‘donor pressure.’ The Commonwealth Observer Group reports this as well although they do not give specific details of the arrangements.

<sup>257</sup> Interview with Justice of the Supreme Court of Uganda, Dr. G.W. Kanyeihamba. Kampala, Uganda, July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009, page 129 of this paper. He made it clear in the interview that these democratic options had been explicitly written (by him) into the Ugandan constitution in order to ensure choice of the system was always politically available.

outsiders, in other words outside of the no-party political space - those who wished to form political parties - could organise and participate in elections, but the followers of the LGS, would remain central to governance of the country.<sup>258</sup> It is likely, according to my research, that a complete reversal of the results of these two referenda occurred because the precise wording of choosing the multiparty system directly (in 2000) was relaxed in the second attempt and “opening up the political space” (in 2005) meant something different to the Ugandan people than multiparty politics. This is largely the topic of the next chapter, and it runs through my interviews regarding Uganda’s two systems and the transition.

Also in 2005, the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda voted to lift the term-limits on the Office of the President, essentially allowing Museveni to run beyond the two-year limit previously imposed. Museveni’s majority of members in parliament essentially said, or at least he had them say, that if there were to be legal participation of political parties in elections, then he would have to stay in power, particularly to avoid instability and to control the growing military.<sup>259</sup> He campaigned on the side of “opening up the political space” but he did not call himself a “partyist.”<sup>260</sup> For this reason, Museveni was on the winning side of both referenda.

Problems seemed to be multiplying as the multiparty system was adopted in 2006. Even though the individual merit system is arguably still regarded as the central political system, the confusion as to whether or not the Movement (NRM) has now become, or should be, constituted as an official political party has arisen. For instance, how does an

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<sup>258</sup> Interview, Patrick K. Mautabwire, Commissioner Local Councils Development, (Kampala, Uganda, July 16, 2009), page 119 of this paper.

<sup>259</sup> Opposition MPs and the Political Editor of the *Monitor* newspaper that I interviewed argued that there was wide-spread bribery by Museveni to achieve his goal of extending term limits.

<sup>260</sup> “Referendum ends 20-year ban on political parties,” *Irin Humanitarian News and Analysis*, August 1, 2005, <http://www.irinnews.org/fr/report/55652/ugandareferendum-ends-20-year-ban-on-political-parties>.

individual candidate stand for leadership of the “movement” system? How do presidential and national elections relate to one another? Leading up to the first multiparty elections in 2011, it was reported that this put the Executive Council of the movement in a bind.

As soon as debate began, delegates realized that the choice was between either accommodating them [those that wanted the NRM to be a political party] or lose them to the opposition. It was resolved that independents and members of other parties who sign memoranda of understanding with NRM could participate in NRM primaries. However, Mbabazi, who was the main force behind this move, insisted that the national constitution be amended to remove independents as a basis for election to leadership positions.<sup>261</sup>

Furthermore, the 2011 election itself had elements of an all or nothing affair, with the tendency for the opposition to assume that they would be able to control the government (even with little previous electoral support) and to convince the population that Museveni would harm or alienate them. Museveni and the NRM also suggested that opposition parties were mere agitators or enemies of the state, and he has been curtailing them with force.

A culture of cooperation among political parties committed to ruling and being responsible for the whole country, as Sartori suggested, is difficult to nurture in such an environment. Despite the fact Ugandans may not have voted for a multiparty system exactly, a point I will continue to explore in the next chapter, we can see that the trappings of the system will affect politics nonetheless. Reiterating the international nature of his political calculations, Museveni gave the BBC three reasons for continuing to run for president and leader of Uganda; “to liberate the country from indirect and direct international control; second, to build the core of Ugandan society; and third, to

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<sup>261</sup> Mubatsi Asinja Habati, “Uganda: Why Does Gen. Museveni Fear Insider Opposition?”, *The Independent*, January 27, 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201001270490.html>.

rebuild pan-Africanism because “Africa is the most fragmented continent in the world.”<sup>262</sup>

The relationship of Uganda to international forces highlighted in the above quote is the subject of chapter 5 of this dissertation. The continental, pan-African, politics that Museveni talked about with the BBC is the subject of the next section of this chapter. These politics across the continent also situate the history of the no-party system as part of the unity movement in Africa historically.

### **The Continent at Independence**

The scope for democracy in Uganda and other countries in Africa was complicated by continental politics at the time of Uganda’s independence. During his time in office, President Milton Obote steered the country towards the continental visions of Nkrumah and concepts of socialism derived from Nyerere. Museveni was also heavily influenced in his early years by intellectual positions in Tanzania and ideologically influenced by an eclectic mix of ideas flowing across the border with Rwanda to the west. The question of sovereignty and independence was thus politicised beyond the borders of the Ugandan state before its first independent elections in 1962. Though perhaps not emphasised the same way it was in the 1960s, this pan-African politics still resonates in Uganda today.

In the 1960s, Julius Nyerere in Tanzania in the East African region and joined the West African leaders Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Sekou Toure of Guinea and Patrice

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<sup>262</sup> “Uganda Election: Amnesty International Violence Concern,” *BBC News*, February 11, 2011, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12428969>, “Uganda’s Yoweri Museveni in profile,” *BBC News*, May 12, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12421747> (see voice recorded interview on this site).

Lumumba in Congo/Zaire in trying to shape the unity of the African continent against imperialist forces. The 1958 All-Africa People's Conference in Accra brought together 300 delegates from 28 countries. They invited Africans in the diaspora, particularly in Caribbean countries, and the conference itself also included representatives from North African Arab states most notably Nasser's Egypt. These countries wanted the space of African democracy to be constituted as continental or at least regional rather than as state-centric. They embraced the notion of what they then called the United States of Africa.<sup>263</sup> *The New York Times* reported that among the delegates' agenda items was "the adjustment of existing artificial frontiers and the amalgamation of states into regional and ultimately into a pan-African commonwealth."<sup>264</sup> Furthermore, the members called for non-nuclear development, a boycott on trade with South Africa, support for the Algerian revolution, and an anti-imperial education which would protect Africans against "imperial tactics of using tribalism and religious separation to perpetuate their policies."<sup>265</sup> The conference continued a commitment to non-alignment and was called "Africa's Bandung."<sup>266</sup> Attempting to advocate for freedom from imperialism and oppression were among the key contradictions of this meeting when certain countries, including Ghana, had strong ties with the "imperialist" state of Israel.<sup>267</sup>

This debate between national vs. continental constitutions for independent Africa was solidified by two groups. Nkrumah and Nyerere's became known as the *Casablanca Group*, but a number of states who longed for their own state sovereignty, such as oil

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<sup>263</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London: Panaf Books, 1965). Part of the reason the diaspora was so integrated with the movement is because many of the leaders met each other while studying abroad in the United States, England and France.

<sup>264</sup> Kennett Love, "All-Africa Body Weighing Tactics: Accra Parley Scans Issues of Violence vs. Non Violence in Liberation Efforts," *New York Times*, December 10, 1958, 13.

<sup>265</sup> "Accra Meeting Calls for Unity Of All Africa," *Reuters*, December 14, 1958.

<sup>266</sup> Love, "All-Africa Body Weighing Tactics."

<sup>267</sup> C.L., "The Accra Conference of African States," *The World Today*, 14, no. 6 (1958) 259–266, 262.

dominated Nigeria and US-dominated Liberia, opposed them and were known as the *Monrovia Group*.<sup>268</sup> Furthermore, like other colonies, these countries had to negotiate their independence with the Europeans and in many cases were indebted to them for colonial institutions. For instance, Tanzania was required to pay the pensions of all the colonial workers in the country who left at independence.<sup>269</sup> On the one hand, pan-Africanism had surfaced as a real possibility, and on the other sovereignty was still tied to the approval of former colonial governments.

When Nkrumah celebrated Ghana's independence in 1957, much of the world was watching. Two divergent delegations from America, one of Martin Luther King Jr. and his wife, the other with American Vice-President Richard Nixon, came to witness the event in person. On the one hand, and represented by the presence of the American Civil Rights hero, was the possibility of popular self-governance, a black Africa freed from a brutal world order based on defunct racial categories. Sovereignty meant freedom of the people, to govern themselves, create their own plans, and use their own resources for realising their own potential. With the hopes of West Africa behind him, Nkrumah fulfilled the role of the British Empire's first post-colonial black-African Head of State and spoke the language of universal freedom against oppression.

With the celebration of the independence of Ghana in mind, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote in a sermon upon his return to America:

The thing that impressed me more than anything else that night was the fact that when Nkrumah walked in, and his other ministers who had been in prison with him, they didn't come in with the crowns and all of the garments of kings, but they walked in with prison

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<sup>268</sup> med Rajab, "The future of African unity," *BBC News*, May 25, 2001, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1351625.stm>.

<sup>269</sup> Julius Nyrere, "Third World Negotiating Strategy," *Third World Quarterly*, 1, no. 2 (1979): 20–23.



caps and the coats that they had lived with for all of the months that they had been in prison<sup>270</sup>

The feelings generated from the populism of Nkrumah the freedom fighter reverberated throughout the continent (and indeed across the oceans). A representative of the people and an opponent of oppression, he captured state leadership in Africa; this marked a victory of popular self-government against racially defined colonial rule. The conditions of representation for the new governments in Africa were not just driven by elite conceptions of civil society and property as they had been in Europe but by universal sovereignty and popular rule.

The presence of Richard Nixon tells another story. His position marked a shaping of an American foreign policy, a new world order that was to guide its relationship with the fledging African states through to the contemporary period. Much of the intellectual foundations for this policy came from modernisation theory. Vice-President Nixon was in Ghana to signal America's new interest in Third World affairs. In the midst of the Cold War's first phase, all eyes turned to the colonies which had become 'proxy' battlefields. This Cold War dynamic marked the structural context of independence deeply.

Among the chief institutions created to support the American policy of open foreign markets was the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development or the World Bank. Its director in 1948, Eugene Black, a leading advocate of modernisation theory, summed up the Bank's worth to the leaders of the Western world in the annual report that year.

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<sup>270</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., "The Birth of a New Nation," in *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. – Volume IV: Symbol of a Movement, January 1957–December 1958*, eds. Susan Carson, Adrienne Clay, and Virginia Shadron (Oakland: University of California Press, 2000), accessed September 27, 2011, [http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/primarydocuments/Vol4/7-Apr-1957\\_BirthOfANewNation.pdf](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/primarydocuments/Vol4/7-Apr-1957_BirthOfANewNation.pdf).

From the standpoint of the underdeveloped countries, the need to expand production and thereby to raise living standards is obvious. But the problem has direct and important implications for the more advanced nations as well. This is not only because the general conditions of poverty in the underdeveloped areas have created political and social tensions, which if unrelieved, may have serious and widespread consequences. It is also because full employment and effective utilization of the resources of the more developed countries depend largely upon a continually expanding world trade; increased production in the underdeveloped areas is one of the principal means to this end.<sup>271</sup>

The seductive images of the American dream did not seduce Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, at least in his writing. *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*<sup>272</sup> was an attempt to expose the networks of foreign aid and capitalist monopoly that had cemented Ghana's subservience to western companies, crippling all African nations' ability to generate the economic basis of sovereignty. Sovereignty and independence soon became bittersweet in the hands of Nkrumah as he continued to campaign furiously for the creation of an institutionalized united Africa, eventually being instrumental in creating the Organization for African Unity in 1963, which later became the African Union.

Not to belabour the point, but in Nkrumah we see a very different interpretation of what national sovereignty meant for African nations. He believed that both sovereignty, as a means of balkanization and control by the western powers, and capitalism, again controlled by western powers, were not elements of freedom, but rather new means of colonisation. The United Nations financial institutions solidified the structures through which indirect control would be foisted on Africa (in order to counter that, African

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<sup>271</sup> Eugene Black, *Fourth Annual Report* (Washington: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [World Bank] 1948–49).

<sup>272</sup> Nkrumah, *Neo-colonialism*.

leaders later helped create the Group of 77). Furthermore, fragmentation of colonial leadership fostered what Nkrumah called the unaccountable policy and practice of multilateral aid.<sup>273</sup> At independence, the old colonial powers worked together instead of against each other, he said, for the control of Africa's resources. Through multilateralism, he argued, accountability for social and economic policy diminished. Although the idea was not entirely fleshed out in his theory, Nkrumah believed the sovereignty of individual states to be the "well-spring" of neo-colonialism, indicating the importance of political structures in the new foreign policy.

Decolonisation is a word much and unctuously used by imperialist spokesman to describe the transfer of political control from colonialist to African sovereignty. The motive spring of colonialism, however, still controls sovereignty.<sup>274</sup>

Partly, as a response to his growing criticisms of western corporations and American foreign policy, Nkrumah was removed from office through a *coup* after nine years in power. Presumably, this move suggested to African populations that their leaders required approval from foreign governments to be successful and even nationalist.

Although different in important ways from the particular case explored in this dissertation, post-colonial Ghana set the tone for independence across Africa. By the time Nkrumah had been internationally re-branded from a man of the people to a tyrant, many other nations had just become independent. When Nkrumah was ousted in 1966, the spirit of democratic and popular independence across the African continent was already giving way toward highly centralised nation-state options. This was the time of Milton Obote's first presidency, when he broke with the Kingdom of Buganda and made the UPC the

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<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Nkrumah, *Neo-colonialism*, 31. Like many G77 leaders, Nkrumah believed at the time that it was possible for the "third world" to use the United Nations to their advantage, but he was wary of the influence of the major powers.

sole legal party in Uganda. By then the most dominant form of state in Africa was the single-party non-communist regime.<sup>275</sup> These regimes often posed as representing political parties or unitary parties (but other parties were mostly ousted or banned). Characteristically, these newfound sovereign entities claimed democracy, yet elections at all levels were shut down, and obedience to the state was garnered by force. In this light, Milton Obote and Idi Amin in Uganda were not anomalies. According to Carlene Edie, although most new states were claiming to be capitalist, all channels of trade, communication and transportation were monitored and controlled giving them the single-party non-communist status.

The pan-African trends suggest that perhaps a pattern was affecting all of these various cultures and peoples simultaneously. As accounted for in the last chapter, this mix of capitalism and dictatorship somewhat eluded political scientists until Samuel Huntington and David Apter captured the trend in terms of “military modernization.”<sup>276</sup> The capacity to buy into the colonies, that Europe had appropriated before the onset of the two World Wars, allowed in particular for the expansion of American influence (through weapons and oil contracts for example). Through these tactics the United States, Europe and their allies in South Africa and other strongholds on the continent ensured that Soviet influence was kept to a minimum until the 1990s when the focus on strong centralised capitalist states as part and parcel of development orthodoxy was relaxed considerably.<sup>277</sup>

The conditions of African independence in part account for the nature of the procedures adopted by the domestic state. Newly independent countries, embroiled in the

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<sup>275</sup> Edie, *Politics in Africa*.

<sup>276</sup> Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, and Apter, *The Politics of Modernization*.

<sup>277</sup> Edie, *Politics in Africa*.

Cold War and the scramble for new markets, were heavily influenced by the change-over in international power structures after World War II. At least some of the anti-imperial rhetoric of that time is still vibrant in Uganda today. Museveni is a leading proponent of the African Union and East African Common Market and the language of anti-imperialism and independence remains an active part of the contemporary political discourse. Chapter 5 of this dissertation will further discuss such matters.

### **Historical Context as a Basis for Social Research**

Talking about First Peoples in Canada, Dr. Glen Coulthard attributes the inability to “reconcile and rehabilitate” as coming from a need “to temporally frame the past,” as if the relationship to the present or future are negligible.<sup>278</sup> In particular, modernisation theory and its variants are idealistic and prone to ideal types that objectify life rather than study it. As Arturo Escobar, Edward Said, Stuart Hall and others have described, this is part of the technocratic approach to development, which founds its theory on the basis of claiming a technical solution to the problem of general development defined as mass consumerism and Western systems of government.<sup>279</sup> The approach can operate without the necessity of considering specific problems or contexts which may complicate the precision of the modernisation formula. Consideration of the *long durée*, or a perspective historically grounded and context-oriented, becomes equated with defending tradition.<sup>280</sup> In approaching governance in Africa, modernisation theories have failed to understand the practices of people and the choices they make. As seems to have been the case with

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<sup>278</sup> Glen Coulthard, “Rage against Empire: On Recognition, Reconciliation and Resentment in Indigenous Politics,” speech at University of Victoria, October 17, 2012.

<sup>279</sup> Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*.

<sup>280</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*.

the second referendum in Uganda, the possibility that people might choose the no-party system was dismissed as archaic thinking by theorists unsympathetic to the historical relations at play in the country.

The historical context allows us to understand the many strains that have faced the Ugandan people during their struggle to democratise. They have had enduring colonial structures and constitutions to contend with as, Mamdani well describes. But more than this they have had an intensely strained system of sovereignty and a forceful and often undemocratic international context to face. Achille Mbembe's works guides us to delve into the consequences of this "fractionated sovereignty" and "private indirect government."<sup>281</sup> Encouraging the use of the "*multiple durée*," or the overlapping nature of these historical events on contemporary politics, Mbembe allows us to understand the multiple ways in which authority, legitimacy and political representation are complicated in the Ugandan context. When Museveni argues against imperialism, or when he claims to be protecting Uganda, this has deep meaning in reference to a long history of colonialism, loss of local cultures, and rebuilding society.

The history of Uganda has been marked by strong Western influence. This is particularly true for the country's instruments of governance and political representation. Though the many cultures that are present on Ugandan soil have long traditions of governance, these systems have been difficult to reconcile with Western systems. Although the Buganda, for instance, managed eventually to merge into the state under Museveni's regime, the forced subsumptions under the Obote regimes are difficult to forget, and violence continues. The betrayal of those pacts on the one hand - and of traditional kingdoms using the power of the state to oppress and starve citizens on the

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<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

other - gives cause to reflect on the nature of state institutions. They have often been inherently contradictory and therefore not surprisingly they lack legitimacy locally. Obote, for instance, was connected with so-called revolutionaries and socialists such as Nkrumah and Nyerere, but he slaughtered local people in the attempt to modernise and nationalise state institutions at the same time. The continued nature of foreign influence in Uganda suggests that the patterns of African governments today are embedded in these historical relations and therefore that these international dimensions, central to Uganda's history, require attention by social scientists not evasion for the sake of convenience or parsimony.

The no-party system in Uganda, I argue, takes on slightly different analytical dimensions when considered in this light. Museveni's novel institutional developments had some very encouraging outcomes in the country including in the areas of health, women's participation and democratic constitution-building. The country still has many problems, without doubt, but whether or not this is due to Museveni's rule in particular also comes into question if considered in the historical and international context. As explained in the introduction to this study, an awareness of this context persuaded me to ask experts in Uganda what they believed were the merits of the no-party system and what the new "multiparty dispensation" would bring. After discussing this in the next chapter, I will then explore the international dimensions of current politics in Uganda following the theoretical lines devised by Achille Mbembe and building on data from my own field work.

## CHAPTER FOUR: Interviews: Competing Concepts of Democracy in Uganda

Recent literature written on Uganda, particularly the studies by Aili Tripp, Giovanni Carbone and Joshua Rubongoya, largely glosses over the no-party era and the recent transition to multiparty politics.<sup>282</sup> Nevertheless, my reading of the historical contests over political systems and the international nature of the Ugandan state affirms the importance of questions about what Ugandans actually experienced in the transition to multiparty democracy. If Achille Mbembe's perceptions of African governance are at all accurate, and private indirect government and *hallucinatory* power structures are rampant across the continent, then the transition to multiparty politics in 2005 could just as easily be understood as a nondemocratic move, or at least as a shift to a nominal form of democracy that has many undemocratic consequences.

Whereas the familiar phrase - transition to democracy - implies an uncontentious understanding of both the origin and destination of a seemingly necessary process, Mbembe's analysis can be understood as a suggestion that the prevailing terms of debate need to be questioned. Similarly, my historical and theoretical investigation into multiparty politics in Uganda so far points to a need to probe more carefully into the competing understandings of democracy that have been taken for granted and to get a sense of how Ugandans experienced their political transition. What my research within Uganda reveals is indeed a much more complex and nuanced picture of what is happening politically in Uganda today than is available in scholarship that relies on the

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<sup>282</sup> Carbone, *No-Party Democracy?*, and Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda*, Rubongoya, *Regime Hegemony in Museveni's Uganda*.



conventional projection of a necessary transition to democracy understood as a multiparty system of representation.

This chapter presents data I gathered in Uganda in 2009. It does not give definitive answers to questions regarding party and no-party systems, for reasons I will discuss in chapter 5, where I pull out themes from these interviews and discuss some of their implications. What it does do is provide new evidence of the ways significant figures in Uganda thought about the politics they were immersed in and the options before them and their country. My first question to my interviewees was “What are the strengths and weaknesses of the no-party and party systems in Uganda?” (the full list of questions appears in the Appendix to this document). For my interviewees, I chose political representatives who had experience in both the no-party and multiparty systems of government. Although I met these representatives in Kampala, they were from a number of different areas in the country. I spoke both to government members of the NRM and the FDC opposition. I also sought out experts in academic and journalistic circles to get a sense of the overall analysis from people who are not directly invested in the Ugandan Parliament. The timing of the interviews is important because Uganda had switched from the no-party system in 2005 and was preparing for a multiparty election in 2011.

Out of respect for their positions and time, I wanted to ensure that I gave my interviewees leeway to speak freely about their experiences. As a result, I allowed longer responses, and often did not get much further than the first question. Most of the people I spoke to responded by explaining that the no-party system had an historical context. They told me about the process of gaining the independence of Uganda and the initial

multiparty democracy at that time. They explained the mid-1980s revolution and the subsequent mutations of the no-party model. It seemed to me that they wanted to ensure that the question of strengths and weaknesses was secondary to understanding the context in which certain systems made sense and others did not. They felt that Uganda had created a no-party model of democracy as a specific response to a violent and tragic beginning as an independent state.

Although opposition members and Charles Mpangi, then Political Editor of *The Monitor* newspaper, seemed particularly interested in modernising and developing the multiparty framework. Mpangi clearly believed that Ugandans had moved beyond sectarian politics and were ready for the new constitutional changes. Others, and the majority of those interviewed for this study, wanted to reiterate that concepts such as pluralism and democracy have deep roots in Africa, and that western models, such as multiparty democracy, are but one option to meet universal values of democratic governance. The interviewees all seemed frustrated by attempts to provide one model of good governance and democracy for Africa, and similarly they all felt that the transition into multiparty politics in Uganda would be difficult for citizens and leaders alike. Although no one seemed to resent the international push toward good governance, the nuances of what this might mean were important to the interviewees.

After they had given me some thoughts on the no-party system, and if the subject had not come already, I asked my interviewees where they thought the impetus for the transition to multiparty politics came from. As I have shown, authors on Uganda, such as Carbone and Tripp in particular, have argued that the pressure for change to the

multiparty system in Uganda was primarily domestic.<sup>283</sup> By contrast, some literature seems to argue that the no-party system had more support in Uganda than donors and these core Uganda specialists suggest.<sup>284</sup> Given this contrast in the literature, it seemed important to investigate this claim. Furthermore, if people in Uganda felt they owned their own transition to the multiparty system, then the change could at the very least be seen as democratic in itself. My interviewees indicated both that in their view there were indeed strengths to the no-party system in Uganda and that the common perception was that the 2005 transition to multiparty politics had been heavily influenced by international considerations and trends in the international environment. Comparing the 2005 transition to the constitution-building exercises that created the no-party system in 1995, we see that Uganda has transitioned (to something) that is described as democracy but the precise meaning of the democracy being described is open to considerable debate.

Consequently, it was not surprising that all of the interviewees noted the trouble with acceptance of the new system by the general population. It was also not clear that problems identified in the system, mostly related to Museveni's power, were actually solved through multiparty politics. The transition to multiparty politics in 2005 has complicated some areas of governance, and it has opened up other areas for new approaches in politics. Yet, the meaning of democracy, the clarity of political procedures, and Museveni's arrangement for his third decade as President, have not been clearly addressed during this transition.

After examining some of these positions in greater detail, I will review some of the recent written literature on Uganda, particularly the work of Giovanni Carbone, and

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<sup>283</sup> Carbone, *No-Party Democracy?*, Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda*, Rubongoya, *Regime Hegemony in Museveni's Uganda*.

<sup>284</sup> Moehler, *Distrusting Democrats*, and Dicklitch, *The Elusive Promise of NGOs in Africa*.

suggest that he and other authors have missed something important by not examining the international context of the Ugandan transition, to the extent that they have not really given the no-party system a fair trial. Like Tripp and Rubongoya, Carbone has not investigated in enough depth the problems inherent in multiparty systems and how they translates into the Ugandan context. These authors primarily targeted Museveni's hegemonic and hybrid (in their terms) leadership in the country as the primary impediment to democratisation. Although this may be true in some respects, my interviews support the finding that the impediments to democracy in Uganda are far more complex than leadership change alone. What people generally refer to as the "multiparty dispensation" in Uganda has, for the most part, failed to address many of the fundamental questions of democratisation that plagued the country before 2005 and it has introduced some new obstacles as well. In presenting the interviews, I divide the interviewees into three groups: Government members, members of the opposition and political experts.

### **A: NRM Government Members**

Hon. Stephen Adyeeri MP Buliisa District, Chairman National Economy Committee, Member of the Natural Resources Committee, Owner, Rise and Shine Projects and Investments. Parliament Buildings, Kampala, Uganda, July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Duration of recorded interview: 21:55 mins.

I met MP Stephen Adyeeri who is part of President Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement at his office in the Parliament of Uganda. He is a strong supporter of the NRM and the no-party system. In response to my first question he immediately said; "The LC [Local Council] was all-inclusive, all-impressive, non-polarized, based on issued debate, where there was inclusion and participation of everybody based on individual merit." If anything, he thought that there had been "over-democratising"

within the LGS itself and that people's relationships with local councillors had lost the authoritative character of the system before the NRM.

The danger was this. In contrast with the earlier system, whereby the District Commissioner would, or the central government, the centre in the periphery, would designate, would appoint a person to do community work, to work on primary health-care as a directive, these elected leaders [under the LC system] do not command, they beg they beseech because they are seeking re-election.

“I think citizen's duties and responsibilities should be brought above everything,” he said.

Mr. Adyeeri thought that political parties at the district and national levels were “okay,” but that at the local levels partisanship should not dominate policy debate. In America, he reminded me, parties took a long time to form.

Here parties are forming, some could even be tribal, some could be religious, some could be parochial, you know discussing trivial issues, some could be nationalistic as opposed to patriotic and nation building, and if you bring them to the lower level [LC level] it is a mess.

He also remarked at the end of this rather short interview that he thought a political system needs to be tailor-made for Uganda.

Pluralism is desirable. It is an ideal for humanity, not only for the West but also for everyone. What I am contesting in the winner takes-all multipartyism. That is all I am contesting. I think as I am putting on this suit, that others should not be able to design this suit, because I am a size 58. So we need to make it tailor-made, a design specifically for an area. There are cultural barriers. In African culture it is not proper for one member of the family to be on the dining table when others are not. That is exclusion. We sit and do everything together. We must all be on the table. So the culture of winner-takes-all and exclusion is not African in the first place.

According to Adyeeri, Uganda is getting impatient for democracy and the multiparty system does not allow all parties to continuously participate in governance.

“The American system whereby the winner makes a government and the opponents are in the waiting for the next four years is not tenable in Africa – because what? We have been

waiting 200 years.” What I think Adyeeri was challenging was the assumption that political parties represent clear majorities in the system. Ugandan political parties, for one problem, do not get these majorities, and the possibility that one vote could put a candidate in parliament using the first-past-the-post method, means that majorities can quite easily be formed without a plurality.

Major problems for Adyeeri now concern the development of viable parties which seem to be difficult to generate. This is what he had to say about his challenges in the multiparty system.

Now you will find a farmer against another farmer in politics. You will find a fisherman against another fisherman because of political party...what does this mean? It means that parties are still not ideologically clear. It means the masses are in parties possibly because they like an individual, possibly because they fear the insecurity of a minority governments, possibly because they have no hope, and possibly because they are not very sure of the future. And that is dangerous because we should be in parties because of the party's vision, the ideology and how we think the party can be used as an instrument to achieve the expression of the people.

In particular, Adyeeri suggested that Uganda might progress more along the lines of Ghana by prohibiting parties at the village or local level and allowing them at the district and national level only. When thinking of the trouble in neighbouring Kenya and in Zimbabwe at the time he said, “We can do this by design, by plan, by structures, by systems. We don't have to wait for bloodshed, to have conflict, to go into governments of national unity.” In the end, it seemed that what Mr. Adyeeri was advocating was a more pluralistic system of voting, but he thought this was easier when local governments were less corralled in their choices for government members. The party-system was troubled by the lack of actually available choices or guiding ideological platforms. In the end, Adyeeri essentially argued that multiparty politics were “not African” and that competing political systems and values complicated the desire for democracy.

Mr. Patrick Mutabwire. Commissioner Local Council Development, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government. Ministry office, Kampala, Uganda, July, 13<sup>th</sup> 2009: Duration of recorded interview: 49:52 mins

Mr. Mutabwire spends his time sorting out squabbles in the various districts, parishes and villages in Uganda. Although his job had always been challenging, he faced complications in the new system when people of different political parties had to work together in order to ensure that governments were working at all. Often, he said, people would be so opposed to the party of another representative that they would not work on committees or Council Executives. These stalemates could go on for long periods of time and his job had become very focussed on sorting out these deadlocks.

As an NRM MP in both systems of government and a long time member of government, he has a unique perspective on the two systems.

The previous system had one advantage. I could come from nowhere, compete on my merit and go through, but now with competitive multiparty politics, where you have to be selected, you have to toe the party line or you will not come up. I think there are merits in terms of selection of people, but certainly there are certain people who will lose.

Mr. Mutabwire discussed how sub-system democracy or democracy during primaries and leadership selection is important. The means by which people come to office often creates divides, he said. In one of the main districts he explained that the incumbent lost the NRM primaries, and because the primary elections were very close, he then chose to run as an independent candidate in the general election and won district leadership. The district he ran, however, mostly consisted of NRM members who did not vote for this candidate during primaries, and as a result the leader was having trouble forming an executive. In Goma, another district, the Chairman is DP and there are only two other candidates who are in his party. Mr. Mutabwire had to help both of these

districts create a Memorandum of Understanding in order for a district executive to be constituted.

In a context of acute hunger, democracy is easily strained as well, said Mr. Mutabwire, because people look for immediate satisfaction and votes are easily bought. That was a problem in both systems, he said, but now the direct relationship between the individual voter and the representative was “severed,” and accountability had become less direct. This brought him to consider how parties help or hinder the democratic electoral process. Perhaps the most important point made by Mr. Mutabwire, and one reiterated in scholarly party-system literature, was that if political parties themselves are not internally democratic then the problem of severing the relationship between the representative and the people increases. Mutabwire said that people can be more easily bribed to vote because party resources are larger than individual ones, but they cannot have as much influence over the actions of the MPs who have been elected because MPs have to toe the party line at the very least. Similar to what Giovanni Sartori had written about *sub-system* democracy as discussed in chapter 2, Mutabwire believes the system will gain strength and stability through reforming internal party structures.

So the parties themselves, as I have already said, if they are democratic, in their nature, they will bring about strong institutions. Much more is the character, orientation and intent of the leadership in these parties. If they are not transparent and accountable to their voters, they will produce un-democratic leaders who will be portrayed and mask themselves as democratic leaders.

Finally, the pressure to introduce parties, he argues was part of a global trend.

The business of saying there is no multiparty, there is no democracy, you know the politics of that: we shall not support you. But of course we are sitting in international contradictions, if you go to Saudi Arabia, which parties are there? So that is global politics, but I think that for me you should look at essence much more than form. Is it the dressing that makes the bishop a bishop, or the essence of whom you are?



Hon. Ahabwe Pereza Godfrey, MP Rubanda East Constituency and Minister of State for Local Government. Ministry office, Kampala, Uganda, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009: Duration of recorded interview: 47:31 mins.

Ahabwe Pereza Godfrey was Chairperson of the committee that amended the 2005 constitution which changed the country over to the multiparty system. Given his role, he was strongly concerned with cultivating political parties. He began by explaining that this was not the first time that Uganda had multiparty democracy. Before Museveni's *coup*, the multiparty system had been attempted for a second time but, he said, the UPC had looked like a Protestant party, and all the parties were divided by sectarianism. The NRM had created the movement to allow Ugandans to "move together."

The strength of the movement/no-party system, he said, was that people became much more engaged in specific problems; "right from the grassroots to the national level. You present yourself as a person; you have merit as an individual; you appeal to the electorate; and they support you as an individual. They have confidence in you as an individual, and they have qualities they admire about you as an individual." He claimed there was also more studied debate at the national level under individual merit. Godfrey's claims challenge assumptions about individualist and communal politics which are also echoed by scholars such Bhikhu Parekh and Patrick Chabal that I discussed in chapter 2 and 3. "You are not fearing any reprimand, you are not fearing any common position that you are digressing from, you are standing as an individual looking at the merit or merits of a proposed law, and you research, support or oppose on the basis of individual strength." Rather than arguing in favour of the no-party system for any patrimonial or cultural reasons, therefore, Godfrey was arguing that the system simply worked more effectively.

“The biggest problem with multipartism today,” said Mr. Godfrey, is the internal organization of parties. “How are we focussed as parties? How are issues articulated?” As Chairperson of the 2005 multiparty transition committee, he said, he had to change numerous laws, such as the Political Party and Organizations Act, Local Council, Presidential and District laws “within the shortest period of time.” Some of the shortcomings of the new laws, he says, are due to the speed of transition and the little time they had to write them.

Further, in his view, the people of Uganda did not really choose multiparty politics. They voted in favour of it in the referendum, but as I suggested in chapter 3, they chose more to separate the movementists and the multipartyists so that those who believe in the movement and individual merit could continue to conduct politics along those lines and those that wanted to organise parties would be permitted in the political space. In Godfrey’s words, the attitude of the majority of Ugandans toward the minority multipartyists was that they were “eating and defecating in our house! Let them leave us with our no-party system, and let them go and build their own house.” He further says,

The individual merit system is still very very strong among political actors; it is even stronger among the electorate. In Northern Uganda, where the president never gets more than 30% of the vote, in the local government, about 70% are held by NRM people. So even there, where there is the least support for the President, you can see the individual merit hangover.

On the question of the internal democratisation of parties, raised by Mr. Mutabwire in the previous interview, Ahabwe Pereza Godfrey was insightful on how the positive elements of *the mixture* of the two systems in Uganda may turn out, now that a formal transition has occurred. If the new system was going to be democratic, he

suggested, it's success would have to be attributed to the strengths of the no-party system before it.

And even under this dispensation, it [the no-party legacy] will help these other parties develop along the way. We shall emphasise discipline within parties, but it also helps to develop internal democratic dynamics of the parties, because once we are internally democratic, that individual merit element is very evident inside parties.

Hon. Yiga Anthony, Parliament of Uganda, MP Kalungu County West, Masaka District. Parliament of Uganda, Kampala, July, 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009: Duration of recorded interview: 21:02 mins

In 2011, NRM MP Yiga Anthony lost the seat he had held for ten years in Masaka District, in the centre of the traditional Buganda Kingdom, to a Democratic Party contender. Like Mr. Mutawabire, he said that under the no-party system “we would talk freely in the parliament, and we would talk for our people. But now that we are going into multiparty, freedom of speech has been curtailed a bit. If you become very critical of your party, then they might have reservations about you.” He claimed, “they can even apply sanctions, they can even disorganise you politically and fight you so that you lose constituents.” Critical of the lack of free speech under the multiparty system, he said, “now before you go to parliament, you have to meet your caucus and harmonize and agree. Then you are expected to speak for the position you have agreed to in caucus. So in the end of the day, some positions are not very good but you are expected to agree with them, so that is a very big change, I have seen what we missed.”

When I interviewed him he was vocal about the difficulties in working with an electorate when candidates need to spend much of their own money to persuade voters that they can deliver goods to the area. “You really have to be financially sound,” he said, “somebody who can contribute to community projects, somebody who can support the

youth and other areas where the government has not been able to deliver.” He emphasised the continual nature of this role. “Even before the elections, you have to be seen to be somebody who can really assist, even using your own resources.” In Uganda, few political representatives are paid at the local levels, so this compounds the problem of who is able to stand for political office and perhaps makes party coffers more attractive.

He also spoke of the “individual merit hangover” that plagues the current politics. “It is fashion for a country to be seen as democratic, you have to toe the multiparty line. Once they [donor countries] pressed, we were forced into it, but then we had not planned for it.” He thought that the people still very much voted along individual merit rather than party lines, although I am not sure he would feel the same after losing the 2011 election. He believed that the electorate still looked at candidates and thought “Okay fine, you are NRM, but um..., who are you? What have *you* done for us?”

In parliament, Yiga Anthony felt party discipline within the caucus has shaped the way representatives debate, and now few are outspoken in favour of their own constituency. In addition, political parties, he argued, were urban centred. “Almost 80% of the population is in villages but political parties, they have not gone there.” The Buganda MP said,

We should allow other forms of government to emerge. Under the no-party system it was very easy to mobilise people for development. They would contribute. They would even mobilise others. But under multiparty it is different, because if I ask for a contribution, and I am under NRM, people will say No! No! Those are thieves! They are trying to cheat you! People get confused.

Furthermore, Yiga Anthony felt that parties tended to be focussed on painting other party leaders as “evil” or “an enemy” rather than mobilising around current political

questions. “Our [development] partners who pushed multiparty could assist us to mobilise our political leaders, because many of them don’t know [how to mobilise around issues]. They say we should get Museveni out of power but they have not really mobilised.”

### **B: Opposition Members**

Hon. Lukwago Erias MP Kampala Central, Shadow Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and Attorney General (Opposition FDC). Personal law offices, Kampala, July, 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009: Duration of recorded interview: 47:46 mins

I interviewed Lukwago Erias at his law office located in downtown Kampala. He had a bustling office downtown but took nearly twenty minutes to show me photo after photo of his run-ins with the police. At every protest, he said, they were hassled and often jailed without cause. He showed me pictures of how the police used unemployed young men in the city to help control the opposition. “See that one there has a big stick,” he noted at one point. Declared members of the FDC opposition have been targeted under the new multiparty dispensation and have found themselves fighting the NRM every step of the way.

Erias was concerned about Uganda’s overall development and the state of its development projects. The climate of multipartism had not really helped development, in his view, because the ruling party (NRM) has turned the parliament against the opposition. Projects and policy development had been side-lined by partisan or even anti-party politics. Erias argued that the government had never supported the new multiparty system (despite campaigning in favour of the change), and therefore it had been

extremely difficult to get off of the ground. Instead, he said, corruption was deepening.

Erias said about trying to initiate development policy in the new system,

You get a problem where you are accused by the ruling party of mixing politics with development. You are seen as just a politician trying to mix your views in with development. In the end, those that steal public funds, who abuse public property and so on, they hide under that. [They say] that this is development we are carrying out; forget about politics that is standing in our way!

Erias' frustration, therefore, is that the party dynamics have stymied development.

He was never in favour of the no-party system and had always found it a ruse for control by Museveni himself. He urged me to look in detail into reports that the NRM had bribed officials to vote in favour of lifting presidential term limits.<sup>285</sup> He claimed that the NRM's corruption was being hidden now behind party politics and party secrecy.

I found it critical to press this particular MP, as one of the most vocal opposition members in the country (and recently mayor-elect of Kampala), on exactly where the impetus for change in the Ugandan system came from. The question is vital for understanding how the new system is working in the country, it seems, and for gauging public sentiment and support. Was the multiparty system an authentic choice, as Tripp, Rubongoya and Carbone suggest, or did it arise from external pressures? In response, Lukwago Erias said:

Well, it really was a concerted effort, from our development partners, the donor community as well as institutions elsewhere fighting for human rights, democracy and good governance.

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<sup>285</sup> Aili Tripp quotes an article about this saying MP Ann Mushiga claimed that, "A new element was introduced into our parliamentary methods of work, whereby the legislators of a particular persuasion, namely the NRM, were given large sums of money outside their normal remuneration in order to 'facilitate' their voting for some proposals, particularly the removal of presidential term limits." Her references for this are: Abu Mayanja, "Constitution Has Become a Temporary Document!", *New Vision*, August 22, 2005, and Joachim Buwembo, "When the Loan Shark Comes Knocking, Even MPs Have a Price," *The East African*, August 15, 2005. Aili Tripp, "The Politics of Constitution Making in Uganda," in *Framing the State in Times of Transition*, eds. Laurel Miller and Louis Aucoin (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2010).

Various international institutions helped us in the cause. But largely, we played a key role as political opposition here, and political parties, which were safe under the constitution that said, you are free to exist but you are not supposed to function. We initiated public programs, which included interest and litigation and that field of constitutionalism. In the end of the day, we got a verdict from court that the then movement political system was not a political system *per se* but that it was a political party.

The NRM itself admits they were being forced by public interest and constitutional litigation, as well as under pressure from the donor community to dismantle the no-party system. However, Erias believes that once the NRM was forced to open up the political space, they began using the institutions of the state to frustrate the implementation of multiparty democracy. He says, “and that cuts across and goes down to the lower local administrative units. Even a man like a Chairman of a Local Council can stop an MP from accessing his village.” Specifically, in order to undermine Erias’ attempts to form a viable opposition and raise critical problems, he was asked to report to court constantly, and at the time I interviewed him in his parliamentary office he had six cases against him. The opposition used the courts to shift the government structure to multipartism by declaring the NRM a political party<sup>286</sup> (which then began to refer to its electoral arm as the NRM-O), but afterward the government has used the courts to limit their opposition through intimidation and false accusations.

At the time of the interview, Erias was also stopped from obtaining a permit to demonstrate against the central government’s bid to take over the City of Kampala and all its functions. He argued, as did many others, that Museveni was centralising all the institutions of the state, controlling the existing districts and creating more of them in

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<sup>286</sup> “Uganda: Country of Origin Information Report,” United Kingdom Home Office Science and Research Group: Country of Origin Information Service, October 2005, 4.09, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/438d75cb4.pdf>.

order to be able to control the budgets and agendas of more areas of the country.<sup>287</sup> The shift to multiparty politics had left Museveni in power, and since then the political space has become more complicated and layered with remnants of the no-party regime as well as intimidation of opposition activists such as Erias.

Hon. Abdu Katuntu, MP, Buweri County-Iganga District (Opposition FDC). Parliament of Uganda, Kampala. July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009: Duration of recorded interview: 31:21 mins.

I interviewed Abdu Katuntu in his large and spacious office in the parliament building. He has been a member of the government since 2001, but like Erias, he never supported the idea of a no-party democracy. He felt the system was “centralised” and “monolithic” and that the government worked as a “one-party” state. “People should be able to run as independents or on party platforms,” he said. He told me that there had been critical problems with the reintroduction of multipartism in Uganda. Now, he said, after “almost 25 years of demonising political parties” and making them difficult to trust, there is also a “terrible leadership crisis” throughout public offices. The problem was echoed in the views of some NRM members I spoke to as well and thus appeared to cut across partisan positions. He said,

60% of parliament can barely use a computer. So, eventually you have people competing for leadership in parties, but they are not up to the job. You know you say, Okay what is your vision? You have been asking for this, tell us, and it is zero. Zero!

Katuntu challenged my understanding of the literature. First, as a strong critic of the government, he recognized that though the power of Museveni was becoming unmanageable, it was a broad crisis of leadership that was most critical for the country.

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<sup>287</sup> The rash of new districts created at the time largely had to do with the 2011 election. The President is reported to have stopped this and argues himself that they are not economically viable. David Tash Lumu and Deo Waluusimbi, “Museveni Tired of New Districts,” *The Observer*, March 11, 2013, [http://www.observer.ug/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=24134&Itemid=114](http://www.observer.ug/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=24134&Itemid=114).



The second relates to my questions regarding the transition. Katuntu is the kind of person that Tripp, Rubongoya and Carbone refer to when they suggest that agitation from internal pressure is what caused the constitutional changes to the electoral system in Uganda. This gives them support for their position that Museveni lacks legitimate support by the general populace and controls Uganda through hegemony. Yet, when I asked him where the impetus for the transition came from, he had this to say,

It was no longer fashionable to have a different political system in isolation. The world has become a global village. There is no such system as a no-party democracy; it doesn't happen anywhere, so the development partners at the time were putting pressure on the government. Look here [they said] in terms of good governance there is a large section of the population you are shutting out. We thought at that time that the government has received this sort of pressure and it has an alternative. Then increasingly the population was aware that you can't really shut people out of the political process, and the sort of people that were being shut out of this process were well educated people and with influence. At the time I was a human rights and constitutional lawyer.

Therefore, though Katuntu supported the shift, the real opening for the change arguably came from the donor community. Constitutional lawyers such as Katuntu and Erias could then use the external pressure to put forth their constitutional cases against the NRM in which the Supreme Court eventually agreed that the NRM had been a political party. For a democracy, one could argue, this has significance in relation to problems of legitimacy and democratic consolidation for a significant portion of the population.

### **C: Political Experts**

Hon. Justice Dr. G.W. Kanyeihamba, Supreme Court of Uganda. Supreme Court Offices, Kampala. July, 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009:Duration of recorded interview: 41:09 mins.

Dr. Kanyeihamba has had experience governing Uganda since it was created.

When I asked him about the differences between the party and no-party system, he began

by explaining to me that Uganda had had multiparty politics at independence. When Idi Amin was overthrown, Kanyeihamba became “the first immediate post-Amin Minister of Justice and Attorney General.” “But as you know,” he said, “it was a mess, and so I left.” Eventually, “after attending many universities in the UK,” he joined the initial group of men that Museveni took to fight the government. Kanyeihamba was Minister of Commerce under Museveni to start and then the Attorney General. From 1991-1997 he was the Senior Presidential Advisor on International and Human Rights Affairs. When he became a judge of the Supreme Court in 1997 this advisory position was abolished. He has had a hand in writing all versions of the constitution and though he used to be a strong supporter and “friend” of the President, he no longer supports his politics. Although he is now retired, by virtue of his position in the Supreme Court of Uganda and his political history, Kanyeihamba is at the centre of current Ugandan politics. He noted how often his view was printed in the news. He shared with me his views of what is troubling the multiparty environment.

What we have is lost opportunities to build a vibrant multiparty system in Uganda mainly for two reasons. One, the genuine political parties, like UPC, DP, Conservative Party, have continued to live in the past. They have not realized that the time has past and they need to radically change. So they continue to live in the glories of the past. Just to show you how unrealistic they are, the spokesman of one of the parties, the UPC said, come 2011 they will get 60% of the vote, but in the last election despite irregularities, rigging and breach of the law, they only got 1 per cent. You can't, within two or three years, build from 1 per cent. Let's assume there was cheating, but even if there hadn't been, I reckon they could only got about 5 [per cent], not more than 10%. You can't build from there to 60%. So they are unrealistic. They themselves are not democratic; they are fighting among themselves, and the old guards continue to hold on to the party. So that is the major problem that we have faced in the building of a vibrant multiparty system in Uganda. The second one is the top leadership in the Movement have never really accepted we should have really genuine multipartism. What they accept is a token, mainly to please donors, donor countries and so forth. At their heart of heart, they loathe

anyone that tries to challenge the main government and anyone wanting to govern as an alternative.

Like some other political leaders, Kanyeihamba felt that the pressure to change was external and that the government was actually working against the multiparty system even though they nominally accept it. Challenges are furthered, Kanyeihamba said, by a lack of education and lack of a “culture of reading” among MPs or citizens. This means, for Kanyeihamba, that the people are easily swayed and cannot effectively use the tools of civic engagement, such as the constitution and other legal systems, to “bell the cat.” He said that Museveni was sequestering power and had changed significantly over the time he had known him. Now, he argued, Local Councils were “dens of corruption” that deliver votes for the NRM and because of that are rarely reported for that corruption.

Nevertheless, Kanyeihamba was passionate that democracy is an African system with African solutions, and his passion is worth quoting, particularly considering his position in the legal system in Uganda.

Some people say, democracy, ahh, that is a Western concept, we are a poor country and cannot afford it! That is nonsense. Democracy is a device for allowing us to communicate effectively, to discuss confidentially and otherwise about our governance and our development. It is not a strange thing. Our forefathers used to do that, and that was democratic. So when people come to me and say, “This is a Western concept,” I want to spit in their face, because they are just avoiding the issue.

Dr. Yasim Olum, Professor of Political Science, Makerere University. Department of Political Science, Makerere University, Kampala. July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009. Duration of recorded interview: 17:10 mins (approximate).

Dr. Olum suggested that the revolution under Museveni in Uganda brought about some very significant changes that were important for the country. He said, for instance,

I think the advantage of that system [the movement system] mainly was that it tried to undo the old divisive, if you like, practices that were in Uganda. There was a high degree of hatred, if you like, between people of different political affiliations. This was really a

carry over from the 1960s, where if you belonged to DP or UPC you could not see eye to eye, even if you were from the same family. Because of the Resistance Council System, which the NRM brought, whatever shade of opinion you belonged to, whatever race you belonged to, whatever region, you were expected to work under the Resistance Council System, and I think that was good for healing purposes. It healed the country very fast, and people almost forgot the bad relationships that were there between people of different political parties, between religion and tribe, if you like. But it too suffered its own problems, the Resistance Council System.

Museveni intervened, he argued, because the two main political parties at independence, UPC and DP “really tore up the political fabric of the country.” He told me about Uganda’s political history and argued that the RCS became the LGS, as discussed in the last chapter, but when it did, he said, it “fused” the local and national levels. Under the initial Resistance Council System from 1986- 1995, local village and parish levels of government operated quite independently of the national executive. The professor was neither really for or against the new system but pointed to some major challenges that Uganda faces under the new policy. He felt donors just “dumped money in” and said “sort out your problems.” It was significant, I thought, that he suggested that a political system had “healing” qualities and that Museveni’s coup and the RCS had somehow brought Uganda together.

Professor Charles Mwanbustya, Centre for Basic Research, Kampala. July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009.  
Duration of recorded interview: 1:45:17 mins

Professor Mwanbustya had a very animated way of teaching the history of his country and his trials as an activist, politician and professor. He described the current system in Uganda today as one of “parties by survival” and constitutions “*without* the habits of the heart.” Unlike Dr. Olum, he argued that even in the first RCS, the government and executive were fused. Many meetings were *in camera*, and Museveni often acted as both the Speaker of the House and Chairperson of the NRM. Through the

1995 Constitution of Uganda, Mwanbustya argues local councils and national government were separated. The Office of the President was also separated from the Legislature at that time, and Museveni was no longer part of the daily sessions. He said that even in the individual merit days, the President played favourites with candidates, and so bias in favour of the governing NRM was inevitable.

Academically, Mwanbustya sees evidence of the neo-patrimonial thesis of governance in Uganda, which he said is able to capture the “informal and formal” mechanisms of government. This blending of personal and political authority he found most evident within the military and security systems in the country, but Mwanbustya argues that patronage and personal rule are rampant elsewhere too. Budgets are increasingly controlled by the central government (taxation powers of local governments were abolished, for instance), and Museveni, he argued, was responsible for this budget centralisation, while still maintaining his reputation as the “blue eyed child of the West.” According to Mwanbustya, Museveni’s rule could be summed up as personal control of the army coupled with neoliberalism. He quoted a Swahili saying that reflected Museveni’s attitude to those that are attempting to form political opposition movements in the country, “Let them talk; they will get tired.”

According to Mwanbustya, there is “no world-view that informs our political relations, that’s why we have a constitution *without* constitutionalism.” The political space is opened “but it is soiled. If you go there security will get you; the president will get you; the judges will get you.” All political actors, he argued, must always be sure to stay the right distance from the leader. Too close and one would be consumed by him, but too far and one would be left aside. Although he argued that there were ideologies in

Uganda, mostly stemming from the cultures and traditions of various groups - “tribal ideology,” he called it - there wasn’t a broad political vision beyond Museveni’s personal rule, as far as Mwanbustya could see.

Uganda was becoming multiparty, he said, because “it looks good to the donors” but he also believed that the government had not really let electoral parties operate. He said the donors demanded the switch, “and we just said, OK, we have it.” Yet, in the context of Uganda, he said, anyone who was actually a multipartyist was considered against Museveni, and he would punish them. Mwanbustya said Museveni liked to use another proverb to describe his behaviour toward the opposition, “if you commit suicide, people are not mourned.”

Nevertheless, Mwanbustya was positive about the global political space, the good governance agenda, and its influence on the democratisation of Uganda. At the same time, he was concerned that there was no “oversight role” for MPs in relations to the international system. Like Katuntu and Kanyeihamba, Mwanbustya was concerned about the expertise of MPs in the parliament.

Some of our MPs, they are just voted in. They cannot, for instance, understand the WTO, for example, and they don’t understand the IMF and World Bank. They don’t understand the EU, the UN system. Then how can you play an oversight role in this internationalised world? They don’t. An MP is supposed to play an oversight role, attend even the LC; the constitution gives them this power. But they don’t. They just go to an election.

According to this interviewee, the “habits of Ugandans” at the time of this interview in 2009 were still based on the no-party system. The donor community had demanded the switch to multipartyism, but both Museveni and a good deal of the citizens were still attempting to live according the individual merit principles, while generating the illusion that multipartyism was active in the country. Echoing Mbembe’s concept of *hallucination*

discussed in the last chapter, Mwanbustya saw the multiparty transition as illusory. Although Mwanbustya was hopeful for political change, and the donor push toward multipartism was in his view a step toward democratisation, he did not as yet see evidence of the vibrant democracy he had hoped for.

Furthermore, Mwanbustya was adamant that the military nature of Museveni's rule dampened the people's ability to participate in politics of any kind and under any system. He then told me "no one can govern Uganda except Museveni." Then he paused, "are you surprised that I said that? Do you know why?" To his satisfaction I responded with something I had read and heard throughout my visit to the country, "Because only Museveni can control the military." Some of the conditions that allow Museveni this control are discussed in the next chapter.

Dr. S. K. Simba Senior Lecturer, Makerere University, Kampala. Centre for Basic Research, Kampala. July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009 (not taped)

Dr. Simba made a very succinct observation on how Museveni continues to control Uganda despite the new multiparty system. Museveni, he said, "does not want to use party organs to get support" because he can secure personal rule without them. This is troubled further by the broad political climate highlighted by Dr. Simba. "The agenda of all parties is the same within the context of neo-liberalism, and there is no ideological basis for parties here." He said that lack of political ideology is in part due to the international climate that is defining the main socio-political parameters in the country. Dr. Simba's own research found that in order to shift Museveni toward multipartism, donor countries and institutions claimed they would cut grants and aid to Uganda's main budget by 21 million USD in 2005. In the end, however, "they needed Museveni in

Sudan and Somalia and so the budgets were merely shifted to sectoral support rather than budget support and they ended up with more in the end.”

Simba argues that the push to change the system was from donor pressure, transnational churches and in part civil society groups. He said about the multiparty transition that “the system aims at empowering – but conditional grants mean that priorities are already made at the centre. The difference between the LGS is insignificant, whether it is controlled by either party [or the movement system].” Essentially he said “the agenda of all parties is the same with neoliberalism- rationally what is the basis of political parties under these conditions? Organizing around parties in Africa becomes somewhat irrelevant.” Dr. Simba’s position approximates to neo-Marxist conceptions of multiparty systems like those brought forth by C.B. MacPherson, but the interactions between grants, loans, aid, public posturing and neoliberal ideology, suggests that Mbembe’s claims of private indirect government are able to capture the power relations Dr. Simba speaks of more accurately.

Charles Mwanguhya Mpangi, Political Editor *Daily Monitor* and political talk-show host Kfm “Hot Seat.” *Daily Monitor* offices, Kampala, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009: Duration of recorded interview: 22:35mins

My next interviewee was detained by police for two hours in early 2011, because he hosted a talk-show with Opposition FDC leader Kizze Besigye.<sup>288</sup> When I interviewed him, he, like Dr. Simba, did not see many differences between the two political systems no-party or multiparty in Uganda. Like most of my interviewees, he pointed to Museveni’s lack of support for multipartism as part of the problem.

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<sup>288</sup> “Radio talk show hosts questioned after opposition leader appears on show,” IFEX, June 15, 2011, [http://www.ifex.org/uganda/2011/06/15/hosts\\_questioned/](http://www.ifex.org/uganda/2011/06/15/hosts_questioned/).



I don't think there have been many fundamental differences in how business is conducted. This can be explained by two reasons. One is because there is the hangover of the individual merit system, which no one has really been able to get away from, and secondly because in many areas, the ruling party remains dominant. They need to function as a party; they need to lead by example.

In other words, the NRM was continuing to act as though they were in the movement and reluctantly accepting their new role as political party. As perhaps the most prominent journalist in country, Mr. Mpangi has a lot to say about how the parties were organising. He denied what he thought was the general accusation that political parties in Uganda do not have ideology, even though he admitted that parties were struggling to try and define themselves. Furthermore, besides intimidation and harassment of opposition members, Mpangi said Museveni was dividing and frustrating political party development through changing small structures of government. There had been "a craze" of creating new districts throughout Kampala, for instance, and Museveni was promising everyone a new district for their support. In the end, the districts were drawn along ethnic lines and thus "driving up tribal sentiments," according to Mpangi.

Mr. Mpangi described politics in Uganda as "groups seeking survival." He took me through each of the political parties and argued that the FDC was too leadership focussed and that the UPC was trying to reclaim the "social democratic" status that he claims they had at independence. New parties like the People's Progressive Parties were emerging, he said, but none of the parties were really supported for their broad ideological message yet. "Maybe after ten years you will see parties streamlining themselves - that is, only hoping that nothing else happens to destruct the course." According to this political expert, Museveni himself would also have to switch tune to be an example and advisor to the NRM rather than "someone who bribes the party." Many

of the main protestors against Museveni were once part of the NRM government themselves, therefore, Mpangi argued, they had been traditionally focussed on the “survival of the state” rather than the articulation of a competitive ideology. Furthermore since the main party, the NRM, would not come out with a “party platform,” the main opposition contenders had little way to figure out how to position themselves against it.

Given the political context, Mr. Mpangi was very vocal about an area I shall revisit in the next chapter, the commercialisation of politics. Here Mr. Mpangi discussed the effects of multiparty electoral politics when the electorate has not developed their political thinking along party lines and when the parties themselves were either frustrated by Museveni or unwilling to stake out their own political ideologies and platforms.

Politics in Uganda has become commercialised to such an extent it is unimaginable. Not on advertising, but you spend a lot of money on buying people – paying them because the social contract that exists between the politicians and the ordinary people has been broken overtime. I wish this foreign funding were going into civic education and people voted out of their consciousness – out of an understanding and appreciation of why they need to cast their vote. But that is not going to happen in the next election.

Instead, commercialisation was exacerbated by parties that lacked a cohesive ideology. And since, he said, “the NRM does not exist as a political party,” the political space is further complicated by the dual system of the NRM and multiparty democracy operating *simultaneously*.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> One young person I interviewed, in his early twenties, was a Ugandan USAID worker who had been a member of the Youth Chamber of Representatives under the LGS. He seemed potentially to be an up-and-coming political actor. He was working for USAID in the capacity of “parliamentary liaison” and would not allow himself to be named. In this capacity, he helped new MPs with resources and by recording constituent’s needs. He helped to fill the technical and party-system knowledge gaps that many of the people I interviewed saw as a major obstacle to developing multiparty government. Asking him about the differences in the two systems was interesting because I learned that his employer thought that the LGS was never democratic and for this young man it was not worth chancing his job to say otherwise, even though it seemed clear to me that he looked favourably upon the idea of ‘individual merit’ and his experience in the LGS government. He expressed concern over factions emerging in Uganda in the new system. <http://www.ndi.org/uganda#Political>.

### **Complexities and Contradictions from the Interview Data**

The interviewees in this dissertation were elite experts on the politics of Uganda and most had direct experience under both the no-party and one-party state. Some of the interviewees welcomed and/or pushed the change toward multiparty politics, judging that it was much better than the no-party alternative and hoping that it would somehow shift the political terrain towards pluralism and open up leadership contests to a wider range of political actors. Others were skeptical of multipartism as a basically Western system of politics that would not give Uganda the political peace and stability necessary to form a democracy. A few felt that Uganda was mobilising for the creation of ideological platforms and solidifying the party-system, but these interviewees were in the minority and most people I spoke with believed it would be a long time until Ugandans positioned themselves along partisan lines. At least one interviewee believed that the political space was so steeped in international politics that independent thinking and differentiation among parties was unlikely. Another thought Museveni was using the system to increase tribal sentiments, working directly against the justifications he had for creating the no-party system in the first place. So there were significant disagreements about both the possibility and desirability of party politics in Uganda.

Such disagreements as well as the depth and semi-structured nature of these interviews, mean that it is difficult to present and interpret them in a straightforward manner. Each respondent had considerable knowledge and experience. They were all very willing to engage in the topic and to discuss the changes they were experiencing from a structural perspective, but there was obviously no common narrative. No two

interviews were the same, and although I pull themes from these conversations, each one of the interviewees has publicized their own views within Uganda. However, the questions I posed captured a suggestive range of elite views at a particularly sensitive historical moment. Moreover, these questions provided an opportunity for important actors to take stock of rapidly moving events. Their responses often express a comparative analysis of their own government systems and register emerging insights into the broad struggles they have faced in the movement toward peace and democratisation in the country, to which most of the interviewees had dedicated their lives. The broad structural changes were occurring quickly and in 2009 their consequences still seemed unclear for everyone.

The interviewees all had one problem in common: the solidification of Museveni's power through the referendum process and through the proposal to lift presidential term limits. As I will discuss next chapter, this does not necessarily mean that Museveni had become all-powerful, but rather that the efforts to create a multiparty state were being frustrated by Museveni at a number of levels. Key opposition politicians were targeted both by police and young men hired independently. The court system was being used as a battleground for both personal and procedural battles. Museveni's control of the military, use of party discipline and bribery, as well as district creation and firmer control of the City of Kampala, meant that the leader was seen to be using any means necessary to hold on to the power base that he had created.

Together these interviews show how complex and contradictory the transition to multiparty politics had been. There was an underlying notion that multiparty politics could turn to violence as it had when it was part of Uganda's politics at independence.

There was also a hope among some respondents that Ugandans were ready and able to use the multiparty system for pluralistic politics although no one claimed that it was working smoothly. The transition seemed shaky at best, its meaning unclear, the way forward similarly opaque.

### **Interpreting the Interviews: Three General Observations**

These interviews highlight a number significant obstacles crucial to understanding the deep context and problems of democratisation in Uganda. This context can best be understood in multiple layers, given that many time-frames and spaces affect the process and implementation of democracy in Uganda today. The historical and international dimensions of Uganda's political space were evidenced throughout the interviews. Many interviewees argued that people in Uganda are trying to hold on to individual merit aspects of the LGS even while accepting the international community's role in democratisation and the push toward multipartyism. My interviews, furthermore, suggest that the literature regarding neo-patrimonial forms of governance does not take into account several dimensions of the problems of democratisation in Uganda. In this section, I will illustrate the missing historical and international dimensions of current analysis on Ugandan governance by using the work of Giovanni Carbone. I will further suggest that there is more going on in contemporary Uganda than neo-patrimonial theory can consider in its theoretical position. This treatment will allow me to bring into relief in the next chapter how remembering the historical basis of the Ugandan state, and highlighting the current international dimensions politics there, develops another and potentially more nuanced picture of what Uganda has been facing politically.

Giovanni Carbone published *No-Party Democracy? Ugandan Politics in Comparative Perspective* in 2008. In his view, the Ugandan no-party system never seriously materialised. He says that because political parties were not outlawed completely when the NRM took power, they kept generating “surrogate parties” that contested Museveni’s power. He writes that the “idea of no-partyism was never fully implemented... certain informal arrangements partly surrogated party activities, and ... old and new party-like organizations retained a degree of political relevance.”<sup>290</sup> These factors contribute to his idea that the 2005 referendum did not create a radical break in Uganda, not because of the weak basis for the transition, but because, the no-party system was a ruse and the NRM always acted as a political party itself. Therefore, he argues, that Sartori’s concept of a “hegemonic party” is useful, and that Uganda could be characterized under the rubric of “one party dominance.”<sup>291</sup> His suggestion is that Museveni’s “hybrid regime” is difficult to transform into multipartism almost solely because of the strength of the executive office.

My interviews offer some grounds on which to contest Carbone’s view that the no-party system never had a serious impact on Ugandan politics. Dr. Otim said it had “healing purposes” and others such as FDC MP Katuntu, NRM Minister Godfrey and the *Monitor* Editor Mpangi said the no-party system has been “hanging on,” and that there was an “individual merit hangover.” This generally common view suggests that citizens indeed had attachments to the individual merit system implying that it did somehow exist as an alternative system, at least at some point in the past. The responses of my interviewees seems to mesh more with authors like Devra Moehler discussed in chapter

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<sup>290</sup> Carbone, *No-Party Democracy?*, 190.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*

2, who detailed the participatory constitution-building that brought forth the no-party system in 1995 and who implied that there was mass involvement in creating the LGS.<sup>292</sup>

Some, like opposition MP Erias and Professor Mwambustya, argued that they had never believed that Museveni supported the no-party system and had in fact derailed it, but they did not deny that other people in Uganda supported the system. Much of the current literature on Uganda eschews the idea of the no-party system but then cannot explain why some citizens may support it either. This perspective neglects to include the Uganda's history in the past 60 years, which offers considerable material with which to explain preferences for the no-party system. Abstracting from history, and thus from the forces shaping the economic, social, cultural and technological aspects of Ugandan politics, the literature cannot really come to terms with contemporary problems in an effective manner.

Furthermore, Carbone does not address some of the important nuances and variants in party models that Giovanni Sartori suggested in *Parties and Party Systems* even though he employs Sartori's typology. As discussed in chapter 2, Sartori argued that "factions" are a critical deterrent to the party system framework, and that "sub-system autonomy" is a critical ingredient. Ideological distance between parties, and ideological coherence within them, were also integral to the Sartorian differentiation in party systems and were clearly very relevant to the political actors I interviewed. Carbone did not address them.

Lack of party ideology and the existence of "factions," or the pursuit of politics by sectarianism, was a concern discussed by both members of the opposition and government members. NRM politicians Adyeeri, Anthony and Mutabwire discussed how

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<sup>292</sup>Moehler, *Distrusting Democrats*.

meetings digressed and parties were disorganised and how the multiparty system was plagued by problems of interest articulation and infighting. In Sartori's view this would constitute a huge impediment to the viability of a "party-system." Therefore, divisions in the community and viable opposition platforms have become crucial to the possibility of a party-system emerging in Uganda. Factions become reduced as parties congeal around broad ideologies that can encompass a wide range of people and interests. The lack of evidence for this tendency is a good reason to suggest that Uganda is not yet a multiparty democracy. Unlike perspectives such as Carbone's that look to executive level power to develop the argument that Uganda is semi-authoritarian or hybrid, however, it seems Sartori was more concerned with the assessment of pluralism from below the executive level. Seeing his analysis in this light, one might ask which system no-party or multiparty, was better at developing nationalist platforms for various interest groups, which system allowed for more sub-system participation?

The significance of Sartori's category sub-system autonomy was illuminated by my interview with Pereza Godfrey, Minister of State for Local Government. For Sartori, sub-system autonomy refers to democracy below the parliamentary or party leadership level. Godfrey argued that the no-party system had helped to develop the autonomy of political representatives and connected them to their constituencies more directly. Sartori's concept of autonomy includes bureaucratic appointments and executive control of key government institutions. Most of my interviewees were concerned by, for instance, by Museveni's personal military and police control in Uganda and by the government's ability to use all the arms of the state in order to hassle opposition development. Development of new districts and political promises by the President were similarly sub-



system concerns emphasised by Mpangi. Many of my interviewees, including Justice Kanyeihamba, argued that processes of governance were too centralised, and that key ministries lacked autonomy from the Office of the President. These tendencies did not seem to be subsiding despite the transition to multiparty politics, however, and in some cases those interviewed, like Professor Mwambustya, felt the trends were becoming more pronounced. Centralisation of state instruments is an obvious antithesis to sub-system autonomy. Carbone's notion of the hybrid state does capture some of these sub-system stymies to democratisation but the analysis remains fixed on the executive which makes it easier to identify more democracy with simply more turn-over in leadership.

Regarding the relationship between Uganda and the international political environment, my interviews offer a striking contrast to Carbone's analysis. In his view, the donor's relationship to the multiparty process was negligible. The donors, he said, "largely remained silent" and "[e]xternal actors, therefore, cannot really be considered a primary cause for Uganda's transition to multipartyism." Similarly, "donors only took some *limited* action after the transition to multipartyism had been initiated." He does not specify what this action was.<sup>293</sup> Again, Carbone's work does not mesh with the information I have gathered. Every expert I spoke to suggested that Uganda had transitioned to a multiparty system in large part because of the international environment. Some looked more favourably on this than others. Dr. Simba had found direct correspondence between Uganda and donor countries over budgetary discipline if Uganda did not transition to multiparty politics, while other like Justice Kanyeihamba, believed that Museveni had agreed to accept multiparty politics to appease donors;

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<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 193.

however, neither offered direct evidence. The international context of Uganda creates new dimensions of politics that authors like Carbone do not consider. Without considering initiatives of the international community in instigating this swift shift to multipartyism, and the consequent negation of Uganda's no-party system, we cannot really understand the context of democratisation and the conditions that citizens and political actors in Uganda face when trying to devise democratic systems that work for their populations.

Another challenge to the literature that arises out of my interviews in Uganda concerns neo-patrimonial theory, the most dominant analysis of African governance, and one with which some of the interviewees including Professor Mwanbustya identify. Yet this theory does not capture some of the critical problems identified across the group I interviewed. Aili Tripp argues that the central political paradox in African democratisation comes from leaders who need to leave power but who are unable to do so "because the personal cost of leaving are too high. Because they have to feed patronage networks through the use of resources illicitly obtained through offices of the state and because they have used force or the threat of force against their opponents, they cannot leave office without dire personal consequences."<sup>294</sup> Although it is true that neo-patrimonialism incorporates the formal and informal levels of power, as Professor Mwanbustya suggested, and allows for an understanding of how cultural traditions such as patronage can impact contemporary politics, the theory does not allow for a dynamic view of the many levels of politics in and beyond the African state. It does not address how multiparty politics have tended to generate patronage networks themselves through the need to aggregate the vote either. The traditionalist and nation-state focus of neo-

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<sup>294</sup> Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda*, 194.

patrimonial theory hasn't embraced the way that modern and technological elements of the state shape and define political identity. It furthermore tends to gloss over the ways leaders are themselves constrained in their actions by forces beyond their control.

### **Contemporary Uganda: Suggestions from the Data**

My interviews, along with literature which addressed the development of the no-party system discussed in chapter 2, suggests that there was indeed a no-party system in Uganda that did have considerable support among the people. Furthermore, it is not clear in what ways Uganda has become a multiparty democracy even though it has supposedly satisfied some of the conditions of good governance for which donor countries had been seeking. The data I have collected in Uganda also suggests that current analysis of Uganda in terms of neo-patrimonial theory does not really speak to many obstacles politicians in Uganda are facing in the new system. In particular, the historical and international levels of the system are missing from neo-patrimonial analysis even though history was central on the minds of political actors who built and participated in Uganda's no-party system. Also, the existing literature has lacked attention to the international context in which democratising Uganda has been taking place, even though donor pressure in general was a common reason given for the transition. I will highlight this latter consideration in chapter 5.

Lack of control over the state has set the stage for a different kind of politics. The use of the concept of hybridity in this context by contemporary theorists seemingly relates solely to Museveni's power, but even though this was important to the political actors I spoke to, the system of politics in Uganda appeared to me to be much larger than

simply Museveni. Because simply reforming the no-party system was never considered legitimate by the international community (or possibly even by theorists), the multiparty system has been brought and it has had noticeable consequences for the political actors I spoke too.

Overall, stepping back from my interviews and looking at the big picture, I observed several distinct areas in which change in the country had been occurring after the introduction of competitive political parties but still, in 2009, before the first full-blown multiparty election in 2011. Let me present schematically, as a conclusion to this chapter, four areas highlighted by my interviews which pertain mostly to the international arena. They will be developed in the next chapter. These four areas serve as increasing sources of tension, and they thwart or inhibit the possibilities for creating a sustainable and consolidated democracy in Uganda today.

First, I notice that the problem of lack of state capacity was deemed critical by both opposition and government members. As I develop in the next chapter following the work of Achille Mbembe, state capacity has often been considered in a narrow and domestic framework, causing analysis to suggest that it is solely Museveni's power or personal manipulation that has stalled Uganda's democratic development. Not denying this, I want to complicate the concept of state capacity and use both the historical and international dimensions of analysis to expand our understanding of it. Many MPs I talked to named the donor community as the cause of the shift to party politics indicating that Ugandan politicians lacked control over the agenda and direction of their own constitutions. Furthermore, in the dance to avert the displeasure of donor countries, the President himself acted as though he wanted a multiparty system even though not one MP

I spoke with, whether NRM or otherwise, believed that Museveni had ever supported a real transition. At the same time, although Museveni conducts politics as though he is all-powerful, that fact that he lacks capacity in fundamental ways was not lost on my interviewees.

Second, I notice the problem of technocratic approaches developing alongside the multiparty system. These were often noted as a particular problem when training MPs from more remote areas. Many MPs need to learn the language of constitutional government and to use computers as MP Katuntu and Justice Kanyeihamba suggested. Further to the condition of technocracy, and as I quoted Mpangi saying earlier,

Politics in Uganda has become commercialised to such an extent it is unimaginable. Not on advertising, but you spend a lot of money on buying people – paying them because the social contract that exists between the politicians and the ordinary people has been broken overtime.

In addition to outright vote-buying, commercialisation is increasingly accompanied by simplistic political messages to attract the broad public into nationalistic and international trends. These are not deliberative platforms but a commercialisation of politics which can be considered part of the technocratic mobilisation of the population through party platforms. Mobilisation through the party machinery seems to have become more of a commercial enterprise than it was when attracting members through individual merit, as MP Yiga Anthony suggested.

Third, I observe from my interviews, particularly with the professors, a concern about the country's heightened militarism and the consequences this can have for democracy and state resources. Professor Mwambustya expressed what many others said at the time as well: Museveni "has created the condition where he is the only one who can run this country, not just the military but all the security agencies." Reminiscent of

neopatrimonial theory though this may seem, the conditions of Museveni's military clout today lay beyond tribal or traditional politics or even cult of personality. Coinciding with the re-introduction of the multiparty system, as I discuss in the next chapter, militarism has increased in Uganda particularly beyond its borders. Furthermore, because of this general condition, choices for leaders and political representatives are influenced. Mwambustya said that "the peasants have a high sense of survival. They ask if the country can be governed without a strong military and they say no, and then why should I waste my vote? If I vote for someone who does not win I will not get the benefits of the state, I will not get the *crumbs*." Militarism influences democratic political choices in Uganda today and tends to affect both leadership and citizens.

Finally, I observe both concern with lack of ideology (or of a coherent set of beliefs for a political party) and problems with positioning political parties along ideological lines. As I have already noted, Sartori believed that the viability of multiparty politics without cohesive ideology is not strong. Although there are many reasons for these problems, such as lack of trade organisations as Adyeeri noted, or lack of communications skills as Katuntu said, another source of these problems is historical and international. Dr. Simba argued that neoliberalism is the only ideology available to Ugandans, and that too gives pause to consider how a multiparty system might be devised in such a context. These are subjects that contemporary books such as Tripp's and Carbone's more or less dismiss, but they then miss how historical divisions, such as those between kingdoms, or between those who supported or opposed Amin, and new international divisions such as transnational religious divides, are alive and mingling in the political space. In other words, the basis for the ideological divisions in Uganda are

not well understood by these accounts. My interviewees were all aware of the strong influence of donors in their move toward multipartism. Furthermore, they mostly doubted actual outcomes of the referendum in 2005 and the so-called transition to multipartism. In this way, what I have called the politics of dispensation, or the international nature of the Ugandan state, is shown to have had a significant impact on conditions and outcomes for democratisation.

## CHAPTER FIVE: A Politics of Dispensation?

Sentiments that arose from my interviews regarding the multiparty and no-party system in Uganda suggest that international systems have impacted the political choices available to Ugandans. The advocates and critics of the no-party system, shared the perception that Uganda's major political actors were in some way courting or responding to the needs of the international community and the donors. As my interviewees told me the story of the country's systems of government since independence, they also explained the international conditions that either forced them to choose change or helped them to facilitate their desire to create a multiparty system. Many of the interviewees seemed to either accept or be resigned toward to the power of foreign influences on Uganda. The transition to multiparty politics in 2005 set the conditions for a multiparty system for which, at best, Ugandans seemed ill prepared. According to my interviews, the space to create this system and the push to change arose primarily from donor-pressure.

As I have said throughout this dissertation, three major works on this case in the last decade by Tripp, Rubongoya and Carbone respectively, did not address the international environment and external influences except as an aside.<sup>295</sup> These recent analyses also do not explain how, for instance, a leader can be considered hegemonic in conditions of deeply informalised and externally influenced economies. How can there be hegemony, as Rubongoya suggests, when power is most often arbitrary and conditioned by donor funds or directives?<sup>296</sup> During my interviews, and through my historical study, it became clear to me that questions of international politics are embedded in many of

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<sup>295</sup> Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda*; Rubongoya, *Regime Hegemony in Museveni's Uganda*; Carbone, *No-Party Democracy?*

<sup>296</sup> Rubongoya, *Regime Hegemony in Museveni's Uganda*.



Uganda's fundamental decisions, and much of the government's ability to function relies on getting the relationship between the national/international levels of power correct.

Achille Mbembe's notion of political power is in contradiction to the prevailing domestically focussed analysis. He argues that the state in Africa is actively informalised through private contracts and is far from a monolithic power as it is often portrayed.<sup>297</sup> Furthermore, many of the MPs interviewed disagreed with the view that there is one system of democracy for Africa or that there is no such concept as indigenous African democracy. None of the three main authors on Uganda I reviewed entertained the idea that democratisation may mean something other than multiparty democracy, or that multiparty democracy may not be the most appropriate system for Uganda. Any hegemony felt by MPs I interviewed such as Adyeeri seemed more related to the influential claim that good governance *must* mean multiparty democracy.

In chapter 3, looking at the history of Uganda, we saw that the internationalisation of the space of politics in Uganda is not new. Colonialism has given way to novel forms of external interference in relation to which the meaning of democracy is being shaped not simply through any process of self-determination but rather according a story about democracy in an ideal-form. The still powerful theory of development works to delegitimise debates about procedural possibilities and structural contexts for self-determination. Particularly since the end of the Cold War, however, politics in Uganda has been subsumed within the development framework. An understanding of the politics going on there should consider the assumptions among donors about how an electoral system and a party system should be structured.

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<sup>297</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*.

The ways in which development and democracy have been interlinked in the last decade has led to a complex blending of two competing principles - proceduralism and self-determination. In one way, the problem can be considered by understanding these two different and often divergent principles historically. On the one hand, democracy has been understood in relation to commitments to principles of self-determination. This democracy would be defined through various local processes; either looking to history and tradition or looking at other countries in the world as models. A people, in this narrative, can choose how, who and what they want their country to be. They can shape and mould it according to the values and ethics they hold. On the other hand, democracy has been understood as the commitment to certain procedures. In this view, the establishment of principles and procedures to achieve democratic governance are primarily derived contextually and specific to local ideals.

Who gets to decide what democracy is becomes crucial to authenticity and to the legitimacy of the system itself. Who gets to decide these questions in Uganda often has been determined far beyond the borders of the state; determined, that is, not through a process of learning from others but by being told by others what is acceptable. This makes for questionable legitimacy when it comes to political systems themselves and makes the claim by Mbaku and Ihonvbhere, cited in chapter 2, that voter turn-out, for example, is declining as more countries in Africa transition to multiparty politics in Africa - make more sense.<sup>298</sup>

It is in this context that I think it is useful to think about the Ugandan experience in terms of the politics of dispensation. I have drawn this concept from my observation of

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<sup>298</sup> Mbaku and Ihonvbere, eds., *Multiparty Democracy and Political Change: Constraints to Democratization in Africa*.

political actors in Uganda in 2009. Although I spoke to people of varying ranks and affiliations, all of them orally referred to the new multiparty system as the “multiparty dispensation.” This is probably a particular vernacular developed in post-British Uganda, a blending of the way language is used in both British and Ugandan contexts. Yet, for me it symbolized what Arturo Escobar referred to in 1995 as a “domain of thought and action,”<sup>299</sup> a sense that from somewhere foreign, and indeed higher up, a political system was handed down, or ‘dispensed’ into the country, like a pill that would cure the patient. In Uganda, the relationship of the state to outside forces has shaped the nature of the democratic space. In these conditions, it is hard to argue that the state is either one-party, no-party or multiparty, because although these systems shape aspects of politics, none of these options define the political space in and of themselves.

Perceptions and many practices of neo-colonialism are fuelled by relations between the domestic state and international system. President Museveni recently met donor-state representatives at the State House in Uganda who were worried about corruption. The nature of constant pandering to international forces was illustrated in this meeting. He reiterated the claim that his country was “anti-colonial” and “anti-feudal.” Museveni said,

As for the Development Partners, kindly inform your home constituencies that you are dealing with capable people who fought the dictatorship of Idi Amin; fought the dictatorship of UPC; defended Uganda from Sudanese - sponsored terrorism; destroyed the colonial army that was killing Ugandans; stopped the multiple crimes of that army against the people of Uganda; enabled the Ugandan economy to recover; contributed to regional peace, etc.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 10.

<sup>300</sup> “Museveni meets donors, vows on corruption,” speech by Museveni printed in *New Vision*, November 19, 2012, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/637429-museveni-meets-donors-vows-oncorruption.html>.

In many ways, what Museveni performs here is a dance of image and perception or what Achille Mbembe has referred to as *hallucination*. Reporter Geoffrey York further illustrated this phenomenon across the continent by tracing the huge sums of money being paid by impoverished African governments to public relations firms in the United States for a “better make-over.”<sup>301</sup> As well, this quotation from Museveni reflects an insistence on the importance of the historical basis of contemporary politics in Uganda and reiterates the widespread feeling that although donor countries have long worked with Uganda they nevertheless need reminding of some of the basic facts of Ugandan history.

In *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, first published in French in 1989, Jean-François Bayart introduces many of the concepts Mbembe later refined in 2001. In the Preface to the second English edition in 2009, Bayart operationalises the concept of “extraversion” he developed in the 1980s. He explains that since the period of structural adjustment in the 1980s, the state-elite in Africa accelerated the tendency to integrate themselves into the global system and to ingratiate themselves to private international actors. Within this outward orientation, Bayart suggests that the “discourse of democracy” was used by African elites as “another source of economic rents, comparable to earlier discourses such as the denunciation of communism or imperialism.”<sup>302</sup> The elite have been so effectively co-opted (through high salaries) into the IMF and World Bank policies of good governance and civil society, Bayart says, that “those potential counter-elites [have been] confined within the ‘legitimate’ problematique of development.”<sup>303</sup>

Bayart refines six aspects of extraversion in his work, and through them he argues that

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<sup>301</sup> Geoffrey York, “Buying a better image: African leaders enlist U.S. agencies for pricey reputation makeover,” *Globe and Mail*, February 1, 2012. Governments including Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Liberia were reported to be paying hundreds of millions USD annually to US firms to improve their public images.

<sup>302</sup> Bayart, *The State in Africa*, xxiv.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*

the democratic developments in Africa have always been historically embedded in international affairs. “Seen from this angle, the reinvention of the democratic model imported from the West remains a possible mode of the ongoing history of extraversion.”<sup>304</sup>

In Achille Mbembe’s terms, in the context of international relations and aid/democratisation programs, African politics has been *zombified* and is witnessed through increasing centralisation of a state that simultaneously lacks real capacity in terms of public goods provision. Mbembe describes “fractionated sovereignty” as a system of centralisation in the conditions of weak and fragile states. His concept develops Bayart’s notion of the *hallucination* of state power in Africa, defined as more ceremony than reality. In Mbembe’s version, power has become *fetishised*. What distinguishes these analyses is the ability of both authors to insightfully consider how both informal and formal aspects of power in Africa allow international dynamics to assert themselves within the domestic context. At the centre of Mbembe’s analysis are “first, the de-linking of Africa from formal international markets; second, the forms of its integration into the circuits of the parallel international economy; and third, the fragmentation of public authority and emergence of multiple forms of *private indirect government* accompanying these two processes.”<sup>305</sup>

As Achille Mbembe argues in his work, people in Africa often view their own political leaders as weak or powerless in the face of international negotiations. Observing their leaders court donor funding and justifying anti-popular domestic political actions is a common occurrence in the daily press. The daily politics of many African states is embedded in international negotiations. Teasing out the implications of this suggests that

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<sup>304</sup> Ibid., lxix., Bayart articulates the “grammar of extraversion” in these areas: coercion, trickery, flight, mediation, appropriation and rejection. Each of these “social types” works on two level: visible and invisible.

<sup>305</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 67.

the analytical imposition of boundaries on a domestic state that are not always to be found empirically and does not really help develop our understanding of a place such as Uganda. Considering that many government initiatives must weigh the opinions of international donor countries and dozens of international agencies in their policy-making processes further suggests that domestic, nation based, analytical categories do not speak entirely to whom the *demos* is that would constitute Uganda's democratic order. The work of both Mbembe and Bayart, however, has illuminated the international conditions and context of democracy in sophisticated and nuanced ways and, both authors have clearly stressed the international nature of African states like Uganda.

Using the guidance of Bayart and Mbembe, this chapter sketches the international nature of the domestic state in Uganda. It is not an exercise often undertaken in the literature on the country and so what follows is both a preliminary investigation into what knowledge might be gleaned from understanding how international influences affect politics and an inquiry into whether or not including international factors in analysis of Uganda develops our understanding of the country/case. The central focus of this study has been the party-system and no-party systems. Therefore, I look at how some critical areas of political life and of party development under the multiparty dispensation have been affected by international systems of power at work in Uganda. I do this by using four themes that became evident to me during my fieldwork in Uganda. These themes are also particularly related to the questions regarding political parties that I have been posing and are embedded in the good governance framework of international development literature. The themes help to exemplify the point that problems inherent in democratic development in Uganda are not simply defined by the sovereign state or domestic society. In taking a snapshot of Uganda in these four areas, we see that Ugandans are not simply concerned with domestic affairs when considering democratic deliberations.

## **Technology**

The first dimension I want to highlight in laying out the politics of dispensation in Uganda is the increasingly technocratic character of politics. Here Arturo Escobar's discussion of the nature of development technocracy in his book *Encountering Development* is especially important. Escobar argues that "technocracy" has been an integral aspect of the "regime of development," one that is tied to a particular mutation of Western modernity.<sup>306</sup> For example, the technical assistance programs of the World Bank, IMF and other development agencies are considered by Escobar to be much less benign than these international agencies admit. Rather, in every development assistance program there is a "system of thought and action" that silences other views on, say, agriculture, education, land use or community development. Technical assistance has been central to development and aid programs, and it is increasingly being taken up by economic institutions such as the WTO as well.<sup>307</sup> Democratisation in Africa is increasingly posed as a technical question, addressed by technicians of democracy, who can calculate appropriate democratic development matrices for countries.

Edward Said documented something similar in his account of Napoleon's conquering of Egypt in his book *Orientalism*. Here, Said argues that it was the system of ideas that the French had generated about the Egyptians which actually allowed them to conquer them. By claiming to know them better than they knew themselves and therefore becoming the experts on Egypt, the French could assert their developed status over undeveloped Egypt. Marshall McLuhan in Canada and Noam Chomsky in the USA have

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<sup>306</sup> Escobar, *Encountering Development*.

<sup>307</sup> The "Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance" is an interesting new development in this area. [http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/devel\\_e/teccop\\_e/if\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/teccop_e/if_e.htm).

also given popular accounts of the ways in which populations are managed and cajoled through technological means.<sup>308</sup> McLuhan has been credited with the term ‘technological determinism.’<sup>309</sup> Systems of thought and a produced knowledge of the people themselves, McLuhan argued, frame how we know ourselves and the types of knowledge deemed credible. This is made possible, moreover, by the ability of powerful actors in the system, such as states and large corporations, to police and ensure that only certain questions are asked or only particular voices are heard, as Chomsky continues to argue unrelentingly.

When we look at the system of political parties throughout the world, not just in places like Uganda, the technocratic character of political representation are obviously important. For instance, a party machinery is in essence a mobiliser, run by constant polling and advertising. In some countries, there are electoral spending laws to attempt to govern the commercialisation of politics. Nevertheless, to meet the demands of the technological character of the institutions of political representation politicians are forced to shape a message that can fit the medium. Jeffrey Simpson from Canada’s *Globe and Mail* newspaper re-stated an old adage when he wrote “Political survival demands avoiding a serious debate.”<sup>310</sup> This implies that even in the absence of US style (non)spending laws, the technological approach to politics as embodied in multiparty competition tends to encourage the commercialisation of politics through sound-bytes and images.

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<sup>308</sup> Eric McLuhan and Frank Zingrone, eds., *Essential McLuhan* (Oxford: Routledge, 1997), Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1979), Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988).

<sup>309</sup> McLuhan and Zingrone (eds.), *Essential McLuhan*.

<sup>310</sup> Jeffrey Simpson, “Here’s My Prescription for Reviving Medicare,” *The Globe and Mail*, September 28, 2012, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/heres-my-prescription-for-reviving-medicare/article4576368/?page=all>.



In Uganda, the party members I interviewed seemed to suggest that they were losing voice to the need for maintaining party discipline and the perception of caucus unity. Although this regimentation may be technically expedient it shapes, arguably, a fairly narrow understanding of democracy. Representatives become orientated toward the political party rather than the particular constituency or the general good of the nation. As opposition MP Katuntu said, even when he is advocating for his region and not his party he is now accused of partisanship. Hon. Yiga Anthony also said that the non-partisan individual merit system had really allowed MPs and voters to debate substantive problems. The technology of party politics shapes political competition in a way that commercialises political messages thereby using mechanisms that can distance MPs from substantive debate.

This type of technical politics is not new, and neither are complaints that it undermines much of the participatory character in favour of instrumental techniques of representation. In the current context of Uganda, however, technocracy, and technocratic politics is further complicated. For instance, political parties have been promised state funding through the 2010 Political Parties and Organizations Act, but many have made complaints that money is not forthcoming and they have accused the state of frustrating fundraising attempts. Political parties in Uganda are open to foreign donations, which they must actively court given the lack of domestic funds. As was reported in 2012, political parties must rely on foreign financial support even for delegates meetings.<sup>311</sup> As my interviews suggested, parties lack broad ideology or vision and consequently lack

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<sup>311</sup> Kakaire Sulaiman, "Broke parties, rich NRM undermine democracy," *The Observer*, May 16, 2012, [http://www.observer.ug/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=18750&Itemid=114](http://www.observer.ug/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=18750&Itemid=114).

intellectual commitment among the party and the electorate. Political parties in Uganda show few avenues for developing cohesive ideas except through commercialisation and foreign support.

According to a report from the Overseas Development Institute in the United Kingdom in 2010, the technical solution approach to political party development in Uganda, undertaken largely by donor sponsors in the Netherlands, UK and USA, are not providing parties with the ability to challenge broad structural impediments to democratisation such as centralisation of leadership. Three main models of party support by the donor community in Uganda have been identified by these researchers in the UK. The “sister-model,” known for supporting ideologically similar parties, but since this is weak in Uganda, they argue, such development can likely only create parties where none exist. The “basket-model” attempts to root local party development into a long-term framework – ideal, they argue, but unclear in terms of strategy.

The popular USAID technical assistance approach is focussed on assistance for every existing party. Yet, it is not clear, the authors argue, that it is favouring democratic development. The technical assistance approach according to this report, was attempting a focus on the internal democratisation of parties, which would have been favourably looked upon by authors such as Dahl and Sartori. In the context of weak parties overall, however, the focus of the party, the report found, is really competitive. In order for a party to exist, it must make an impression at election time. This large-scale message building does not equate easily with democratising internal party dynamics, and the report shows it has not been successful in Uganda. As Wild and Golooba-Mutebi report, “they appear to struggle to engage with the broader political challenges inherent in

political party development in Uganda, such as the fusion between ruling party and state.”<sup>312</sup> Moreover, it seems that the most problematic block in democratising Uganda according to leading donors and theorists - Museveni’s leadership - has not yet been addressed by the transition to multiparty politics.

At another level, this technocratic approach allows parties to operate in an international system and broadens the range of who actually participates in a Ugandan election. There is a huge push by donors to educate parliamentarians. Political actors from every party that I interviewed discussed these concerns and suggested they have ample donor-support to develop these programs. However, as Justice Kanyeihamba said, without a culture of reading, one cannot expect MPs to follow and uphold the constitution and precedents set by the Supreme Court. Essentially, these systems and methods of law making through written texts remain somewhat foreign to ordinary people and to politicians despite having a parliamentary state since the 1960s. And if only 40% can now effectively use a computer, as MP Katuntu suggested, then 60% will lose out on foreign connections and support and be trumped by the more technologically adept MPs. Again, this may be good for streamlining and making parliament more efficient but it does not necessarily connect the MP to their constituents or constitute enhanced democracy.

The “depoliticizing of development” through technical assistance identified by Escobar in the 1990s, means that as democracy is approached as a technical fix, many of the underlying historical and contextual problems in Uganda will be ignored. This

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<sup>312</sup> Leni Wild and Fred Golooba-Mutebi, *Review of international assistance to political party and party system development – Case study report: Uganda* (London: Overseas Development Institute, August 2010), <http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6867.pdf>.

technical solution of multiparty procedures for ensuring democracy means that the population will have to align with a main political contender in order to participate in political discourse. In doing this, parties do not necessarily aggregate the vote as Gabriel Almond once assumed they did. They may open the state to political contenders, both foreign and domestic, local or national, depending on what is most strategic for their interests. As others have suggested like Meredith and Kasfir discussed in chapter 2, the party-system may also cause people to align with identity-based parties particularly in the absence of broad ideologies other than ethnicity, region etc. Again, we may also look to Sartori who suggested that parties might simply devolve into factions, secular or otherwise, in the context of low state capacity and reluctant nationalist vision.

Technical solutions to party development enmesh the state of Uganda and each of its political parties in an international web of proceduralism. Technocracy has been problematised in development studies at least since the 1990s, but in the context of multiparty democratisation in Uganda, the technical aspects of politics, which are mostly adopted from abroad, are gaining sway and growing. The no-party system, though not without difficulties, was a means of communication that utilised local resources and innovation. In at least one way, the commercialisation of politics and the universal template of multiparty democracy, increases international technocracy through means of sound bytes, mass communication and international funding. The politics of dispensation increases a disconnection of the personal relationships between political representatives and their constituents. There becomes a technical solution to democracy, taught to the voters in which the focus is simply selling the message until it is believed to be true. The politicians I interviewed have their work cut out for them trying to turn Ugandans from

the LGS toward multiparty democracy. They are selling the concept of their political party to the population without resources, education or internal party democracy. The technical dispensation of the appropriate constitution to satisfy the international democratic experts dissociates Ugandans from their own traditions and preferences. Although the multiparty ‘medicine’ has been dispensed, however, it is not clear what the results will be, especially given Uganda’s political history.<sup>313</sup>

### **Military**

A second theme I draw from my field work is that Ugandan democratisation is increasingly pinched in every way by the international context of militarisation which is making President Museveni more powerful due to the centralisation of control necessary for such policies. The problem is that while multiparty democracy is being instituted, the international community is simultaneously encouraging Museveni’s military control of the whole of East Africa, from Somalia to the Congo. Uganda’s strategic location coupled with the western military training of its key leaders, has given it the region’s most fierce and disciplined army.<sup>314</sup> Recently, Uganda had an increase in its military budget of 300%, largely spent on purchases of Russian fighter-jets.<sup>315</sup> It now has a larger

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<sup>313</sup> Technocratic tendencies characterise many aspects of Ugandan politics besides party politics, although this is my specific focus here. Furthermore, access to technology sustains a form of elitism in Uganda. Idi Amin’s nickname “the last King of Scotland,” and his reliance on foreign medical attention and expertise, is an example of how the loyalties of the elite are split between global and domestic forces. President Museveni continues to ensure medical treatment for top government officials, by paying for their overseas medical care. Ismail Musa Ladu, “Government spends Shs380 billion on officials’ treatment abroad,” *Daily Monitor*, April 24, 2012, <http://mobile.monitor.co.ug/News/-/691252/1392598/-/format/xhtml/-/mm69rt/-/index.html>.

<sup>314</sup> Dan Damon, “Why is Uganda fighting in 'hellish' Somalia?,” *BBC News Africa*, March 15, 2012.

<sup>315</sup> Haggai Matsiko, “Why is Museveni Building Region’s Strongest Army?,” *The Independent*, April 9, 2012, <http://www.independent.co.ug/cover-story/5554-why-is-museveni-building-regions-strongest-army>.

army than Kenya and is involved in military operations for the African Union and the United Nations.

For Bayart, coercion is the most obvious form of extraversion. The use of coercion throughout the African state, he argues, has its roots in colonialism, and today it continues to be facilitated through military contracts and often direct support for heavy-handed governments by international actors. The intensified violence on the continent, deepening the banality of physical control, leads Bayart to argue, “the new style of coercion may also take the form of deregulation (or possibly democratisation?) of the use of violence, in the shape both of collective armed movements and of more individual delinquency, both facilitated by the wide availability of low cost firearms.”<sup>316</sup> Mbembe makes suggestions along the same lines when he argues that “private indirect government” or the “privatisation of sovereignty” engenders a new system of government in Africa which explicitly includes the “*privatisation of coercion*, because the control of the means of coercion makes it possible to secure an advantage in the other conflicts under way for the appropriation of resources and other utilities formerly concentrated in the state.”<sup>317</sup>

Uganda is implicated in global security forces. Yet, rather than taking on the security form that Paul Collier suggested,<sup>318</sup> they take on more conventionally militaristic nature. US President George Bush Jr. elevated military partnerships between his nation and African institutional bodies such as regional security organizations and the AU. Through the US African Command (AFRICOM) networks, which partnered many

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<sup>316</sup> Bayart, *The State in Africa*, lvi.

<sup>317</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 78 (emphasis original).

<sup>318</sup> Paul Collier, *War, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009).

military organizations, both public and private, the US has undoubtedly elevated its military presence in Africa. Professor Horace Campbell argues that AFRICOM ensures US needs from Africa are secured.<sup>319</sup> His conclusion is found repeated in popular publications such as that by the Africa Faith and Justice Network, who print the view that these security solutions to African problems divert money and attention away from badly needed services and secure oil interests and other lucrative deals on the continent instead.<sup>320</sup> Uganda is now spearheading military operations for foreign interests throughout the eastern continent with its latest boost in Somalia with the formation of AMISOM. These posts come with a salary for Ugandan soldiers reportedly ten times that of domestic work. The renewed UN base in Entebbe offers constant support for military operations with flights, medical assistance and general funding.<sup>321</sup>

The burgeoning area of world military structures has been private military bodies, and their effects in Africa have been huge. Private military corporations (PMCs) have managed to avoid accusations that they are mercenaries and governments are free to employ PMCs. No violation against the Geneva Conventions or any other such law has prevented their operation and there is seemingly closure on public debate about the subject. The Ugandan military is now tied to these external forces in various ways. In 2010, 1,700 Ugandan AMISOM troops were transported using a private military corporation (PMC), contracted by the US government, under the banner of NATO.<sup>322</sup> For

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<sup>319</sup> Horace Campbell, "Africa: AFRICOM Go Home!", June 6, 2013, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201306071644.html>.

<sup>320</sup> "AFRICOM: Key Facts and Concerns," Africa Faith and Justice Network, undated, (published originally on the resist AFRICOM coalition website, August 2008), <http://www.afjn.org/focus-campaigns/militarization-us-africa-policy/134-basic-facts/760-africom-key-facts-and-concerns-.html>.

<sup>321</sup> Henry Mukasa, "UN to expand Entebbe base," *The New Vision*, August 9, 2009.

<sup>322</sup> David Isenberg, "Africa: The Mother of All PMC," CATO Institute, March 22, 2012, <http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/africa-mother-all-pmc>.

the average Ugandan, these levels of power are completely inaccessible, and the framework of citizen control over the domestic state is further strained.

As Professor Myambustya explained to me in our interview, it is often said in Uganda that no one can control the military except for Museveni. His main contender, with 20% of the vote in the last election, was Dr. Kizza Besigye of the FDC party. He was Museveni's medical doctor in the original formation of the NRM and fought the revolution along side him. Besigye has since organised numerous strikes and protests against the government but his power is waning in the midst of heightened militarism in Uganda; the FDC has recently opted for a military leader to run against Museveni and let Besigye step aside.<sup>323</sup> Despite party competition, leadership selection bids are conditioned by the state of the country as a whole in relation to external pressures and politics. The strong military components of the politics of dispensation strain democratic dialogue for all actors in the system.

Relationships with external militaries and the varying levels of power between different organizations such as the AU, the domestic government, PMCs, NATO and the USA, are not very clear. Uganda furiously pulled out of its missions in Somalia for AMISOM (it is not clear how deep the threat goes) on the grounds that it felt betrayed by "Western governments" for apparently leaking confidential briefings over Uganda's own military work in Goma, Congo. "Let's stop all these initiatives. We will concentrate on ourselves. Whoever wants to cause us trouble, they will find us at our home," Uganda's

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<sup>323</sup> Nelson Wesonga, "The campaigns that exposed FDC structures," *The Monitor*, November 24, 2012, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/The-campaigns-that-exposed-FDC-structures/-/688334/1627090/-/item/1/-/e8sxxpz/-/index.html>.



Security Minister said.<sup>324</sup> The influential African Union has a triumphant slogan “African Solutions to African Problems,” and when Libya’s Gaddafi was Chair of AU in 2010 he pronounced himself the leader of 2000 tribes of Africa. Yet, when the decision came to invade Libya, the AU was not allowed into the discussion.<sup>325</sup> To the Ugandan citizen, their continental institutions are strained by international politics and their governments’ embedded in these political dynamics.

Although this dissertation cannot examine all of the military contracts and security developments in Uganda, getting control of military missions or military expenditure does seem daunting for most Ugandan citizens. Most relevant for this paper is that the authority and interests at work in the Uganda People’s Defence Forces, in the government’s military directives, and in other military interests in Uganda are simply not very clear. The increase in the role of the military at the precise moment at which Uganda officially returned to multiparty politics does not bode well for the overall effectiveness of the political system either, especially given the skepticism of the military that lingers from the 1962-1986 era. As stated in chapter two of this dissertation, Bayart argues that the remarkable feature of African polities is precisely peaceful anarchy or “the art of living without a state.”<sup>326</sup> In Uganda, with so much political violence in its history, skeptics of sovereign state power would likely increase if the government tends toward isolation and military coercion. As Downes and Monten argue, military “security” has little positive and often considerable negative impact on development and similarly

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<sup>324</sup> “Uganda to withdraw troops from Somalia, says Mukasa,” *BBC News Africa*, November 2, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20187369>.

<sup>325</sup> Alex DeWaal, “The African Union and the Libya Conflict of 2011,” World Peace Foundation, December 19, 2012, <http://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/2012/12/19/the-african-union-and-the-libya-conflict-of-2011/>.

<sup>326</sup> Bayart, *The State in Africa*, 35.

forced regime change tends to have negative effects.<sup>327</sup> Good governance approaches that assume that the military can conduct security, according to this study, have failed at the very least to take in to account the statistical failure of such policies. Moreover, they have also neglected to consider that democracy is deeply effected by systems of coercion employed by the state.

### **State Capacity**

When governments lack legitimacy and authority, building state capacity is strained. The nature of the historically predatory and violent government in Uganda impacts the ability of the government to generate authority today. Partha Chatterjee offers some guidance on the problems raised here in his recent discussion on civil society.<sup>328</sup> He argues that in eastern India railway squatters in the late 1990s gained no benefit from aligning with the formal sector even for health and water security. Therefore, people are not inclined to trust the government and are concerned that if they participate in one area of government affairs they will be open to abuse by the government further down the road. Chabal and Daloz also remind us that competition in African states is not simply a matter of different groups vying for political control of national institutions.<sup>329</sup> They suggest that problems of state capacity are further complicated in this context by competition over which institutions of power are most legitimate. Many people, they argue, are more loyal to kingdoms, religions and regions, and many be more terrified of the wrath of a sorcerer than that of the army or police. Capacity building to support

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<sup>327</sup> Alexander B. Downes and Jonathan Monten, "Forced to Be Free?: Why Foreign-Imposed Regime Change Rarely Leads to Democratization," *International Relations* 37, no. 4 (2013): 90–131.

<sup>328</sup> Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*.

<sup>329</sup> Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*.

democracy and democratic institutions must take in account these competing areas of authority.

Professor Charles Mwanbustya of the Centre for Basic Research in Kampala informed me when I was interviewing him that in Uganda “We do talk of the ‘national cake,’ we talk of the ‘national carcass.’” Although humorous, what he was referring to was the lack of state capacity to actually deliver public goods. This condition, faced by many African states, is critical to the politics of dispensation. As states lack capacity, they also lose control over their own sovereignty and are directed by international institutions which manage their debt and restructure the government. Achille Mbembe says of the privatisation of government;

Most starkly, the developments now under way - in Africa, are *creating systems* in such an original way that the result is not only debt, the destruction of productive capital, and war, but also the disintegration of the state and in some cases, its wasting away and the radical challenge of it as a “public good,” as a general mechanism of rule, or as the best instrument for ensuring the protection and safety of individuals.<sup>330</sup>

One of the more telling symptoms of the problems faced by African states today is the frequent suggestion that African states lack state capacity but are forms of authoritarianism or dictatorship. It often seems as if African states are both all-powerful and yet powerless failures at that same time. Achille Mbembe captures this contradiction, and the forms of hypocrisy it often creates, in his theories of the hallucinatory *commandement* and *zombification*. Yet, Mbembe also reminds us that this not simply a matter of losing capacity due to lack of bureaucratic skill or corruption or other things of that sort, because what is crucial is the *active* undermining of state capacity in order to

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<sup>330</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 73.

continue the privatisation of the state and the economy that Mbembe is describing, a condition that it derived both locally and internationally.

Most people I interviewed, even those who are among the most powerful and influential in the country, felt side-stepped in their ability to define their own systems. It is perceptible from these sentiments that the state in Uganda is informalising in the ways that Mbembe suggests. This lack of official control over politics has increased on the back of IMF adjustments. From the 1990s forward, Ugandan state employees, including the military, were reduced by 42% through the SAP programs of the IMF and World Bank.<sup>331</sup> Though the state is losing capacity to employ its civil servants, military contracts in particular are still lucrative given new boosts from non-state forces in Uganda.<sup>332</sup> The International Labour Organization released a report in 2005 that recommended that the government offer services to the informal sector because the formal sector (with a paper trail for taxes or property rights) is unlikely to expand in the near future.<sup>333</sup> They estimate that 90% of employment in urban Uganda is in the informal sector. Furthermore, this sector is largely comprised of females and children. This causes the ILO to argue that current oil boom in Uganda and related international contracts, infrastructure and market developments, are not likely to impact informal sectors. Therefore, state capacity is not something Uganda can develop on its own. It is part and parcel of a deeply embedded international financial and legal regime that must oversee state capacity building or lack thereof.

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<sup>331</sup>“Urban Informal Sector in Uganda” (paper presented during the Key Labour Market Issues Course, UMI GDLC, Uganda, April/May 2005), [http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/211247/Uganda\\_Urban%20Informal%20Sector.pdf](http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/211247/Uganda_Urban%20Informal%20Sector.pdf).

<sup>332</sup> Interview, Dr. S. K. Simba, Senior Lecturer, Makerere University, Kampala, (Centre for Basic Research, Kampala, Uganda, July 22, 2009), page 127 of this paper and Matsiko, “Why is Museveni Building Region’s Strongest Army?”.

<sup>333</sup>“Urban Informal Sector in Uganda.”

These trends of informalisation suggest that authors like Mamdani are correct to suggest that the pattern of development in Uganda will continue to traditionalise rural areas while the urban centres tie-in to the global economy, transforming the historic division between “civilized and savage” into a deepened division between “urban and rural” instead. In his version, Uganda is headed toward a two-Uganda situation, where the rural population is increasingly alienated from modern political representation in the centre of the country. Yiga Anthony, the NRM MP I interviewed, reiterates this problem with party development in Uganda as he explained that they remain extremely urban centred. He said, “almost 80% of the population is in villages but political parties, they have not gone there.”<sup>334</sup> This certainly complicates the building of a comprehensive government in Uganda and remains one major divide in the population. But Mamdani misses, in his division, the lucrative border lands of Uganda where much of the informal economy is developing. This is because the international nature of the underground economy is not factored into what he broadly construes as state capacity or domestic government. Given the large number of informal and underground activities the area is experiencing, however, Mamdani’s two-state concept might be further complicated by a three-Uganda concept, in which international players and lucrative international borders are factored in to what might constitute the state/society/people/nation or *demos* in Uganda.

Canada’s Trudeau Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Toronto has been studying the relationship between state capacity and environmental scarcity under the guidance of Thomas Homer-Dixon. His team has also generated a

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<sup>334</sup> Interview, Hon. Yiga Anthony, Parliament of Uganda, MP Kalungu County West, Masaka District. Parliament of Uganda, (Kampala, July 15, 2009), page 122 of this paper.

useful schematic in relation to how one can think through what state capacity entails.<sup>335</sup>

Notably, they emphasise the need to build on inclusiveness and consensus-style government. Their suggestion is that cooperation and inclusiveness are more important than competition for the development of the state. This is instructive in relation to the promotion of multiparty systems of government which often focus on competition over cooperation. The prospects for success of political parties in the absence of state capacity in Uganda does not seem likely. Building state capacity, moreover, is not necessarily facilitated by either international actors nor domestic politicians in the current conditions of political economy in Uganda. How the active informalisation of the state, that Achille Mbembe discusses, impacts the ability to create democracy in Uganda seems like an important consideration.

### **Ideology**

To the effect that political party systems require parties with coherent ideology, the people interviewed for this dissertation, whatever their view of the multiparty system, reiterated a point that Giovanni Sartori made in 1976. The nature of parties without ideologies, in the sense of a structure of doctrines and beliefs that can prescribe preferences and policies, clouds the party's purposes and does not give a solid platform from which to build a broad and democratic party message.<sup>336</sup> As Professor Simba said in my interview with him, the room for Ugandans to create ideology may be narrow when there is limited negotiating or bargaining in the global neoliberal economic environment. When I spoke to people in Uganda in 2009 it seemed clear that parties would still have

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<sup>335</sup> Thomas Homer-Dixon, Trudeau Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Toronto, <http://munkschool.utoronto.ca/program/program-on-global-environmental-governance/>.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

trouble developing coherent ideologies by the 2011 elections. Mwambustya suggested that tribal ideologies were a valid source of party ideology but undeveloped, and Mpangi suggested that earlier political parties were attempting to revitalize social-democratic platforms but he thought it would be a long process. Adyeeri was interested in the development of ideologies through interest groups and workers' associations to guide the state in economic policy and direction but suggested that Ugandans did not align along their economic or class positions and therefore coherent ideology along these lines was not forthcoming. Yet, in Uganda, the future possibility of ideological development is not simply domestic, and when it is fused with political mobilisation, the need to generate funds to ensure that a message gets out is evident. One way this is apparent is through the development of ideology through religious connections and mobilisation practices. As part of Jean-François Bayart's schematic of "extraversion," he called this internationalised form of ideological development "mediation" which connects a "whole range of social categories," most notably including church relations across the planet.<sup>337</sup> As was apparent in Uganda's early days of independence, political parties are deeply affected by religion and this is evident in current debates as well. Bayart says,

Now, the development of independent churches or religious movements is, together with war, one of the principal contemporary forms of social mobilization in Africa. It is also a leading means by which sub-Saharan Africa integrates itself into the international system, such as via the links between the evangelical preachers of Monrovia and those of the religious right in America's Deep South, or between congregations of Christian charismatics among Ghanaian migrants living in the Netherlands and their country of origin.<sup>338</sup>

This particular problem mires Uganda in international religious politics, as it did in the immediate postcolonial conflicts between Protestants, Muslims and Catholics discussed

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<sup>337</sup> Bayart, *The State in Africa*, lxiv.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, lxv

in chapter 3.

The layers of problems inherent in identity and ideological development have recently resurfaced in Uganda in relation to homosexuality. In 2012, Canada's Foreign Minister John Baird exposed what he claimed to be an incredible violation of the rights of Ugandan people. Mr. Baird condemned Uganda for what was being called the "kill the gays" bill. On the surface, it is being argued that Uganda may vote in Parliament on a bill to make homosexuality illegal and in some cases punishable by death. This bill was tabled in 2010 by a private member, however, and Museveni has claimed since then that there was no support for the legislation from the ruling party. Yet, the legislation keeps resurfacing and violence against homosexuals is a serious actuality at present.<sup>339</sup>

When the Speaker of House in Uganda came to visit Canada she met Baird, who publicly denounced the proposed legislation for nearly the entire meeting. The Speaker accused the Canadian Minister of being colonial, disrupting the meeting and interfering in Uganda's sovereign affairs.<sup>340</sup> She returned to Uganda to a standing ovation at the airport in Entebbe. *The Monitor* newspaper reporter Otim Lucima wrote "Ugandans understand cultural diplomacy as seen in the Kadaga-Baird brush as a rejection of non-reciprocal Western imposition of their world views on Ugandans."<sup>341</sup> The tendency to paint all Western leaders as the same is evident from the statements by the Speaker and in the news report. It suggests that the play between looking for acceptance or at least

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<sup>339</sup> "Uganda: Museveni distances himself from 'cruel' anti-gay bill," *Irin Humanitarian News and Analysis*, January 14, 2010,

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report/87728/UGANDA-Museveni-distances-himself-from-cruel-anti-gay-bill>.

<sup>340</sup> Yasiin Mugerwa, "Kadaga, Canadian Minister in gay row," *The Daily Monitor*, October 25, 2012, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Kadaga--Canadian-minister-in-gay-row/-/688334/1594430/-/emkqmuz/-/index.html>.

<sup>341</sup> Otim Lucima, "For diplomacy, Uganda needs Kadaga more than Kagimu," *The Daily Monitor*, November 11, 2012, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/Magazines/ThoughtIdeas/For-diplomacy--Uganda-needs-Kadaga-more-than-Kagimu/-/689844/1616794/-/item/1/-/yhcqw1z/-/index.html>.



camaraderie with the West and then simultaneously rejecting that same relationship as neo-colonial, has overcome balanced analysis of this political situation (at the expense of protection for homosexuals in Uganda).

The facts of the occurrence become more complex if we consider the politics of dispensation. Evidently, wealthy American preachers and evangelist churches have been pushing Uganda to adopt this policy and have encouraged anti-homosexual thinking. The Ugandan government has been praised in American churches, and funds have been flowing to Uganda to support those who oppose homosexuality.<sup>342</sup> The politics of dispensation is apparent. Even though anti-imperialist rhetoric is being used now to support the Speaker in her brush with Minister Baird, support for the legislation is still ultimately coming from Western churches. Perhaps the private-members bill had no hope of getting off the ground until this money was associated with it or if it had not been proposed by American preachers in the first place.<sup>343</sup>

The Canadian Government is unable to stand its ground with its attacks on Uganda because it is not aware or is unable to admit these church affiliations with the United States. Canada ended up treating the Speaker with such disrespect that she became determined to pass the bill.<sup>344</sup> The concept in the international press is that this bill will and has come about because of inhumane cultures and perspectives in Uganda, but this

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<sup>342</sup> Jill Filipovic, "The Disgrace of Church Backing for Ugandan Homophobia," *The Guardian*, December 30, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2012/dec/30/disgrace-papal-blessing-ugandan-homophobia>, and Jeffrey Gettleman, "Americans' Role Seen in Uganda Anti-Gay Push," *New York Times*, January 3, 2010, [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/04/world/africa/04uganda.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/04/world/africa/04uganda.html?_r=0).

<sup>343</sup> Susan Dicklitch, Berwood Yost and Bryan M. Dougan, "Building a Barometer of Gay Rights (BGR): A Case Study of Uganda and the Persecution of Homosexuals," *Human Rights Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2012): 448–471.

<sup>344</sup> Isaac Imaka, "Speaker Kadaga Determined to Revive Shelved Gay Bill," *The Daily Monitor*, Sept. 19, 2013, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Speaker+Kadaga+promises+to+revive+shelved+gay+Bill//688334/1607470/-/r2faku/-/index.html>.

misses the mark. It is not that such sentiments do not exist in Uganda, but the political nature of the question now, coupled with the foreign shaping and funding of political parties, does cast doubt on the authenticity of such politics.<sup>345</sup> The politics of this legislation is international, and its passing will be the responsibility of many actors should it occur. The concept of a government with clear boundaries, the concept of economies that are simply controlled domestically, and the notion of a civil society that can be generated and prove effective locally to form a nation, do not really help those affected by this legislation, and it will not help social science further its understanding of what is happening or how politics is working in Uganda.

Cultural frameworks and values have been shaped in Uganda by colonial structures and postcolonial structures alike. Orientations toward modernisation and Westernisation have competed with cultural pride and conservation. What may be called a cultural imperialism shapes the values of the people, divides them along urban/rural geography and internationalises the state in interesting ways, along lines that have been discussed by many postcolonial scholars including Fanon, Stuart Hall, Escobar, John Tomlinson and Chandra Mohanty.<sup>346</sup> These theorists developed ideas about the way in which power dynamics in the international system affect the internal identity of people around the world, often causing them to emulate foreign cultures, as Fanon said, or developing “hybrid” identities, as Stuart Hall suggested. This has also aggravated misinterpretations between cultures and fuels reactive ideological developments.

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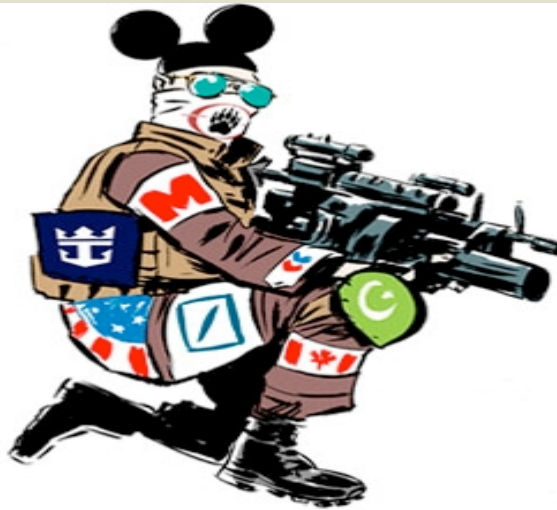
<sup>345</sup> Yusuf Kirand and Mathias Kamp, eds., *Reality Check: The State of Multiparty Democracy in Uganda* (Kampala: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Uganda Programme, 2010), 122–123, [http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas\\_21611-1522-2-30.pdf?110113145556](http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_21611-1522-2-30.pdf?110113145556).

<sup>346</sup> Chandra Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” *Feminist Review* 30 (1988), 61–88, John Tomlinson, “Cultural Imperialism,” in *Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Globalization* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2012).

Ideological developments in Uganda have international dimensions that are instructive for how we might understand the future basis for political parties.

### **Dispensation**

If Uganda is a country prone to dictatorial or hegemonic leaders, as the daily news and the academy are inclined to report, then they are dictators of a very particular and unique kind. Importantly, they are of an international character, as least partly made in foreign countries but still attempting to be powerful among their own populations. On the other hand, the rhetoric of anti-imperial revolution has not waned in Africa or Uganda despite the seeming illusion of state power and compliance with international norms. Shifting between stiff international business meetings promising aid money in Switzerland and meeting under shady trees with shield wielding local chiefs is a pattern of African governance that all successful leaders must negotiate. Populations in Africa have to wonder all the time who might be the next benefactor of their state and what consequences will come from the arrangements. The levels of power and influence are multiple in Uganda, and democracy in one area of politics or society does not spell democracy for all areas. Exchanging one leader for another will not address the many challenges facing Ugandans in democratising their country.



Ryan Inzana, *The Nation*, September 15, 2010 <http://www.thenation.com/article/154739/blackwaters-black-ops?page=full>.

With the politics of dispensation I mean to articulate the many layers of governance and power that face the democratically minded Ugandan citizen. The above image needed to be included here to visually demonstrate the types of power experienced in a state like Uganda on any given day. This is not an occasional kind of interaction, but daily and from everywhere. The consequences of the privatisation of the state and now of the military, and the internationalisation of law among unequal states suggests that the intrusion of international actors in domestic affairs is not optional. Donor countries affect many essential aspects of political life: Who is the source of authority? Where is the boundary of the state? What is the power of which leaders? The four areas I have highlighted show that the source of authority and influence in the state of Uganda is heavily internationalised and that this context shifts contemporary democratic and political party development and the choices available to Ugandan citizens.

The shifting, or better *melding*, of multiparty democracy and no-party democracy, in Uganda, is having a straining effect on the procedures in parliament and on the ability of the people to understand their relationship to government. My interviews and research suggest that procedural shifts to multipartyism in Uganda engendered an environment that focuses attention on technocratic minutiae and tends to downplay large-scale factors that can actually produce an environment where multipartyism can succeed. Multiparty systems generate competition, but in Uganda this is occurring in conditions of vulnerability and scarcity.

The no-party system made sense to those political actors who saw that the right conditions to support multiparty democracy were not available or desirable. According to some, the no-party system allowed citizens in Uganda to engage in politics in a different way. As Dr. Yasim Olum, Professor of Political Science at Makerere University stated in his interview, the no-party system was good “for healing purposes,” meaning it managed to subdue an extremely violent and volatile political environment in the 1980s. Leadership turnover is very important, as highlighted by Tripp, Rubongoya and Carbone in their work on Uganda, but in confronting the leadership question through constitutional change over to multipartism, the conditions for generating new leaders have been strained because of partisan competition and external influence. The fact that these problems do not seem active in the minds of external actors and donor countries suggests that the conditions of dispensation thwart balanced knowledge of cases in the social sciences.

Although dispensation is a broad concept and this study is limited by time and budgets, it seemed to me necessary to form some other way of understanding what was

happening in Uganda given the mixed interpretations of the results of the two multiparty referendums and the inability to really explain Uganda's case with the normal social science vocabulary. Many concepts of stressed boundaries and fluid spaces were articulated in early work by scholars of comparative politics like Dahl, Huntington and Sartori.<sup>347</sup> Those early ideas, however, seemed to lapse into questions of how cultures influenced institutions and led eventually to publications such as Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations" article in 1993.<sup>348</sup> In Uganda, perhaps as in other places, politics of cultural and political rivalry have a global context and dimension that is not as clearly demarcated as Huntington's framework. In many ways, such as the technocratic, militaristic and ideological ways I have suggested in this chapter, these politics are heavily influenced or even exist because of the dynamics of these global relations. The ability for the state to shape a response to these global forces is a problem I discussed as state capacity. The lack of space for emergent democracy seems to be more of a problem in Uganda than the type of procedural democracy that it develops.

Dispensation is neither meant to be understood as an expression of imperialism, nor neo-imperialism, because in each situation the power levels inherent in political negotiation are different. As Bayart suggests with "extraversion" what occurs is not mimicry but rather a dynamic integration of some parts of foreign influence and not others, such as with Museveni's illusions during the multiparty referendums where he essentially pretended to support the transition. There is similarly not a particular leader or

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<sup>347</sup> Robert Dahl, *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy: Autonomy vs. Control* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*, Samuel Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay," *World Politics* 17, (1965): 386–430.

<sup>348</sup> Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs*, Summer (1993), <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/48950/samuel-p-huntington/the-clash-of-civilizations>.

groups of leaders who will always have the most influence in Uganda, although power differentials are certainly important and can be highly concentrated at times.

Furthermore, power has many different faces in different aspects of life. International actors are more influential in shaping the political culture and setting the agenda in Uganda than other theories are suggesting today, but that does not mean that domestic levels of politics are not active nor of course that theorists haven't other important points to make.

Although early comparative politics theorists like Huntington and Dahl argue that the state and the international environment are important in democracy and development, they did not explain how the international and national are often blended in the same space, and they treated these levels of analysis instead as separate and coherent spheres. The general politics of dispensation suggests that the people in Uganda seem to experience power in far more nuanced ways than as coherent and competing spheres of power. Focussing on the domestic state as a unit of analysis does not speak to the difficulty of Ugandans in identifying the underlying sources of power and authority within their own territory.

I agree with Mbembe that the development of stable politics has been *zombified* because of the global relations of private indirect government where the state and its parameters are distorted, informalised and yet embedded in the international system. Yet if we can articulate this relationship in the areas we study we can see more clearly how the dynamics of politics in Ugandan society work today. Mbembe's analysis gives us a different line of reasoning when trying to understand why the state is showing a tendency to centralise under Museveni's rule. The de-structuring of the government and the global

anchoring of the state are integral to this. With the politics of dispensation, I have tried to develop particularly the international aspect of this and show how it shapes political choices and possibilities in Uganda. The concept of extraversion developed by Bayart goes a long way to clarify the international nature of the state, and it may be interesting to explore the concept in future research, perhaps looking at whether the ‘inside-out’ emphasis of Bayart’s concept and the ‘outside-in’ nature of my concept dispensation has some actual empirical weight in terms of emphasis of directives and concentrations of power. In the dynamic relationship between the sovereign state and the international system – is there truly a dominant partner, is there always a clear winner?



## **CHAPTER SIX: Conclusions: Democratisation and Global Politics**

This dissertation has explored Uganda's political systems in the past few decades and drawn attention to some of the obstacles and impediments to democracy-building in the country. Uganda shares many traits of other African countries discussed broadly in the literature on the subject. Yet, Uganda's no-party political system has also been one of the most provocative attempts anywhere to develop a tailor-made democracy. Furthermore, because Uganda was able to develop the system over the course of two decades, scholars are able to study its unique properties, their relevance in Uganda, and subsequent transitions away from that same system.

After reviewing some of the literature on development and democratisation and on the role of the state in development in chapter 2, it became evident that there was a symptomatic division in scholarship about African political parties today - between literature that adhered to one specific account of what democracy must be, multiparty democracy, and literature which considered the possibility of procedural models more akin to the traditions and values of an area.

Both chapter 2 and the interviews in chapter 4 suggest that this divide between universal and particular models of democracy has been etched in the minds of many Ugandans but somewhat erased from the most predominant literature on the country. Both the importance of international contexts in relation to Uganda's political prospects, and the understanding of particular historical traditions that informed political developments there were arguably better articulated in the early literature of modernisation and dependency theory that was enmeshed in the Cold War and

decolonisation. Now it seems that although universal models of democracy have persistent sway in the global development system, their relationship to domestic democratic structures and traditions has been downplayed.

This division in the literature identified in chapter 2 begins to account for how it is that important books written on Uganda seemed to acknowledge the successes in Uganda during the no-party era, but then appeared to blame the same system and its leadership for stalling democratic development. The facts of Uganda's no-party system suggest that there has been considerable problem in defining what precisely the democratisation or governance problem in Uganda actually is today depending on how one is balancing the interpretation. Viewed in relation to international norms of multiparty democracy Uganda's system can be understood in the ways the leading authors have suggested. When looking at the history of multiparty democracy as I do in chapter 3 and when considering the more particularistic accounts of democratic traditions in Africa, Uganda's political experiment presents itself in a slightly different light. Although implemented in basic ways, Uganda has not absorbed multiparty politics and in many ways did not fully construct the no-party system either. But certainly, the no-party model attempted some significant changes in the constitutional structures of the country that were intended to articulate a system based on the specific needs and heritage of Uganda.

In seeking to get a better view of this problem, I went to Uganda in 2009 to interview political experts on their thoughts about the two different systems. Uganda was in the process of transitioning from the no-party system to the multiparty system, but the justification for this transition did not seem clear to me through reading the standard

literature on the subject. What I found when I arrived in Uganda was different than what experts in the field had written. I have taken into consideration here especially the work of Giovanni Carbone, Aili Tripp and Joshua Rubongoya, who have all written books on Uganda's no-party system in the last decade.<sup>349</sup> Each of these authors argued that the transition from the no-party system was the consequence of internal pressure by opposition groups in Uganda itself. They argued that Museveni himself was solidifying his rule and was moving the country towards an authoritarian state. Carbone calls this political order "hegemonic," Tripp calls it "hybrid" or "semi-authoritarian," and Rubongoya simply refers to it as *pax Musevenica*.

In many ways, Museveni's protracted rule has been crucial to the politics of Uganda, but what this had to do with the political system *per se* is less clear. Each of the authors above also implied the prediction that Museveni's Uganda would change with the development of multiparty systems. Uganda would get away from authoritarian tendencies, in other words, by developing political pluralism through the procedural tool of allowing multiple political parties which would compete for power. These authors differed from others who suggested the multiparty systems might in fact limit democratic developments. This group of authors, most of them from Africa, includes Claude Ake, Mbaku, and Cyril Obi.<sup>350</sup> These authors showed us that multiparty elections in Africa had a tendency towards centralised and elitist political representation and that they often

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<sup>349</sup> Carbone, *No-Party Democracy?*; Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda*; Rubongoya, *Regime Hegemony in Museveni's Uganda*.

<sup>350</sup> Obi, "No Choice, but Democracy: Prising the People out of Politics in Africa?"; Mbaku and Ihonvbere, eds., *Multiparty Democracy and Political Change: Constraints to Democratization in Africa*; Claude Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1996).

generated instability through winner-takes-all electoral politics and/or by creating political parties aligned ideologically with people's race, ethnicity or tribe.

Arriving in Uganda, I found none of these problems in full form. Although President Museveni had claimed that political party development was detrimental to peace and security in Uganda, and thus created the National Resistance Movement, the problems with democratic development seemed to be much broader and deeper than merely procedural. Questions of the strengths and weaknesses of various political systems were instead sidelined by broader questions of how democracy might be enshrined and stabilised given the competing contexts for its definition. Political parties were straining to generate nationalistic visions, vote aggregation was corrupt, and Museveni was gaining strength. Ugandans appeared to be scrambling to sort out the new "multiparty dispensation."

My first observation was that Uganda had not really accepted multipartism as was being reported in the media. While Tripp, Carbone and Rubongoya had suggested that Museveni was delaying or derailing the transition, they did not suggest that Ugandan citizens themselves had anything to do with this. However, many of my interviews suggested that Uganda had not transitioned away from individual merit practices much at all. Many candidates were standing as independents to avoid being associated with political parties which much of the population remained skeptical of. When I asked, "What are the strengths and weaknesses of the multiparty system?" many of my interviewees explained to me what Mbembe might call the complex illusions of political life in Uganda today. For example, Mwanbustya argued, that when the second referendum in 2005 asked the Ugandan people if they wanted "to open up the political

space” it was not intended to mean a transition to party politics. Instead, the question was to be interpreted as referring literally to the creation of a *different space*.

Museveni will tell you that he does not believe in multipartyism but he is a multipartyist! When we reviewed the constitution he said he had been allowing multipartyism in order to get rid of people that were stabbing us within the party and in order to deal with international pressure. But he does not believe in it, he believes in the movement. So we have multipartyism without multipartyists; you have structures but you don't have the habits of the heart. You have decentralisation without localism because it looks good to the donors - but you have not let the local system operate.

Again, this was difficult to understand given the existing literature. What most interviewees suggested was that the no-party system, which had wide popular support in Uganda, was being protected by allowing political partyists to participate, but to participate as outsiders. The individual merit basis of the no-party system was to remain strong, but political parties would be allowed to contest elections, which they had been prohibited from doing since Museveni's *coup d'état* in 1986 and indeed since Obote's first *coup* in 1966. Museveni himself, who had almost demonised political parties in speeches and propaganda, campaigned in favour of “opening up the political space,” while leading opposition members boycotted the multiparty referendums altogether.

How did this happen? Why would a population seemingly vote for a multiparty system while almost covertly maintaining another system? The first way in which this was presented to me was through historical explanation. The interviewees often told me that the history of Uganda was the source of the creation and protection of the no-party system. In the beginning, after sovereign independence, Uganda had had a multiparty system and legends of the tragedy of this era abound. Violence was amplified by colonial state structures, run by leaders who were heavily influenced by the external politics of the

Cold War and neo-colonial economies, both sustained through militarism.<sup>351</sup> In chapter 3, I addressed this historical development, in order to understand the emergence of the no-party system and the type of state structure that Uganda had before it. The importance of the no-party system was evidenced almost immediately in Uganda by strong indicators of success, such as economic development, the sharp decline of political violence, rapid increase in women's and youth participation in the government and improved health statistics.<sup>352</sup> Within the historical context, one can see that Uganda had a long way to go to achieve these statistics after the tyranny of so many leaders, but also through the importance of the establishment of such a system, and through such a long process, one can also see it is not an easy system to forego.

So Ugandans seemed to have a sense of worth for the system they created. After so much political violence, one may even say, as did Professor Olim, that the system seemed a relief. And, as said by the Minister of Local Government at the time, even with continued fighting in the Gulu district in the North, Ugandans seemingly were attached to no-party democracy. This made sense in terms of the about-face election results of the two referenda. The first time, when the question was simply "Which system would you like?" they had voted 90% in favour of the no-party system. But five years later, in 2005, they had a completely opposite referendum result. Had anything objective really changed in Uganda at that time? Museveni was pestering the newly formed International Criminal Court to deal with Joseph Kony in the Northern borders, and so even the worst problem in the country seemed to be under some control.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> Mamdani, *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda*.

<sup>352</sup> Tripp, "Women's Movements, Customary Law, and Land Rights in Africa," and Moehler, *Distrusting Democrats*, and Bigsten and Kayizzi-Mugerwa, *Is Uganda an Emerging Economy?*.

<sup>353</sup> Mohamed M. El Zeidy, "The Ugandan Government Triggers the First Test of the Complementarity

With this evidence, it seemed necessary to push my interviewees, if they had not volunteered, to explain how the multiparty system came back onto the political agenda in Uganda. As I stated, Rubongoya, Tripp and Carbone argued that it was from internal pressure that the shift to multiparty politics happened. One of these party leaders was a lawyer I spoke to in Kampala, Hon. Abdu Katuntu. He explained that given the constitution's provisions for both the party and the no-party systems, the opposition was able to use the courts to argue that Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) had been acting as a political party. Allowing the case to go to court put pressure on Museveni to explain how the NRM was any different than a mass-party or one-party. Single party states are illegal in Uganda and therefore a ruling that the no-party system amounted to a one-party state would have forced an election or referendum in the country. So an election was held.<sup>354</sup>

Yet, despite these semi-successful legal battles, which seemingly only proved the support of elite constitutional lawyers, many answers I received from my interviews about the impetus for the change were different. As I show in the field-work chapter, chapter 4, my interviewees, whether from a political party, the NRM, the judiciary, academia, law or journalism, primarily argued that the system changed because of donor pressure. This implied that the transition had been fashioned in order to rest the fears of donors that Uganda had lost ground on the good governance score. Carbone, Tripp and

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Principle: An Assessment of the First State's Party Referral to the ICC," *International Criminal Law Review* 5 (2005): 83–119.

<sup>354</sup> Interview, Hon. Abdu Katuntu, MP, Buweri County-Iganga District (Opposition), (July 19, 2009) and Interview, Hon. Justice Dr. G.W. Kanyeihamba, Supreme Court of Uganda, (July 12, 2009), page 127 and 128 of this paper.

Rubongoya did not account for this troubled transition and seemingly took the referendum results at face value and as a victory for democracy.

Justice Kanyeihamba, Hon. Stephen Adyeeri, and others I spoke with were also adamant about the notion of unique democratic systems that are generated out of local traditions. Although Kanyeihamba conceded that there were many elements of authoritarian behaviour in Uganda, he was deeply disturbed by having to defend the idea that Africa was “ready for democracy” and by the implication that Africa lacked a history of democracy. Hon. MP Adyeeri complained about the “one size-fits-all” prescriptions by donor countries for democracy in Uganda. He believed that Uganda’s traditions could be redesigned and modernised and that countries such as Kenya and Zimbabwe were governing by “crisis.”

The type of complex transition under discussion with my interviewees immediately spoke to the type of politics that Achille Mbembe describes in *On the Postcolony*.<sup>355</sup> As I discussed in chapter 5, Mbembe develops the line of analysis introduced in Jean-François Bayart’s first edition of *The State in Africa*. These authors delineate the ways in which African governments in general are externally orientated in their structures. They show how a country could vote for a system, but defend another at the same time. Mbembe refers to “private indirect government” as a concept that can capture the “fractionated” nature of sovereignty in Africa today and the consequences this has on domestic government. If understood as a tool of international relations, sovereignty itself becomes a negotiation, and the most any leader in Africa can hope for is the illusion of control, according to these scholars.

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<sup>355</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*.



In Uganda's situation, the transition to multiparty politics challenged notions of Museveni's "hegemony" or "semi-authoritarianism" as suggested by Carbone and Tripp. Mbembe describes power in the African state today as a mere fetish. He suggests that neither the people nor the state have ultimate power and are mutually "zombified." He further explains an almost deliberate lack of capacity in domestic states and the limits of power and authority. Although the state and the people may have power at times, and both in different ways at different times, the constitution of this power is ever-changing, making accountability, transparency, legitimacy and voting suspect at best. A leader may show power at times, but she or he is not constantly in control of the political space and may even lose fundamental control over major parts of the government such as the constitution and military expenditure.

In chapter 5, I explored the ways in which international politics affect different areas of political life in Uganda today. Developing the impact of international politics on Uganda's political system in four key areas- state capacity, technology, militarism and ideology, I explore some challenges Uganda faces now that multiparty system has been 'dispensed.' In doing so, I complicate my original question "What are the strengths and weaknesses of the multiparty system and the no-party system?" by showing that both systems are obscured from domestic politics by means of the overarching context of international relations. There have been merits to both systems, my interviewees suggested, but the transition and related confusion itself have created new sets of problems. At the same time, Uganda's internationalisation seems to be becoming more intense. Pressures on Uganda's democracy appear to be deeply interconnected with global politics. Finding the place and parameters of democracy in the country is strained

by these contexts and further increases the difficulty of constituting legitimate state power.

Adding to the problem, this dissertation addressed theory on political parties and the pressures on many African countries to try to shape their populations into these models. The analysis of Giovanni Sartori suggests that many of the key ingredients for party systems, such as sub-system autonomy and broad-based ideology are currently missing in Uganda. My interviews confirmed this suspicion. If this is the case, then success in implementing the party-system requested by donors to Uganda is not a likely scenario, at least for some time. What is more, the potential for the party system to explode into factionalism is a real concern backed by hard evidence of political violence in neighbouring Kenya and Zimbabwe. So while Ugandans are faced with the pressure to democratise using the multiparty system, they are confronted by the system's violent tendencies displayed in their own history and in many countries surrounding them.

The international nature of the Ugandan state and its recent transition to multiparty democracy compromises to some extent the concept of a government derived from the people. Uganda did have a comprehensive referendum when it officially instituted the no-party system in 1995.<sup>356</sup> The nature of the transition to the multiparty system in 2005, however, does not seem to have had the same support, and seems to have turned politics in Uganda even more toward outside influences.

What can be said in conclusion is that at least some of the pressure to reform Uganda appears to be in itself applied from the outside and thus undemocratic. The referendum was a confusing affair: it did not clearly signal strong support for

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<sup>356</sup> Moehler, *Distrusting Democrats*.

multipartism according to my field work. Defining democracy has become a procedural and technocratic exercise that appears to be approved and measured from outside the sovereign state. In Uganda, this process of approval has been accompanied by substantial increases in military expenditure as well as by intensified privatisation and influence particularly from American churches. Meanwhile, as the incident regarding the Canadian Minister John Baird and the Ugandan Foreign Minister showed in chapter 5, there is a strong perception in Uganda that donor-countries are not really listening to them, nor acknowledging domestic politics and therefore there is increasing anti-Western sentiment particularly among the more secular population.<sup>357</sup> Museveni too, it seems, has become more powerful with the new transition. Although not measurable in this study, increased militarism in Uganda and in the entire central African region has given Museveni opportunities to solidify power. As noted in chapter 5, the opposition party has now elected a military leader in order to pose an effective electoral challenge to Museveni. Museveni himself also argued that his reason for staying on as President is to “protect” Uganda from division and international influence as well as from a military that could run out of control.<sup>358</sup>

My interviews and current news reports suggest that the multiparty system, at best, has solved some problems but created others. Furthermore, multiparty democracy has been shown to be somewhat of a mantra, a proceduralist high ground, which is not particularly nuanced. The irony of Uganda’s political journey over the last thirty years was stated to me by the Minister of State for Local Government in Uganda in 2009 when he noted that ultimately it will be the return of individual merit practices which will serve

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<sup>357</sup> Mugerwa, “Kadaga, Canadian Minister in gay row.”

<sup>358</sup>“Museveni meets donors.”

Uganda in the future. He said, “and even under this dispensation, [individual merit] will help other parties develop along the way. Once we [political parties] are internally democratic that individual merit element is very evident inside parties.”<sup>359</sup>

With Achille Mbembe’s work, the foundations for a new and different theory of democratic governance in Africa emerged. The privatisation of the state, common in most of the world, has been factored into Mbembe’s analysis of governance, which allows new and important ontological dimensions into the analysis. He further is able to show how privatisation and centralisation are often simultaneously fused within the position of the President. Mbembe is therefore able to account for a condition of arbitrary private power articulated without tremendous culture conditionality. Precisely because the capacity of states is weak, sub-system autonomy is lacking, bureaucracies and institutions of democracy are not robust, the politics of dispensation takes root and international influence in all affairs becomes normalised.

The problem identified in this dissertation is two-fold. First is the problem in regards to who gets to define democracy under the context of international democratisation programs. The international systems at work in Uganda are not only unaccountable but they are diverse and difficult to trace. The main institutions that support democratisation appear to be inflexible and biased in terms of their own views of which systems of democracy best suit particular places and what the details of such systems entail. The problem is exemplified by the choice of multiparty democracy for

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<sup>359</sup> Interview, Hon. Ahabwe Pereza Godfrey, MP Rubanda East Constituency and Minister of State for Local Government, (Ministry Office, Kampala, Uganda, July 17, 2009), page 113 of this paper.

nations such as Uganda where the people have not only felt the horrific possible consequences of a multiparty democracy in the past, but where they are also ill-equipped to generate the peaceful basis for establishing such a political system today. The second conclusion is that the case of Uganda cannot be understood without considering international or global politics as an active part of the democratic space. Studies that have neglected this really miss out on a huge part of Uganda's political experience and the effects of this experience on local democratic development. Who is involved in creating, funding and supporting political party's and their platforms in Uganda is a crucial question in this light.

In *After the Globe, Before the World*, Walker discussed "fracture zones" in the international system. He argues that the system of states is based on many discriminations of what constitutes modern and developed and what does not. These distinctions cause much of the order, balance, and imbalance in international relations that affect Uganda and other areas profoundly. Walker states that there are (at least) three fracture zone in the international system (that compound and multiply). One is the relationship between citizens and the state, one that transforms a person from a "mere human" to a political citizen. Second is the relationship between states in the international system poised as they are for war and for battle over the meaning of the modern state system.

A third great fracture zone has been between those who are included in modernity and/or the modern state system, and those who are not. This fracture zone is the one that modern political analysis has been most reluctant to acknowledge or examine, but in modern political life is always open to the possibility of a state of exception articulated much more broadly than on the edges of the modern state.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>360</sup> Walker, *After the Globe Before the World*, 144.

In the case of Uganda, a country that may include itself in the third fracture zone of exclusion from the modern state system, but which is continually attempting to join in, Walker says, “any state that claims sovereignty is already caught up within the structures of inclusions and exclusions that have worked to affirm a world of exclusions.” The broad exclusions and exception to the teleological march of universalist modernity in Uganda has been related to the creation of the no-party political system. Treated as an illness of traditionalism, the system has been replaced, through a politics of dispensation, by a system that is more suited to the logic of modern states in the international system. This study has endeavoured to present both the no-party system and the people in Uganda with a more balanced or at least nuanced analysis. The politics of dispensation is a concept generated from this case study that can be used to understand other countries in the world, particularly those that are heavily internationalised.

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## Appendix 1: Study Description

**Title:** Multiparty Democracy: The ontological limits of political imagination in Uganda

**Principal Investigator:** Sabina S. Singh

**Senior Supervisor:** Dr. James Busumtwi-Sam

**Department:** Department of Political Science

**Chair of Department:** Dr. Paul Delany

No Collaborators

This project is to complete dissertation requirements for the PhD in the Department of Political Science. This July, I will travel to Uganda for elite interviews and further secondary research in my area of study, pending this ethics review.

### **The Study Overview:**

Uganda has undergone a historic political transition since 2005. Its previous “no-party” system was heralded for many successes and was novel in its design. Merging local level governance with centralized state structures, Uganda’s “Local Council System” (LCS) confronted political and conceptual attacks on African governance structures in a systematic way. Now, following global trends, Uganda has transitioned to a multiparty system of democracy. Still in its early stages, this transition is an exceptional opportunity for political scientists to understand African governance structures and their multiple complexities. Uganda’s President, Yoweri Museveni, designed and implemented the LCS specifically to confront issues such as overload of political competition and ethnic division in intensely multicultural societies. This study focuses on political participation and compares the LCS with the promises of the multiparty system. The study is primarily conceptual in that it looks at theories of multiparty systems and critically analyses their relevance in the Ugandan context and on the African continent more generally. The case of Uganda exemplifies crucial debates between many African leaders and the international development community on how and if highly developed western political structures are appropriate, both culturally and functionally, for African states. It is also an opportunity to reflect on the potentials and merits of the old Ugandan system and how it helped to stabilize a broadly divided country.

The key research questions of my thesis are: Is the multiparty system the best way to sustain and promote democracy in Africa or can a no-party or alternative democratic structure be devised?; How successful was Uganda’s political system at achieving broad and pluralistic political participation?; Could reform of the system rather than outright transition have been an option (did they throw the baby out with the bath water)?; Is Uganda able to accommodate a multiparty system, does it have the necessary

components identified in key literature on the subject? And finally now that they have accepted political parties what are the best ways to proceed?

### **Survey Instruments:**

This study will focus primary research at the elite level in Kampala, Uganda. I will speak to experts in Uganda on the transition from no-party to multiparty democracy. The semi-structured interview questions are provided in a separate document for this ethics review. The questions will be the same for each person I speak with.

I will ask for roughly fifteen minutes to speak to each person about the transition, and what their expectations of the transition are; whether or not they voted for the transition, what they liked about the old system, what they hope will change with the new system, what other alternatives to the old system they were familiar with and how they feel the transition came about. I will write down their answers and ask if I can tape record the interviews as well.

### **Method for Recruitment of Participants:**

I will not attempt to offer rewards or incentives for participation in this study. The interviews will be voluntary. I do not anticipate any detriment to the individuals I am questioning. The Ugandan political system allows for popular dissent and criticism and there should be no issues as far as I can tell. I will meet people in a formal setting, preferably their offices, and attempt to keep disruption of their workday to a minimum.

I do not intend to conduct mass interviews and hope to speak to approximately 20 people in expert fields related to governance. Examples include,

1) **Makerere University**, in Kampala, Uganda, is a renowned facility with excellent social science faculty. The first stage of investigation will be to conduct semi-structured interviews with faculty on campus. I will try to make appointments and find faculty on campus at their offices.

2) **The Centre for Basic Research** is across the way from the university in Kampala. I will be a visitor at the centre during my stay. The centre requires that visiting graduate students pay a fee for using the library facilities. They also offer courses throughout the year, primarily on research methods; if there is one scheduled during my stay I will take the class. I will conduct my interview with staff, students and faculty at the centre in order to glean what local social scientists and experts have to say about their countries political transition.

3) **The Parliament building** is also in Kampala, Uganda. I will conduct research at the parliament building and try to interview people that are close to the centre of power and other Members of Parliament that are able to meet with me. I am writing a formal letter to the President's Office and requesting a fifteen-twenty minute interview. I will do the same with a few other high-ranking members of the Parliament.

The transition to a multiparty system should in theory have an acute effect on the Ugandan bureaucracy. I will attempt to conduct my semi-structured survey in the courthouse, policy station, and government offices in Kampala.

**Purpose of the interviews for the project:**

The over-all purpose of my interviews is to understand what experts and those closely involved in the political transition have to say about the old and new Ugandan system. This level of interviewing seems to be more difficult to attain than large country studies. I will not attempt to offer my own analysis of the system to people I interview and keep questions as open and neutral as possible. It is my belief at present that the current transition has been influenced heavily by external forces and that the system will have many difficulties. At least that is what the theory suggests and also some recent experiences in neighbouring countries such as Kenya and Rwanda. These thoughts I will keep to myself until the dissertation is finished.

Due to lack of funds and security issues, all data for this project outside of the capital city will be derived from secondary sources that ensure complete confidentiality. Large data basis of surveys on political parties and multiparty systems are available at [www.afrobarometer.com](http://www.afrobarometer.com) and other large universities who publish their statistics on-line.

**Consent: The consent form will look as follows,**

1. Goals of the Study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Evaluate the previous LCS government structure</li> <li>b) Evaluate the potential of the new multiparty system</li> <li>c) Understand how and why the transition occurred</li> <li>d) Elicit opinions on the transition</li> </ul>
2. The study has been approved for <b>Sabina S. Singh</b> , PhD student, under the auspices of <b>Simon Fraser University</b> , Burnaby, BC, Canada
3. The title at present: Multiparty Democracy: conceptual and political imagination in Uganda <sup>361</sup>
4. All participants in this study are asked to give fifteen minutes to discuss issues related to Uganda's political system. This interview is voluntary.
5. There are no risks associated with this research. If you feel any risk please let the interviewer know and the interview will be concluded.
6. If at any time, <u>even after the interview, you feel that you would <b>not</b> like the interview to be used in this research</u> , your comments will be pulled out of my file. Please contact the Principal Researcher, Sabina S. Singh or the Department of Political Science at

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## Survey on Ugandan Politics

**Principal Investigator:** Sabina S. Singh

This survey is for the purpose of my dissertation proposal. This research has been approved by **Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, Canada**

This interview is strictly voluntary and will take approximately 15 minutes.

**Please read and sign the consent form provided by the principal researcher.** You will not be contacted after this interview but you are free to contact the interviewer about this interview at any time.

- 1) What were the main strengths of the LC system in Uganda if any?
- 2) What were your main concerns with the LC system if any?
- 3) Did you agree that Uganda needed a new political system?
- 4) Did you vote in the referendum?
- 5) Will this new system be better or worse than the old system?
- 6) Did you believe the LC system was democratic?
- 7) In your view what were the main reasons that the transition to multiparty democracy occurred?
- 8) Do you have any other comments?

## Appendix 2: Uganda profile

Capital: Kampala

City is spread over a series of hills  
1890: HQ of British colonial administration  
1962: Capital of independent Uganda  
Population: 1.2m

Former leader Milton Obote

Leader at independence in 1963  
Toppled by Idi Amin in 1971  
Returned as president in 1980  
Ousted in 1985 coup

A chronology of key events:

1500 - Bito dynasties of Buganda, Bunyoro and Ankole founded by Nilotic-speaking immigrants from present-day southeastern Sudan.

1700 - Buganda begins to expand at the expense of Bunyoro.

1800 - Buganda controls territory bordering Lake Victoria from the Victoria Nile to the Kagera river.

1840s - Muslim traders from the Indian Ocean coast exchange firearms, cloth and beads for the ivory and slaves of Buganda.

1862 - British explorer John Hanning Speke becomes the first European to visit Buganda.

1875 - Bugandan King Mutesa I allows Christian missionaries to enter his realm.

British influence

1877 - Members of the British Missionary Society arrive in Buganda.

1879 - Members of the French Roman Catholic White Fathers arrive.

1890 - Britain and Germany sign treaty giving Britain rights to what was to become Uganda.

1892 - Imperial British East Africa Company agent Frederick Lugard extends the company's control to southern Uganda and helps the Protestant missionaries to prevail over their Catholic counterparts in Buganda.

1894 - Uganda becomes a British protectorate.

1900 - Britain signs agreement with Buganda giving it autonomy and turning it into a constitutional monarchy controlled mainly by Protestant chiefs.

1902 - The Eastern province of Uganda transferred to the Kenya.

1904 - Commercial cultivation of cotton begins.

1921 - Uganda given a legislative council, but its first African member not admitted till 1945.

1958 - Uganda given internal self-government.

1962 - Uganda becomes independent with Milton Obote as prime minister and with Buganda enjoying considerable autonomy.

1963 - Uganda becomes a republic with Buganda's King Mutesa as president.

1966 - Milton Obote ends Buganda's autonomy and promotes himself to the presidency.

- 1967 - New constitution vests considerable power in the president.
- 1971 - Milton Obote toppled in coup led by Army chief Idi Amin.
- 1972 - Amin orders Asians who were not Ugandan citizens - around 60,000 people - to leave the country.
- 1972-73 - Uganda engages in border clashes with Tanzania.
- 1976 - Idi Amin declares himself president for life and claims parts of Kenya.
- 1978 - Uganda invades Tanzania with a view to annexing Kagera region.
- 1979 - Tanzania invades Uganda, unifying the various anti-Amin forces under the Uganda National Liberation Front and forcing Amin to flee the country; Yusufu Lule installed as president, but is quickly replaced by Godfrey Binaisa.
- 1980 - Binaisa overthrown by the army.
- Milton Obote becomes president after elections.
- 1985 - Obote deposed in military coup and is replaced by Tito Okello.
- 1986 - National Resistance Army rebels take Kampala and install Yoweri Museveni as president.
- 1993 - Museveni restores the traditional kings, including the king of Buganda, but without political power.
- 1995 - New constitution legalises political parties but maintains the ban on political activity.
- 1996 - Museveni returned to office in Uganda's first direct presidential election.
- 1997 - Ugandan troops help depose Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, who is replaced by Laurent Kabila.
- 1998 - Ugandan troops intervene in the Democratic Republic of Congo on the side of rebels seeking to overthrow Kabila.
- 2000 - Ugandans vote to reject multi-party politics in favour of continuing Museveni's "no-party" system.
- 2001 January - East African Community (EAC) inaugurated in Arusha, Tanzania, laying groundwork for common East African passport, flag, economic and monetary integration. Members are Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya.
- 2001 March - Uganda classifies Rwanda, its former ally in the civil war in DR Congo, as a hostile nation because of fighting in 2000 between the two countries' armies in DR Congo.
- Museveni wins another term in office, beating his rival Kizza Besigye by 69% to 28%.
- 2002 March - Sudan, Uganda sign agreement aimed at containing Ugandan rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), active along common border.
- 2002 October - Army evacuates more than 400,000 civilians caught up in fight against cult-like LRA which continues its brutal attacks on villages.
- 2002 December - Peace deal signed with Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF) rebels after more than five years of negotiations.
- 2003 May - Uganda pulls out last of its troops from eastern DR Congo. Tens of thousands of DR Congo civilians seek asylum in Uganda.
- 2004 February - LRA rebels slaughter more than 200 people at a camp for displaced people in the north.
- 2004 December - Government and LRA rebels hold their first face-to-face talks, but there is no breakthrough in ending the insurgency.

2005 April - Uganda rejects accusations made by DR Congo at the International Court in The Hague. DR Congo says Uganda invaded its territory in 1999, killing citizens and looting.

2005 July - Parliament approves a constitutional amendment which scraps presidential term limits.

Voters in a referendum overwhelmingly back a return to multi-party politics.

2005 October - International Criminal Court issues arrest warrants for five LRA commanders, including leader Joseph Kony.

2005 November - Main opposition leader Kizza Besigye is imprisoned shortly after returning from exile after a trial in a military court on various charges including treason and illegal possession of firearms. Supporters say the trial was politically motivated, and take to the streets. Mr Besigye is released on bail in January 2006, just ahead of presidential elections.

2005 December - International Court in The Hague rules that Uganda must compensate DR Congo for rights abuses and the plundering of resources in the five years leading to 2003.

2006 February - President Museveni wins multi-party elections, taking 59% of the vote against the 37% share of his rival, Kizza Besigye. EU observers highlight intimidation of Mr Besigye and official media bias as problems.

2006 August - The government and the LRA sign a truce aimed at ending their long-running conflict. Subsequent peace talks are marred by regular walk-outs.

2006 November - Government rejects a United Nations report accusing the army of using indiscriminate and excessive force in its campaign to disarm tribal warriors in the lawless northeastern region of Karamoja.

Somalia role

2007 March - Ugandan peacekeepers deploy in Somalia as part of an African Union mission to help stabilise the country.

The UN World Food Programme says it will have to halve food handouts to more than 1 million people displaced by war in the north.

2007 April - Protests over a rain forest explode into racial violence in Kampala, forcing police to protect Asian businesses and a Hindu temple. An Asian man and two other people are killed.

2007 July - Lord's Resistance Army says lack of funds for foreign travel and to reach commanders in remote hideouts will delay peace talks.

2007 August - Uganda and DR Congo agree to try defuse a border dispute.

2007 September - State of emergency imposed after severe floods cause widespread devastation.

2008 February - Government and the Lord's Resistance Army sign what is meant to be a permanent ceasefire at talks in Juba, Sudan.

2008 November - The leader of the Lord's Resistance Army, Joseph Kony, again fails to turn up for the signing of a peace agreement. Ugandan, South Sudanese and DR Congo armies launch offensive against LRA bases.

2009 January - Lord's Resistance Army appeals for ceasefire in face of continuing offensive by regional countries.

The UK oil explorer Heritage Oil says it has made a major oil find in Uganda.



2009 March - Ugandan army begins to withdraw from DR Congo, where it had pursued Lord's Resistance Army rebels.

2009 October - Somali Islamists threaten to target Uganda and Burundi after action by African peacekeepers in Somalia kills several civilians.

2009 December - Parliament votes to ban female circumcision. Anyone convicted of the practice will face 10 years in jail or a life sentence if a victim dies.

2010 January - President Museveni distances himself from the anti-homosexuality Bill, saying the ruling party MP who proposed the bill did so as an individual. The European Union and United States had condemned the bill.

The Ugandan army says it killed Bok Abudema, a senior commander of the Lord's Resistance Army armed group, in the Central African Republic.

2010 February - Heritage Oil sells its assets in Uganda to the UK firm Tullow Oil after Italian energy company Eni dropped out of the bidding.

2010 June - Public prosecutor opens corruption investigation against Vice-President Gilbert Bukenya, Foreign Minister Sam Kutesa and several other ministers and officials over the alleged theft of \$25m.

2010 June-August - Operation Rwenzori against ADF-NALU rebels striving for an Islamic state in Uganda prompts 90,000 to flee in North Kivu province of neighbouring DR Congo.

2010 July - Two bomb attacks on people watching World Cup final at a restaurant and a rugby club in Kampala kill at least 74 people. The Somali Islamist group Al-Shabab says it was behind the blasts.

2010 August - National Resistance Movement primary elections for parliamentary and local candidates suspended amid irregularities, violence.

2010 October - UN report into killing of Hutus in DR Congo between 1993 and 2003 says they may constitute "crimes of genocide". It implicates Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Zimbabwe and Angola.

2010 October - Constitutional Court quashes treason charges against opposition leader Kizza Besigye.

2011 February - Museveni wins his fourth presidential election. Challenger Kizza Besigye alleges vote-rigging and dismisses the result as a sham.

2011 April - Kizza Besigye arrested several times over "walk-to-work" protests against rising prices.

2011 July - US deploys special forces personnel to help Uganda combat LRA rebels.

2011 September - Court orders release of LRA commander Thomas Kwoyelo, saying he should be given the amnesty on offer from the government.

2012 May - Ugandan Army captures senior LRA commander Caesar Achellam in a clash in the Central African Republic, one of the nearby states in which the remaining band of LRA troops operates. Uganda says this is a major breakthrough, billing Achellam as a top LRA strategist.

Tens of thousands of refugees cross into Uganda, fleeing fighting in DR Congo.

2012 July - UN accuses Uganda of sending troops into DR Congo to fight alongside the M23 rebel movement, a charge Uganda denies.

2012 November - Uganda announces its intention to withdraw from UN-backed international peacekeeping missions in response to UN accusations that Uganda is arming Congolese rebels.

Britain and other European countries halt aid channelled through the Ugandan government amid a scandal involving the alleged theft of donor funds.

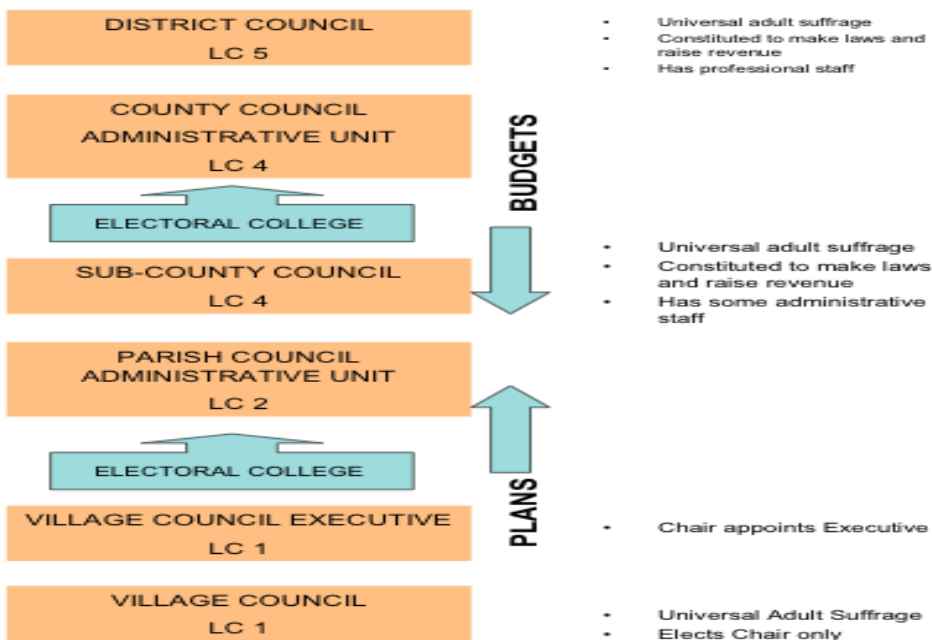
2013 February - Eleven countries, including Uganda, sign a UN-mediated agreement pledging not to interfere in DR Congo.

2013 March - Uganda is grouped among the worst offenders in the illegal ivory trade at a meeting of CITES, the body regulating wildlife trade.

2013 May - Government temporarily shuts two newspapers after they published a letter suggesting President Museveni was grooming his son for power.

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14112446>

**Figure 1. Local Government System**



**UGANDA'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM**

