Museveni’s Centralization of Power: The Political Economy of Development in Uganda

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Museveni’s Centralization of Power: The Political Economy of Development in Uganda

A Thesis
Presented to
The Dean and Faculty of the Josef Korbel School of International Studies
University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
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November 2011
Advisor: Paul R. Viotti
Abstract

This thesis develops a model of structural power in society that builds upon Weber’s notion that several types of power exist in societies and that these types of power operate differently within societies. The purpose of this model is to help explain the political economy of development during Museveni’s tenure. The thesis argues that Museveni has centralized power through a complex system of patronage and repression. Furthermore, Museveni’s transformation from the leader of a cadre of ‘new breed leaders’ to ‘just another African big man’ results from his choice to centralize power as a means of achieving his revolutionary goals. While this thesis explains how this centralization occurred it does not explain why. The final chapter investigates some theoretical frameworks to explain why it has occurred. The thesis concludes by noting that a combination of these frameworks and the model developed herein offer several avenues for possible further research.
Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge Paul Viotti for his supervision and aiding in the conceptual development of this thesis and Robert Uttaro for helping to ground the thesis in African political realities. I would be greatly remiss if I failed to acknowledge the support of my family. My wife Liesel has offered encouragement to me at every stage, was excited when I was not and hopeful when I was disillusioned. Her support cannot be overstated. Lastly, my two daughters, Kendyl and Josie, have been a constant source of mental rejuvination. Despite their youth, their exuberant affection for me encourages me to be a better father and student.
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INTRODUCTION

The early 1990’s saw the emergence of a “new breed” of African leader. The original triumvirate of Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, Isaias Afewrki of Eritrea and Yoweri Museveni of Uganda became internationally recognized as the scions of this new breed. Their embrace of Western political and economic values seemed, especially to leaders in Western donor nations, as a watershed for African politics. Gone were the days of Mobuto Sese Seko’s venal regime, gone were the days of Julius Nyerere and Jomo Kenyatta’s pan-Africanist movement. This new triumvirate would herald in the modernization of Africa. Among this new ruling class none were as magnanimous or successful as Yoweri Museveni.

*New York Times* journalist James McKinley, Jr. characterized international sentiments towards Museveni with this 1997 entry:

> These are heady days for the former guerrilla who runs Uganda. He moves with the measured gait and sure gestures of a leader secure in his power and in his vision. These days, political pundits across the continent are calling Mr. Museveni an African Bismarck. Some people now refer to him as Africa's "other statesman," second only to the venerated South African President, Nelson Mandela.¹

McKinley is by no means measured in his adulation of Museveni. The same could be said of many the other new generation of leaders. Much political rhetoric was devoted, both within African and from without, to the political transformation of Africa. In the space of

ten short years Museveni had gone from virtually unknown African rebel leader from the bush of Uganda, to the patriarch of African politics. Two policy developments in Museveni’s first ten years illustrate why the West attached itself to Museveni. First, Museveni’s rhetoric aligned his goals with Western ideals for Africa. Second, at a time when many African leaders skirted the growing issue of the AIDS pandemic Museveni confronted the disease. This confrontation of traditional taboo subjects demonstrated Museveni’s modernizing credentials and his ability to confront traditional notions of health and development.

**Museveni’s Acceptance of Western Ideals**

One of Museveni’s qualities that most endeared him to Western nations was his acceptance of Western political and economic ideas and behaviors. Politically, Museveni was often heard excoriating previous African leaders for their extended tenures in office. On one occasion Museveni argued that Africa’s problem derived from leaders staying in office too long.\(^2\) This seemingly dramatic shift in African political rhetoric caught the attention of Western governments. In addition to his calls for shorter terms for African leaders Museveni’s system of and calls for increased decentralization of power further enshrined him as the scion of the new breed of African leaders. These new African political ideas also blended well with Museveni’s adherence to Western economic policies, particularly his embrace of neoliberalism, as Museveni moved to increase privatization levels\(^3\) and decrease overall government spending\(^4\). This adoption of such

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strict neoliberal policies in the heart of Africa opened the way for Western leaders to easily attach themselves to Museveni and his new government.

*Confronting the Reality of AIDS*

The second action taken by the government illustrates Museveni’s willingness to confront traditional notions of health and development. In 1986 the government of Uganda began confronting the challenge of HIV/AIDS. They instituted the ABC program (Abstinence, Be faithful, Condoms). In 1990 the HIV/AIDS infection rate in Uganda was roughly 15% of the total population.\(^5\) Currently, the HIV/AIDS rate in Uganda has plummeted to nearly 5%.\(^6\) This program was effective due to its direct confrontation of the issue. This direct confrontation can be attributable to Museveni’s willingness to act. In this context Museveni came to be seen as an African modernizer, one who was willing and able to confront the reality of challenges facing African states. This program has served as model for many developing nations to confront the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

*Declining Favorability*

Despite the aforementioned accomplishments in his first ten years in office, Museveni soon began to lose favor with the West. In the space of roughly ten years the Museveni led triumvirate of new African leaders have all but fallen out of favor with Western governments. American ambassador Jerry Lanier’s statement in a diplomatic cable epitomizes this declining favorability: “The President’s autocratic tendencies, as well as Uganda’s pervasive corruption, sharpening ethnic divisions and explosive

\(^4\) The foundation ideas for decentralized government are outlined by Museveni in his book *What is Africa’s Problem?* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, MN, 2000).


\(^6\) Ibid.
population growth, have eroding [sic] Uganda’s status as an African success story.” No longer are Museveni and the others eulogized as African modernizers, but are decried as African big men. How did Museveni go from the paragon of African political virtue to the epitome of African political dysfunction in such a short time-span?

I argue in this thesis the Museveni’s transformation was, and is, a direct result of the length, nature, and consequences of his tenure in office. This extended tenure has been a direct result of his ability to maintain power in Uganda’s fractious society. While Museveni may have rhetorically accepted Western political ideals, he has governed according to the underlying political realities of Ugandan society. These realities derive from the ethnically divided nature of contemporary Ugandan society. In order to accomplish his desired goals and vision for his tenure Museveni choose to govern through informal, personal channels as opposed to formal, institutional channels. While on the surface Museveni has appeared to be building formal institutional structures that would allow greater influence for the rule of law, he was not. These efforts were merely a façade to cover his network of informal institutions. This thesis will demonstrate how this has occurred during his presidential tenure and will do so according to the following outline.

In chapter 1 a model is developed that explains how the structure of power in Uganda’s society has shifted during Museveni’s presidential tenure. This model is first outlined conceptually and then applied to contemporary Ugandan society. This chapter argues that political authorities in Ugandan society have centralized power at the expense

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of social identities and cultural elements in society. This centralization underscores Museveni’s influence on contemporary Ugandan society. However, this model does not explain the political logic of Museveni’s actions. This is a shortcoming of the model that is further addressed in the final chapter. Despite this shortcoming the model developed nonetheless does explain the broader societal power dynamics of Museveni’s presidential tenure and for this reason the model was developed and employed.

Next, chapter 2 deepens the understanding of how Museveni centralized societal power. In this chapter I argue that a logical system of patronage and repression allowed Museveni to entrench and expand his power throughout Uganda’s ethnically divided society. The central observation is that Museveni has pursued different patronage strategies in both northern and southern Uganda, but has equally repressed both halves of the country. This chapter focuses on outlining the nature of the systems, while leaving the description of the political logic to the concluding chapter.

After reviewing the nature of Museveni’s structure of power maintenance chapter 3 analyzes the positive and negative consequences of Museveni’s extended presidential tenure. The positive consequences are derivatives of the political and economic stability Museveni brought to Uganda. However, in many ways these positive developments represent the same political logic exhibited in Museveni’s patronage system. The negative consequences also exhibit a political logic but one that differs from the distribution of patronage and positive consequences. Like the motives of the patronage system, this political logic is synthesized in the concluding chapter.

The 4 and concluding chapter will attempt to synthesize chapters 1-3 by describing the political logic of Museveni’s centralization of power. This political logic
sheds light on Museveni’s declining favorability. This logic illustrates that Museveni governed Uganda according to the underlying political realities of Ugandan society, namely the ethnically fractious nature of society. Had he not governed in such a way he would have never centralized and maintained power for the past thirty years. His choice to govern in this manner has led to his declining favorability in Western circles as many leaders have come to view him as not part of a new cadre of African leaders.
CHAPTER ONE: CONSTRUCTING SOCIETAL POWER STRUCTURES

Societies are constructed according to those elements within the society that possess the greatest amount of power within the society. As defined in this thesis, societies are comprised of four elements: 1) political, 2) economic, 3) social identities, and 4) cultural. Each of these elements holds a unique place and function in a particular society. The main goal of each element of society is to secure for itself benefits via the acquisition of power. The figure below provides a visual model of what how elements relate to one another within a conceptualized society.

Figure 1. Relationship Between Societal Elements in Conceptualized Society.

What the model represents is the relationship between the political and economic elements in society and the social identities and their relationship to the cultural elements of society. The positioning of the elements within the model represent the position they play in society. Central to any society are the political and economic elements. Operating

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8 This model is adapted from a discussion the author had with Paul Viotti concerning the work of David Easton. For further detail concerning this work please see David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965).
within those elements, and contributing to those elements, are the social identities of the society and the cultural practices/norms of the society. Lastly, the model illustrates that each element of society has a vested interest in maintaining proper power balances within the society.

The self-interested pursuit of the acquisition of power shapes a society. Furthermore, the interactions between each element of society allow for a proper balance of power to be achieved and, theory a productive society to be shaped. Max Weber’s definition of power, “the chances [sic] which a man or a group of men have to realize their will in a communal activity, even against the opposition of others taking part in it,”9 is a useful foundation from which to analyze these power acquisition interactions. As societal elements interact they begin to develop an intersubjective understanding of the others and the other’s place in the society. In this process some elements become relatively more powerful than the others in society. In the ideal society this process gradually leads to a set of productive relationships through processes of ‘give and take’ consensus building that allows mutual benefit to all elements of society.

However, in reality what takes place is much different. The distribution of power throughout the elements of society become unequal and therefore affects the functioning of the societal system as a whole. Each element of society seeks to acquire power in order to realize their will at the expense of others within the system. This acquisition of power, and the subsequent distribution of power across the system, results in four main types of power: political, economic, citizen, and cultural. In essence each element seeks to push

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itself into the prominent position within the system and therefore secure for itself, and its members, the privileges of systemic rule.\textsuperscript{10} This broad definition of power presented above is central to the purposes of this thesis as the idea of the individual or group is directly transferable to the concept of societal elements as presented here. These four types of power are different\textsuperscript{11} and with each exhibiting different characteristics upon the system and leading to the development of different types of societies.

These developments in societies are dynamic and can shift over time due to different types of interactions between the different elements of society. In essence societies can be reshaped due to the emergence of another type of power that successfully supplants the dominant power holders and successfully restructures power in their favor. The French Revolution is an example of such an event occurring. During the Revolution political authorities maintained both political and economic power over social identities for centuries until the emergent strength of social identities overtook the systemic power of political authorities. Social identities used their own power to acquire economic power and completely reshaped society. The societal dynamism exemplified in the French Revolution is characteristic of systems focused on power acquisition. In order to understand the role of power in shaping societal constructions and identity it is important to examine more closely the four types of power outlined above.

\textbf{Types of Power}

As mentioned above four types of power exist within societies. Each element within society acquires power by its own mechanisms and processes. These different

\textsuperscript{10} This helps to explain why so many political authorities to come to acquire systemic power: they start at the preeminent position within the system.

\textsuperscript{11} Weber, 182.
mechanisms cause each type of power to exhibit different characteristics in the societal system. It is important to note that power is never distributed evenly across the entire system, but rather it is unevenly distributed as shaped by the interactions between the elements of society and the actions of individuals most in control of those elements. The distribution of this power is what eventually determines how the society is constructed and what identity the society takes on.

*Political Power*

Political power is the most important form of power across any societal system. A simple definition of this type of power is the ability to enact, influence, or create codified law within a society. Often it forms the basis of the systemic law and order. A societal system cannot exist without political power. Regardless of the evolutionary position of the society (i.e. modern state, a nation, a tribal society) all societies, with the exception of hypothetical anarchies, must have authorities who determine laws and who enforce such laws. These authorities make up the political elements of society and wield political power within it. Both political authorities and political power exist in a symbiotic relationship that reinforces the preeminent position of the political elements within the societal system. Lastly, it is important to note that political authorities are initially created by the acquisition of political power; however, once created political authorities control political power, it creation and destruction. Both of these concepts are central to the acquisition of political power within societies. Examining how political authorities are created by political power and how they then come to control this power will illustrate this process of power acquisition.
Political authorities are created by political power. The initial origin of this political power differs from society to society. Whether by inheritance, bestowal, the transfer of power via democracy, or through brute force all political authorities must become authorities through their acquisition of political power. Societies can experience a single acquisition of political power (as in the case of the United States social identities transferring power to representatives) or multiple transfers of power (as in the case of Haiti and its multiplicity of coups) over time, but rarely experience complete upheavals such as those witnessed in the French Revolution. Specifically in the African context, societies across the continent have consistently seen multiple transfers of power, often vacillating from the hands of social identities to those of political authorities. The frequency and type of transfer of political power has lasting effects on the overall society. Once transferred, regardless of how this initial political power is transferred, those who hold it, for better or worse, control the power.

Political authorities control political power as they enact laws or other forms of institutions in regards to their status as the creators and enforcers of law. These laws or institutions can reinforce, strengthen, or destroy this position, and thus have a causal effect on political power. The enacting of laws to be enforced upon the other elements of society by political authorities weakens the other elements power position within the system; they are at the whim of the political authorities. The opposite is also true: the destruction of political power strengthens other elements of society. If left unchecked by the society, political authorities have the ability to create enough political power to overwhelm the entire system, or in other words acquire systemic power. This creation of
systemic rule by political power is ultimately destructive of the entire society, but beneficial to the political authorities. Adequate economic and citizen power can check the runaway growth of political power.

_Economic Power_

Much like political power economic power is vital for a society to successfully exist. However unlike political power that can be acquired through on interaction, economic power is acquired through multiple interactions between multiple elements over time. Furthermore, economic power is not controlled in the same manner that political power is controlled: economic power exists independent of those who hold it and is highly transferable. Those who hold economic power can wield considerable power within the system. However, their wielding of power does not necessarily result in destructive consequences in the same way systemic political power does. Lastly, economic power can be held by all in society and is not restricted solely to one class of people as is political power.

As argued above economic power is acquired though multiple interactions with multiple societal elements over time. The result of these interactions is the acquisition of wealth, either in monetary form or other forms such as land. Economic power derives from this wealth. As more and more individuals within the economic sphere acquire more wealth more economic power is generated. However, because of this power is highly transferable it is not as easily controlled as political power.

Despite its difficulty to control, the wielding of economic power can hold considerable sway over the societal system towards both positive and negative ends.
Positive benefits come when economic power is widely disbursed throughout society in the hands of a large number of individuals. As larger numbers of individuals acquire economic power they now have agency in their lives thus empowering individuals to act for themselves and not to be acted upon by other elements or actors in society. Most importantly, the more disbursed economic power is away from political authorities the more productive the societal system can become. When economic power is outside the hands of political authorities individuals acting within the economy begin to gain power within the system and can counterbalance any attempts to grow political power. They can push back against political authorities when political authorities begin to encroach on their ability to gain wealth. However, when the acquisition of economic power is not regulated to the benefit of the system, economic power becomes centralized in the hands of a few. This centralization creates negative consequences for the system.

The negative consequences associated with the centralization of economic power center on the loss of economic actors in society to act as a check on runaway political power. The centralization of economic power can take place in two ways. First, the most economically successful individuals can gradually acquire the majority of the economic power in the system through their own talent and success. This happens when few restraints are placed upon economic interactions over time. Second, economic power can be centralized as political authorities acquire economic power due to their political positions or through the co-optation of those holding the majority of economic power.

Both types of economic centralization have negative, but different, systemic consequences. In the first instance the centralization makes it easier for economic power
holders to cooperate with political authorities. Thus rather than acting as a counterbalance on growing political power those holding economic power can align their actions with those of political authorities in order to secure their interests, namely the complete maximization of profits and market position. Cooperative relationships such as these do little to create the conditions for greater distribution of economic power and the subsequent long term society construction becomes unstable.

In the second scenario when economic power becomes centralized under political authorities the society as a whole begins to break down. The acquisition of economic power by political authorities often occurs through nefarious means. The use of political position to secure government contracts or market positions undermines economic competitiveness and ultimately leads to a loss in overall productivity. Furthermore, if political authorities do acquire large amounts of economic power prior to acquiring political power they often use this political power to acquire more economic power thus having the same affects as in the first scenario.

The proper distribution of economic power is thus critical to maintaining a productive society. Proper distribution can act as a check on runaway political power. Conversely the centralization of economic power can actually serve to undermine competitiveness and in some ways serve to facilitate runaway political power. In order to ensure that the proper distribution of economic power occurs social identities must hold enough power within society in order to properly monitor political power and economic centralization.
Power of Social Identities

The power of social identities derives from the ability of individuals to organize in favor or against a cause, government action, or any other idea around which they feel to organize. This organization can take various forms and is not constrained to mere protests or opposition political movements. It is not only the nominal ability to organize that facilitates the acquisition of power but also the proven ability to do so. The intersubjective interaction between social identities and other societal actors, mainly political authorities, shapes their nominal and real ability to organize. These abilities are mainly shaped through the interactions with the political elements. Political authorities can quickly curtail or enhance this ability through legislative or arbitrary action. Therefore it is imperative that social identities and political authorities act cooperatively to shape the norms of citizen organization, as it is the mechanism for power acquisition.

When large enough these social identities can acquire systemic power and overwhelm the other societal elements. It is also important to note than an individual cannot possess citizen power as it derives from group organization. Furthermore, the likelihood of the centralization of citizen power is very low as its very nature precludes multiple groups with diverse interests from coming together under one leadership umbrella. Precisely for these reasons citizen power is unlike political and economic power in that the accumulation of citizen power has very little if any negative consequences for the system. On the contrary large social identities are highly often be beneficial to the system, as groups are more capable of producing positive results from
collective actions than are individuals.\textsuperscript{12} Therefore with organization comes power within the societal system. This power leads to at least positive outcomes for the society.

First, the diffuse nature of social identities allows them easily act as a type of organic oversight committee against unbridled economic centralization. Multiple interests exist within a society and these interests, if allowed to organize and acquire citizen power, are likely to seek out likeminded economic power holders in order to cooperate with them. Conversely, these interests are also likely to investigate economic power holders in order to expose their attempts at centralization or other nefarious practices. In both scenarios social identities and groups contribute to the continued diffusion of economic power: when cooperation takes place power is diffused and when activities are exposed economic power holders are often forced to concede certain levels power. They therefore help to create stability within the system, thus promoting a productive society.

Second, the diffuse nature of social identities checks runaway growth in political power. Simply put when social identities feel their societal rights or liberties are being overwhelmed by encroaching political power they are able to organize against such actions. Social identities can quickly organize to acquire systemic power and overwhelm the political elements within the society. These social identities, often powerfully motivated by a collective cause, can reach tipping points from which they shape, or reshape, the distribution of power within the society in their favor if the right combination of authorities is involved.\textsuperscript{13} However, despite the ability to reach systemic

power fairly quickly and organically these groups often become disjointed quickly after achieving their objectives. Despite this lack of longevity these groups often leave behind powerful forms of social capital from which reorganization is usually possible.

Thus the power of social identities is interconnected with economic and political power within the societal system. When a society is constructing itself productively each of these three elements serves to reinforce the productivity of the other. Economic power acts as a check on political power, social indefinites act as a check on the centralization of economic power and the runaway growth of political power, while political power can check, albeit in a negative way, the growth of social identities. Figure 2 illustrates how these three types of power interact with one another in an idealized, productive society as described in the previous paragraph.

Figure 2. Power Relationships in an Ideal Society

Cultural Power

Cultural power derives from the ability to shape societal norms and behaviors. This power is often acquired and wielded by more traditional elements within the society (e.g. kings, tribal elders, churches), but is not restricted to these individuals or groups. It is possible that this power can be co-opted by the other three elements of society. Furthermore cultural power is not exclusive: multiple actors within the system can hold
This power. Thus cultural power is more diffuse throughout the system than the other types of societal power and is therefore more difficult to pinpoint its effects on the system. That said cultural power holds great power over the entire system. As can be seen in Figure 3 cultural power, in an ideal society, encapsulates the other power triangle relationship of the other three forms of societal power. This encapsulation is meant to represent the overarching nature of cultural power within the system. Furthermore, it represents the ideal that cultural power is shared among multiple actors across multiple elements of society. When cultural power is shared across multiple actors and multiple elements the system can function more productively as only one group does not shape the norms of various interactions.

Figure 3. Influence of Cultural Power on Systemic Power Relationships

The ability to shape cultural norms and behaviors allows those possessing this power to establish behavioral norms for societies. This shaping of cultural norms is not a short-term proposition. Rather the shaping, or reshaping, of the cultural norms of interaction takes place over generations. It is this long-term nature of this process that gives cultural power such inertia this inertia is the reason traditional institutions often
hold the greatest concentrations, but not all, cultural power. With this power traditional institutions can either condemn or encourage the development of negative societal consequences. For example, in the case of the centralization of economic power a traditional institution can come out against the centralization of power on the basis of its going against traditional economic practices, or it can encourage this practice by arguing the opposite.

For a society to be productive cultural power must be used to shape norms in such a way that averts the negative consequences of systemic power acquisition. In an ideal positively functioning society cultural power is wielded in differing ways across the other elements of society. Traditional institutions can be, and often are, overruled by other societal elements, namely the political and economic, wielding cultural power. When this power becomes monopolized by one element of society it aids those societal actors in the acquisition of systemic power. This monopolization begins a dysfunctional set of processes that leads to an unproductive society.

In the scenarios where traditional institutions are no longer the dominant wielders of cultural power, cultural norms are reshaped in systemically unbeneﬁcial ways. Cultural norms can become co-opted by political and economic actors and reshaped in ways that beneﬁt these elements in their pursuit of systemic power acquisition. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate how the model shifts when cultural power is monopolized by either political or economic elements within society. The negative consequences of political authorities wielding systemic power and economic centralization are outlined previously.
But the important question remains: how does cultural power become centralized in non-traditional institutions and elements?

Figure 3. Cultural Power Monopolized by Political Authorities

![Diagram of Cultural Power Monopolized by Political Authorities]

Figure 4. Cultural Power Monopolized by Economic Authorities

![Diagram of Cultural Power Monopolized by Economic Authorities]

Political authorities monopolize cultural power using force or cooptation. Force is often used to eliminate traditional authorities for the societal system. This elimination does not singularly constitute murder or other forms of physical violence, but can also include arrest and exile. Political authorities can also use the force of state capability to overwhelm the influence of traditional authorities. Political authorities engage in high numbers of interactions in ways that reshapes cultural norms in their favor. These interactions often involve political authorities engaging with social identities and the
economy in ways counter to how traditional leaders would interact. In this manner the ability to shape norms become that of the state and not traditional authorities simply based on the number of interactions the state engages in with other elements of society. Simply put, the state becomes more prominent in determining the rules of interaction within the society than the traditional authorities. This pattern of power acquisition is similar to the cooptation processes economic authorities use in their acquisition of cultural power.

Economic actors regularly engage in dramatically higher number of interactions over a given period of time than other elements of society. It therefore follows that any attempt to reshape cultural norms in their favor could easily take place. Unlike political authorities, economic authorities merely seek to gradually reshape cultural norms through leveraging them towards the greater generation of wealth. Whereas political authorities can often seek to reshape cultural norms by erasing them and starting over, economic authorities seek to reshape them by interacting within them over time in their favor. Thus by interacting within these norms and making minor readjustments to them to fit them into their business interactions economic actors gradually co-opt cultural power and reshape societal norms.

The question then arises concerning what effects these four types of power and the acquisition processes of each have on the societal construction and identity. As one might predict their effects differ, but they differ in the presence of different types and levels power found within the system. It is therefore not possible to discuss the effects of an individual power type in isolation. The challenge then becomes how can one identify
the presence of varying levels of a particular type of power within a system? Analyzing the societal construction and identity yields understanding as to which elements and types of power are most prominent in society.

Each society is uniquely its own and as such must be analyzed within its historical context. One must discover the broad historical narratives of the society in order to fully understand and analyze its power interactions of the society. For this thesis the process of discovering the board historical narratives is difficult as pre-colonial Uganda experienced nearly 1000 years of various forms of societal interactions and little academic work has been done on those interactions. Nonetheless adequate work on the colonial and post-colonial Ugandan society has been done and the reader is encouraged to seek these sources out from the reference list if more information is desired. The following section will attempt to sketch how Ugandan society is constructed to determine which forms of power are dominant within the system. Given the focus on the present some references will be given from earlier works on pre-colonial and colonial Ugandan society where relevant.

**Ugandan Society under Museveni**

The purpose of this section is to analyze the state of Ugandan society during the Museveni era through the previously outlined model of societal power. In laying out the various types of power the purpose was to conceptually understand their sources and how they interact within a conceptual society. As the remainder of the chapter proceeds keep in mind that societies are not static and are products the broad historical trends of their construction. Uganda is no different.
Political Power in Uganda

Political power in Uganda is centered squarely in the hands President Museveni. He has acquired this power at a steadily increasing rate over his nearly 30 years in power. What started as a popular ousting of the second Milton Obote government in favor of a more open, democratic and forward-looking government has in many ways become what it sought to replace. Museveni’s first ten years in office were non-democratic with himself as the ultimate voice of government, thus allowing him to acquire political power by decree. Furthermore, Museveni’s growing ability to influence parliament towards supporting his own agenda give him remarkable political power.¹⁴

Museveni’s rise to power following the ousting of the unpopular Obote government, and his subsequent national vision, established his popularity within society. As recipients of this vast support and popular legitimacy, the government promised the restoration of democracy and constitutionalism. Thus, outlining their revolutionary aims of reconstructing power along democratic ideals. Sensing their own popular legitimacy political authorities postponed the beginning of these aims for ten years until 1995-96. While the reasons may not be wholly nefarious, one cannot help but to question why the regime waited for ten years to restore democracy. Regardless of the reason for delaying these processes, the Museveni government and the ruling party established itself as the dominant political entity over those ten years.

Since the first elections held in 1996 and the restoration of nominal multipartyism has continued acquire political power based upon the groundwork it laid during its first

ten years in office. As will be explored in a later chapter the regime has created multiple avenues to generate loyalty and support throughout the country. Furthermore, its background as an insurgent group has given rise to its repressive nature in its efforts at maintaining political. Thus, Museveni’s first ten years in office were the platform from which he acquired and then expanded his political power. Currently, Museveni’s political power is largely un-challenged, but cracks (rather large ones) are beginning to develop within his government.  

Economic Power in Uganda

The economic actors within Ugandan society are fairly independent of the government and have avoided the economic centralization that has taken place in many other one-party African states. The lists of the Ugandan rich and super rich demonstrate the diffusion of wealth throughout different sectors in Uganda. This diverse group of self-made businessmen, large landholders, and a few government department executives should hardly be considered as a cadre of ruling party faithful or solely pursuing ruling party interests. This diffusion of economic power away from political authorities has always been a hallmark of Ugandan society and is one of the driving forces behind its resilience.

This diffusion of economic power outside the hands of political authorities has often caused severe tensions to develop between the political authorities and economic...
actors. At one point even Idi Amin expelled all “Asians” from the country in 1972 and took control of the economy in an effort to centralize economic power in political authorities. This centralization devastated the economy in multiple ways. Aside from this brief episode of Africanization and nationalization during the Amin years, the distribution of wealth has not changed significantly since independence; however, under Museveni the process by which wealth, and subsequently economic power, is acquired has.

Since 1986 Uganda has undergone a significant economic liberalization program. The Museveni government has implemented and continues to implement neoliberal reforms in Uganda. its adoption is tied to its relationship with the World Bank, which has been one of the largest institutional promoters of neoliberalism. The irony of Uganda’s adoption of neoliberalism is that this adoption process has been state guided and state owned. Political authorities have sought to oversee the implementation of the neo-liberal agenda and have created and odd mixture of surprisingly successful state-led neoliberal policies. However, political authorities did not merely view neoliberalism as a mechanism to spur growth and development, but also as a mechanism to acquire further economic power.

Neoliberalism, like most aspects of the Museveni government, has been co-opted in Museveni’s continuing attempt to personalize the state. While the reforms appear to have contributed to a decade and a half of economic growth, they have also enlarged the

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19 Pitcher, 385.
capabilities of political authorities operating within the economy. The reach of the regime has been widened in two ways and this widening has increased the amount of economic power within the NRM. First, economic growth has increased the amount of money flowing into the government in the form of taxes and other forms of donor support and there is therefore more resources to distribute as patronage. Second, the economic growth that has taken place during the Museveni era has brought the government greater legitimacy in the southern ethnic Bantu portions of the country where much of this growth has occurred. While the south has seen great economic progress, the north has only seen stagnation and deprivation. The horizontal inequalities have contributed to many of the ethnic tensions during the Museveni’s tenure.

Despite the enlarged capabilities of political authorities operating within the economy, economic power continues to be diffused throughout society. Non-ruling party actors holding economic power pursue their own interests and thus possess the ability to act as a check against any attempts by political authorities to acquire too much economic power. While this statement is true for the society as a whole, it is more difficult for those from the northern regions to check growing political power. The economic stagnation of northern Ugandan during Museveni’s tenure is thus allowing the ruling party to begin to acquire larger amounts of economic power in the north.

Economic power in Uganda is structured differently in the northern and southern halves of the country. In the south economic power is widely diffused away from the ruling party and those holding this power possess the ability to check the growing

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political power of the Museveni government. In the north economic stagnation depleted any transformative economic capabilities and this lack of transformative economic capabilities forces the north to seek government assistance in generating economic development.21 From this assistance the Museveni government is slowly centralizing its economic power in the north.

*The Power of Social Identities in Uganda*

Despite the nominally democratic nature of the Ugandan system social identities’ hold relatively little power within society. Museveni and other political authorities hold large amounts of political power, which they use to overwhelm and suppress the power of social identities. Under this construction social identities find it difficult to create effective interest organizations opposed to regime interests. The nature of Uganda’s constitution is such that citizen are afforded the right to peacefully assemble and organize22; however, the effectiveness of opposition organizations is lacking. Groups that are effective at pursuing their interests are those whose interests are aligned with the regime. This cooptation stifles many attempts to effectively check the runaway growth of political power of the Museveni government.

Two areas of potential power reflect this trend: opposition protests and the press. First, as discussed in more detail in chapter three opposition protests are often repressed both institutionally through the codification of law and violently through physical

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21 This is most evident in the most recent National Development Plan. In this plan the government calls for increased investment in agricultural processing in the north as to be directed by the government. This plan forces northern Ugandans into dependency on the central government. This dependency quickly yields economic power to the central government. For more details see The Republic of Uganda. *National Development Plan 2010/11-2014/15. Kampala, Uganda, 2010*

22 The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995, Chapter 4.29.1.a and 4.29.1.e.
violence. Both types of repression have rarely hindered the actual gathering of protest
groups that seek to check political power or influence the direction of government, but
rather the organizations have had little influence over the actual course of government
decisions. The most recent walk to work protests did little to change the actual course of
policy and in many ways served to reinforce the ability to the central government to
dominate the societal system.

Second, and perhaps more importantly than the lack of effective opposition
groups, is the lack of a state run press. The New Vision group is notorious for its support
from and backing of the Museveni regime. In Uganda there are several African
language papers and are two main English language dailies. One of the most
disconcerting aspects of Uganda’s media culture is the dominance of the New Vision
Media group. Of the four major African language papers the New Vision group owns all
of them. Thus, government interests are easily disseminated throughout the country via
the New Vision apparatus. The ability of the government to reach into the ethnic majority
areas gives political authorities the advantage when it comes to shaping political
discourse. Shaping political discourse in favor of the government in ethnically unfriendly
regions allows the government to potentially win support from this coverage. Thus, even
in matters of the press the Museveni government attempts to extend its reach via ethnic
mechanisms.

The English language media market also experiences the same dynamics of
government influence. The two main English-language dailies are published by the New

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23 The central government established the flagship paper *New Vision* following its consolidation of power
and continues to hold 53% of publicly traded shares in the New Vision Media Group.
Vision group, which publishes *New Vision* and the Monitor group, which publishes *Daily Monitor*. The dominance of New Vision can be seen in the circulation of both papers with the *New Vision* holding a nearly sixty-five percent (65%) market share.\(^{24}\) With English language papers being the only nationally distributed ones, the government is easily able to influence public discourse on any pressing national topic. When taken in connection with the high distribution in the non-English language papers one quickly can see the dominance political authorities have over civil society discourse and potential actions.

*Cultural Power in Uganda*

Tribal authorities have traditional held cultural power in Uganda. Due to the nature of British colonial boundaries multiple centers of cultural power have existed within the country. Given that individuals acquire cultural power through their ability to dictate societal norms of behavior these multiple centers of power have competed and at times collided with one another. While there is not space to give a detailed recital of the traditional kingdoms in present day Uganda, suffice it to say that the most prominent and powerful kingdom is the kingdom Buganda.\(^{25}\) Given its status within Uganda, the Buganda kingdom holds great sway in shaping the future of Ugandan society. For this reason Buganda kingdom will be used as a case for examining cultural power in Uganda and the ways in which it influences the society.


As an institutional regime Buganda kingdom receives great loyalty from its people.\textsuperscript{26} This loyalty is often fiercely held among its members. One kingdom member was quick to point that he considered himself first a Baganda before several other group associations. He then pointed out that being a Ugandan was maybe fifth or sixth down on the list of self-described associational relationships.\textsuperscript{27} This loyalty turns into strict adherence to kingdom interests. Some government actions cannot become legitimate in the eyes of the people without the ‘blessing’ of traditional kingdom heads.\textsuperscript{28} However, this is not always the case.

Furthermore, the population living within Buganda kingdom is the largest of any traditional kingdom in the country. Combined with the kingdom loyalty mentioned above Buganda often plays a kingmaker role in Uganda presidential politics. Despite the historic tensions between Buganda and the presidential office,\textsuperscript{29} the kingdom has mostly been a supporter of Museveni’s government. This quasi-official support of Museveni has allowed him to retain some of the popular legitimacy within Buganda kingdom that he originally had in the beginning of his tenure. Yet despite this support the kingdom still (and this is true of the other kingdoms also) has legitimate concerns over the continued attempts of the central government to acquire cultural power.

\textsuperscript{26} This is also true of the other traditional kingdoms as well.
\textsuperscript{27} Ssimbwa Busulwe, 19 April 2010, Interview with author.
\textsuperscript{28} This was made clear to the author when interviewing one Ugandan who gave an anecdote concerning a government run child vaccination program. The program initially got no support within the kingdom and very few children received vaccinations from the local administrators. However, this quickly changed when the Kabaka, made a radio announcement supporting the vaccination program. Soon the program was very successful within the kingdom.
Increasingly Museveni is moving to strip traditional authorities (not just in Buganda, but in the entire country) of their ability to shape the behavioral norms of their subjects. Specifically, Museveni continues to quarrel with some traditional authorities regarding their proper role should be in national politics. During the most recent election cycle Museveni made it clear that traditional rulers of all ethnic backgrounds had no place in national politics and moved to codify this position.\(^\text{30}\) The pushback from these authorities forced the regime to slightly modify legislation. Nonetheless it still passed parliament and became law, thus curbing the cultural power of traditional authorities.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has presented a framework for analyzing power in societies and applied it to the case of the current Ugandan society. What this analysis reveals is Museveni’s government currently holds the vast majority of power in society (see Figure 5). This acquisition of systemic power gives Museveni the ability to pursue, and secure, his two main interests virtually unopposed from the other elements of society. Ironically, Museveni’s two interests are conflictual. Firstly, his interest is to maintain power in Uganda’s ethnically diverse society in order to bring about national and economic development. Museveni believes that his government is the only government capable of achieving this goal. Secondly, his interests, rhetorically at least, is to shift power away from political leaders in hopes of overcoming the ethnic divisions within Uganda society. The irony lies in the fact that maintaining power makes shifting power towards social identities less likely.

The model below represents how power relationships in Uganda are currently structured. As argued above the Museveni government has taken several measures to monopolize cultural power in Uganda and therefore cultural power is currently firmly centered within the political authorities of society. One can also notice from the model that the relationship between social identities and political elements runs in only one-way: from political elements to social identities. As will be argued in further detail throughout this thesis, social identities have little ability to organize to act as a check on runaway political power. In essence, they have become subjects to political authorities instead of active participants. Despite this inability of social identities to check runaway political power, political authorities have not overwhelmed the entire system. A two-way relationship between the political and economic elements continues to exist. Therefore it is possible, but unlikely due to the relative prosperity gains achieved under the Museveni regime, that the economic elements can check runaway political power.

Figure 5. Model of Power Relationships in Museveni’s Uganda

Given this model I argue that the political elements of Uganda dominate the society within a distinct north-south ethnic divide. In order to achieve the most important goals of economic and national development the regime has to confront its own
centralization of power while balancing the historic ethnic tensions of the society.

Museveni’s acquisition systemic power also does not portend positively for the Ugandan society’s ability to achieve these goals. The likelihood of the transferring power away from political authorities is unlikely given the ways Museveni has maintained societal power. The exception to this would be another violent political transition.
CHAPTER TWO: MAINTAINING POWER IN UGANDA’S ETHNIC SOCIETY

From the Bush to the Banquet: Distributive Patronage under Museveni

Museveni’s ability to maintain political power in Uganda’s ethnically divided society rests on his ability to leverage institutional patronage in the pursuit of his two earlier referenced interests. Institutional patronage in Uganda takes two forms: decentralization and co-optations of civil society. The institutional nature of the patronage network makes it more difficult to differentiate it from normal government activities. This section argues that Museveni’s patronage strategy contains multiple internal inconsistencies due to his competing interests. Inconsistencies that derive from Museveni’s attempts to bridge key divisions within Ugandan’s society. The ultimate consequence of these inconsistencies is the further centralization of power within political authorities.

Democracy Now: Government Decentralization in Uganda

The purpose of any good patronage network is to weld individuals and groups to a single political authority, via favors, positions, and other forms of graft. In a hybrid regime\textsuperscript{31} such as Uganda’s political authorities often use tactics that “weaken all independent centers of power”\textsuperscript{32} in order to accomplish this task. Andrew Mwenda calls these attempts to weaken independent centers of power in Uganda the “institutional fragmentation” of the government.\textsuperscript{33} In describing this fragmentation Mwenda details how Museveni and his government have contributed to a proliferation of organizations.


and government levels. The growth of administrative sub-national districts is an example of this phenomenon. In 1980, six years prior to Museveni’s military takeover there were 33 administrative districts and at the end of 2010 there were 112 districts\(^\text{34}\) (see Figure 1) and recent reports suggest that the government is going to create 21 new districts bringing the total to 133 districts.\(^\text{35}\) This is a staggering amount of districts\(^\text{36}\) when one remembers that according the latest census data Uganda has roughly 25 million\(^\text{37}\) people and best estimates of present day population is around 33 million.\(^\text{38}\) Mwenda argues that this has been one of the most effective ways for Museveni to enlarge his patronage.\(^\text{39}\) Furthermore, the local governments are a direct reflection of the larger patronage network and the growth thereof.\(^\text{40}\) The expanding nature of the patronage network is disturbing to concerned social identities as this growth represents political authorities’ attempts to acquire larger amounts political power.

Along with the number of districts, the distribution of districts throughout the four regions of Uganda is another indicator that the government has used institutional decentralization as part of its patronage network. Museveni and the NRM receive their strongest support from the west and central regions of the country and conversely receive

\(^{36}\) Uganda is number one on the list for the amount of sub-national administrative districts per country in the world. See the Global Administrative Database website at www.gadm.org for a data set on these statistics.
\(^{39}\) Ibid., 31.
the least amount of support from the northern and eastern regions. Historic ethnic
tensions in existence (and continues to exist) at the time of Museveni’s consolidation of
power are to blame for this distribution of support. According to the most recent
national census conducted in 2002, 5,363,669 people live in the northern region, live
6,204,915 people in the eastern region, 6,575,425 people live in the central region and
6,298,075 people live in the western region. As of July 2010 the northern region of
Uganda had 30 districts, the eastern region had 32, the central region had 24 and the
western region had 26. If the purpose of decentralization is to allow Ugandans more
opportunities to participate in government and better representation in parliament then
would it not follow that there would be more districts in the central and western regions
than the northern and eastern? That the data demonstrates the opposites suggests that the
regime is creating districts within the northern and eastern regions of the country as a
patronage mechanism to bridge the ethnic divide hindering deeper governmental
legitimacy in the region.

Any perception of tribal and ethnic group preference in the government has
historically created divisions within Uganda. The creation of more districts in the north
and east is an attempt to bridge this tribal divide through patronage. In creating these
districts the government has attempted the dual purpose of creating better governance
structures, or at least the appearance thereof, while extending its reach into areas of less

See the Uganda Electoral Commission website at http://www.ec.or.ug/eresults.html for more detailed
information on the electoral support that Museveni and the NRM have garnered in the west and central
regions since the reintroduction of electoral politics in 1995.
If successful the government will not only have overcome historical ethnic tensions and shifted power towards social identities in the north and east, but also will have manufactured political support in previously unfriendly regions.

Figure 1. Administrative Districts in Uganda.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{42} Some of the recent districts such as Pader district and other districts in the north and east were created specifically for this reason. The government argues that the larger district of Kitgum was neglecting the region of the newly created Pader district.

Under this guise of increased democratic accountability Museveni has been able to extend his reach throughout Ugandan society. Museveni’s statement upon the creation of 14 new districts in 2005 reflects his rhetoric that increasing the number of districts increases democracy in Uganda: “although a new district takes a lot of money, this is the democracy we fought for. People must ask for what they want and get.”\textsuperscript{44} With the large sums of money distributed at the start of a new district it is easy to see why the government has used decentralization as the cover for its patronage network.\textsuperscript{45} It is easier to extend a patronage network when the money is offered through formal government channels than it is to transfer suitcases of cash around. The ability of the government to use its formal revenue distribution structures hides much of this distribution.

Analyzing the categories of revenue district administrations receive from the central government illustrates how this decentralization process has operated as part of the patronage regime. Local governments receive approximately 39 different categories of funding from the central government. These categories range from various types of salaries to infrastructure/maintenance issues. Two of these funding categories are of a more dubious nature: the district unconditional grant and the urban unconditional grant. The regime gives these funds to “local governments to spend on activities, which the local governments themselves choose, such as salaries, administrative costs, and development activities.”\textsuperscript{46} While the government does attempt to publicize the amount of

\textsuperscript{44}Ocwich, “Can Uganda’s Economy Support More Districts?,” \textit{New Vision} August 8, 2005
money distributed to the local government under these categories in order to facilitate social identities holding officials more accountable, it is nonetheless too easy for local governments to siphon this money to suit their personal interests.\textsuperscript{47} If the central government had an interest in reforming the system it would eliminate these unconditional grants. The ease at which these grants can be distributed makes them a perfect option of economic patronage to distribute throughout the north and east of the country.

Rhetorically, Museveni began this decentralization process much for the same reasons that any decentralization takes place: increased democratic functioning and efficiency. However, instead of creating a more efficient and accountable government structure as one would expect, it has “become and ally and reinforcer of personal rule.”\textsuperscript{48} Decentralization has allowed more individuals to receive state funding and these individuals have become beholden to the government and not to other centers of power. In essence what started under donor pressure to decentralize was co-opted for personal purposes. Thus, the decentralization scheme in did little to shift power away from themselves in society, but had the opposite effect of actually centralizing greater power in their hands. Lastly, the expansion of districts in the north and east of the country has allowed Museveni to extend his reach deeper into ethnically unfriendly portions of the country.

\textsuperscript{48} Mwenda, 2007, 31.
Rearranging the Chairs: Cabinet Appointments under Museveni

While decentralization has been a powerful patronage mechanism to bridge ethnic divisions in the north and eastern regions of the country, the regime has used cabinet positions as distributive patronage for the west and central regions. By promoting individuals from his own ethnic region Museveni undermines his attempts to bridge national ethnic tensions. Museveni’s promotion of individuals from the west and central regions to cabinet posts is at odds with his rhetoric of a unified and ‘non-sectarian’ Uganda. The government reinforces the historical north-south ethnic tensions through the exclusion of northern politicians from viably participating in governing the country. By failing to bridge this historic tension the government fails to shift power away from the political authorities in society; by reinforcing the underlying historic ethnic tensions Museveni reinforces his own power in society.

Since taking office the size of Museveni’s cabinet has dramatically increased in size and ethnic uniformity has characterized its composition. For most of Uganda’s post-independence history the size cabinet ranged from between 15-30 ministers.49 This pattern persisted in the early years of the Museveni era. However, following his victory in the 2001 elections, in which the first real signs of political opposition emerged, Museveni quickly increased the cabinet to 65 ministers. He then increased the size to 69 ministers in 2006 and again to 74 following the 2011 elections.50 This packing of the cabinet “allows [Museveni] to personalize decision-making authority without necessarily weakening the

50 Ibid.
capacity of the organizations in question.”

Museveni’s ability to expand the cabinet beyond the constitutional limit of 21 ministers derives, at least up until now, from the absence of an effective parliamentary opposition. MPs and the regime share a common interest in this further institutionalization of patronage. The constitution stipulates parliamentary approval is required to the size of the cabinet and the regime relies on its parliamentary cadre to expand the institutional nature of the patronage regime in this way. The regime can secure more support through political appointments and MPs can demonstrate their NRM credentials in hopes of receiving a cabinet level ministerial post.

This common interest in constructing cabinet patronage undermines governmental efforts at bridging ethnic divides elsewhere in society and undermines its efforts to shift power away towards social identities. Since the majority of the central government support comes from the west and central regions of the country, the majority of the NRM cadre in parliament is from the Bantu portion of the country. This in turn facilitates the broad ethnic uniformity in Museveni’s cabinet composition. A recent report in The Observer, a leading Ugandan newspaper, notes the following historical pattern within Museveni’s cabinet:

Of the 229 ministers Museveni has so far had for the 25 years he has been president, 70 have hailed from western Uganda, which accounts for 30.6%,

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52 Constitution of Uganda Section 113.2.
53 In previous years parliament has been complicit by simply not opposing Museveni’s cabinet appointment. However, several of the most recent appointees were rejected by NRM MP’s, thus effectively halting Museveni’s appointment of those individuals. This may be the most important development in Ugandan politics. While the parliament seems to be pushing back for now, one would expect Museveni to push back against parliament in subtle, yet personalizing ways.
followed by 65 from the central region (28.4%). Eastern Uganda has had 51 ministers (22.3%) and the north, 43 (18.8).\textsuperscript{54}

This historical pattern also presents itself in the current cabinet (Table 1). Given the historic tensions between the Bantu southern parts of the country and non-Bantu north, Museveni’s distribution of ministerial positions to those of Bantu origin creates a perception (or reality) of ethnic uniformity within the cabinet, thus further entrenching north/south ethnic distrust.\textsuperscript{55} This distrust disrupts any possibility of shifting power towards social identities. Without the necessary cross-ethnic trust in place the government only serves to reinforce its own power in society, while weakening the ability of the society to shift power away from political authorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total Cabinet Posts</th>
<th>Senior Level Posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The different patronage strategies towards the north/east and west/central are significant in that they reveal the extent to which the regime’s rhetoric of overcoming tribalism and sectarianism in order to shift power towards social identities is mere


rhetoric. On the one hand, decentralization as a patronage mechanism allows the regime to extend its reach into discontented areas to buy their loyalty with patronage, oversee any developments in the region, and support grassroots democracy within society. But, the government’s actions elsewhere illustrate its lack of intention of moving democracy down a decentralized path that does not ultimately benefit its own ends. Buying support allows the government to modestly bridge the north/south ethnic tensions that have dominated sub-regional political interactions over history. However, this modest bridging is limited only to the interactions between the central government and these sub regions. It has not extended to other north/south interactions. Therefore the regime has not actually overcome the historic ethnic tensions permeating Ugandan society, but rather leveraged modern political ideologies imported from the West to manufacture support in an otherwise hostile region.

On the other hand cabinet positions have been used in the west and central regions to reward loyalty and to shore up political bases, thus actually further entrenching the very ethnic tensions the regime seeks to end. Unlike in the north and east of the country, the west and central have historically been supportive of Museveni and this support has not gone unnoticed. The subsequent cabinet appointments have strengthened the relationship between the regime and Bantu ethnic groups. Overtime these strengthened relationships have acted as a check on sectarianism in this region as more and more ethnic groups give loyalty to the regime; however, and more dangerously, it has served to strengthen the ethnic tensions between the northern and southern ethnic groupings. Despite Museveni’s attempts to bridge ethnic divisions through distributive patronage the
ethnic tension dividing Uganda have not subsided. This dualistic nature of his patronage strategy is to blame and only serves to undermine attempts to reshape societal power structures.

Conflicted Loyalties: Women’s Representatives in Uganda’s Parliament

Along with decentralization and the distribution of cabinet positions Museveni’s government has been able to co-opt civil society movements in an attempt to reshape the political discourse. In doing this, political authorities have curbed citizen’s attempts at acquiring the power needed to check anyway possible runaway growth of political power. One of the most prominent examples of this is the establishment of the women’s quota representation system in parliament. The quota system effectively co-opted one of the larger civil society movements in Uganda. Its establishment was meant to appease a vibrant women’s movement in the early days following the 1986 power consolidation. This early appeasement of the women’s movement wedded the women’s representatives in parliament to the NRM, despite sometimes-divergent legislative views.

Early after the success of the bush war, Museveni recognized the need to incorporate the women’s movement within his government. Once in power he moved quickly to distribute government positions to the women’s movement. However, these positions were not in the form of powerful ministerial positions, but rather they were added-on quota seats for women’s representatives in parliament. These seats were tied to the number of administrative districts, and as such their number keeps growing. This continued growth in the number of districts further co-opts the women’s movement as
greater numbers of women’s representatives are elected to parliament and become part of the formal government power structure.

Far from advancing women’s political standing in the Ugandan parliament and in the broader government this add-on quota has actually served to stifle women’s political power and coherence. Women’s quota seats have left many women feeling conflicted about who they actually represent – women or the constituents in their district. Ann Marie Goetz argues that this mechanism for women’s participation is “based on the principle of extending patronage to a new clientele.” The current quota system discourages the women’s movement from developing a certain level of autonomy due to its reliance on formal government structures, mainly parliament, for its voice in society. Instead of developing this needed autonomy the women’s movement is gradually becoming, or in many instances has become, part of Museveni’s system.

Women’s representatives MPs party affiliation demonstrates how this lack of autonomy actually incorporates the movement into Museveni’s patronage system. Table 2 illustrates how women’s representatives overwhelmingly have chosen to affiliate with the NRM. 73% of all women’s representative are affiliated with the ruling party. This is nine percentage points higher than the overall NRM representation in parliament, which has 210 MPs out of the total 327 or 64%. This suggests that the women’s representatives are part of the patronage system and see their opportunity for a voice in society as tied to the NRM. It further suggests that the regime has co-opted the women’s movement as

58 Ibid., 558
59 Goetz, 558.
function of its patronage network. By co-opting a large portion of the civil society movement the regime has been able to stifle citizen’s attempts to acquire citizen power through the women’s movement. This stifling has allowed the regime to avoid shifting power towards social identities on the grounds that the social identities are already a part of the regime itself. Justifying its power acquisition in this manner further entrenches power within the political elements of society.

Table 2. Party Affiliation of Women’s Representative MPs in 8th Parliament.60

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Affiliation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NRM</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>79</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general the co-optation women’s movement also represents a significant attempt at bridging the tribal tensions in Uganda’s political system. By focusing patronage on the broader women’s movement and not simply women from one tribe, the government can claim to be reaching out to bridge the ethnic divides via civil society and the women’s movement. This allows the regime to deflect any criticisms of favoring one ethnic group over another. In essence the regime has been able to shape the political discourse away from ethnic politics via its patronage of civil society.

The NRM patronage system is vast and growing larger. With the number of districts increasing on an almost yearly basis the reach of Museveni and the government extends into ever-smaller units of society. Increasing administrative districts also serves

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the political purpose of distributing patronage to ever-larger percentages of the population in hopes of bridging ethnic tensions. However, this practice is undermined by Museveni’s regionally based appointment of cabinet ministers. Furthermore, the continued use of parliamentary quotas for women’s government representation creates fragmented loyalties within the women’s movement. And keeping the quota system as part of the legislative institutional structure political authorities can assure support from a large portion of society.

While institutionalizing patronage networks requires more effort than simply distributing benefits doing so has clearly benefitted the Museveni government. Despite promoting itself as a new type of regime the Museveni era has been characterized by many of the same political practices of previous Ugandan governments. The regime has not significantly changed since independence and political authorities have created a political environment that encourages the further institutionalization of patronage and personal rule in Uganda. This political culture creates institutional inertia against the reconstructing of societal power within society by further entrenching north/south ethnic tensions.

**Repression**

When patronage is not adequate the government has employed various means of both institutional and violent repression. Because Museveni promoted himself and his regime as a new model of African leadership the regime could not continue the brutal violence of the Amin government; however, the NRM has created a delicate balance of violent intimidation and institutionalized repression of basic constitutional freedoms,

47
such as the freedom of speech and association. In regards to violence the government has employed ‘private’ plain cloth militias, the police and the Uganda People’s Defense Force (UPDF) to intimidate and coerce social identities into following government demands. The government's response in three separate cases (the 2009 Kayunga riots, the 2010 Kasubi Tomb burning riots, and the 2011 Walk-to-Work protests) illustrates their employment of repression as a tool to curb the ability of social identities to acquire power in society. In each situation the government moved to curtail constitutional rights via presidential decree and enforced these decrees via violence. These instances also demonstrate the regime’s primary interests of maintaining power at the expense of shifting societal power towards social identities.

2009 Kayunga Riots

Relations between the Buganda Kingdom and the central government have been tense since independence. The tensions derive from the central role the Buganda Kingdom played during the colonial era. The highly organized kingdom has always pressed the central government to create a federal structure along the lines of the traditional kingdoms of the region. The Buganda kingdom would highly benefit from this system, as it is the best-organized and most populous kingdom in Uganda. However, precisely because it is the best-organized and most populous traditional kingdom in Uganda the central government fears the impacts the involvement of the Kabaka (king of Buganda kingdom) could have on its power. This tension has created a delicate balance for the government in managing its political relationship with the Buganda kingdom. Any

sign of power shifting away from the government triggers a repressive response from the central government.

In 2009 the Kabaka planned to preside over a Buganda youth festival being held in Kayunga. The disapproval of a local Museveni appointed chief sparked internal strife between the local chief and the Kabaka. Despite the disapproval and the strife it created within the Kingdom the Kabaka decided to go ahead with the planned event. This decision prompted the local community in Kayunga to petition the Buganda Parliament to secede from the Kingdom. In connection with this petition some elements of the local community continued to demonstrate against the Kabaka’s visit. Unmoved by the protests the Kabaka’s office determined that the event would go ahead as planned. In accordance with the event-planning schedule the Kabaka’s advanced preparation team began local preparations for the festival, which caused further demonstrations. Amidst these internal kingdom protests the central government misread the protests as something larger than an internal dispute. This misreading of the protests led police to begin firing teargas on the Kabaka’s advanced team and other protestors in the area. The government’s actions united the Buganda youth against the central government.

On September 10th the Katikiro (equivalent of prime minister) and other ministers of the Kingdom attempted to visit Kayunga to oversee preparations for the festival. As they attempted to enter the region police forces barred them from entering the region on the grounds that the visit would promote further instability and that it was unsafe. Once news of this action spread anti-government protests and riots erupted throughout Kampala and the suburbs. These protests were a sign that the possibility of power shifting
towards social identities and away from the regime. In response to these protests government forces moved quickly to quell the protests using teargas and other violent measures. The government also forced the silence of the Buganda Kingdom’s radio station, the Central Broadcasting Service (CBS), for inciting violence in Kampala and throughout Buganda Kingdom. All told over a four-day span of protests four people were killed and scores injured.

2010 Kasubi Tombs Burning

Several months after the Kayunga protests on the morning of March 16, 2010 the Kasubi Tombs, which were the ceremonial burial grounds of several previous Kabakas, were burned to the ground. Originally it was unclear what the cause of the fire was and some suspected the government of involvement in burning the tombs. The following day the current Kabaka visited the tombs with President Museveni. Large numbers Bagandan youth demonstrated against the President’s visit and attempted to block him from entering the area. In an effort to curb the protests and allow the president’s visit to occur police fired live ammunition into the crowds killing three people. Again this was a clear attempt by the Bugandan youth to organize against political authorities in order to influence government actions. Thus, the government moved to stop power moving away from the regime.

While this event did not turn into more than an isolated incident, tensions remained high throughout Kampala for several days. One Kampala resident remarked, “it

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was as if the country would explode into a civil war.”

Unlike the protests seven months earlier the central government did not move to institutionally repress civil rights by restricting constitutionally protected acts. However, the use of live ammunition to disperse protests at an important Buganda cultural site illustrates the ready nature of the Museveni government to employ violence to repress civil rights. Employing force to curtail these civil rights undermines any citizen attempts to check runaway political power, since they lack the capabilities of violence necessary to check the military power of state.

2011 Walk-to-Work Protests

The 2011 walk-to-work protests continued to demonstrate political authorities’ use of institutional and violent repression against any societal attempts to shift power away from the government. While the protests began in mid-April 2011 the events in the months preceding the protests help establish the context. In late February 2011 Uganda held parliamentary and presidential elections with Museveni running for a fourth five-year term against several opposition candidates. The general sentiment previous to the election was that Museveni was going to face his closest election decision since the resumption of elections in 1995; however, Museveni ended up winning in a landslide fashion securing 68% of the vote. The opposition candidates immediately decried the elections as illegitimate charging the regime with vote rigging and buying. From this context of a landslide, but deeply flawed, victory the protests developed.

63 Ssimbwa Busulwe, interview with author 13 April 2010.
In a rare demonstration of opposition solidarity, the opposition candidates uniformly called for protests. In fear of widespread protests, similar to those sweeping over North Africa and the Middle East at the time, the government banned all public demonstrations and took other measures to ensure any protests would not get out of hand. Despite the feverish nature of the call for protests none materialized and the government seemed to stave off any attempts to check its growing political power.

This uneasy aftermath of the election continued until late March 2011. Amidst rising worldwide oil and commodity prices Ugandans began to face a steep rise in the cost of living. The opposition used this steep rise as a rallying cry for social identities to join them in walking to work as a means of protest over the high prices. The main demand of the protests was for the government to cut the tax rate on fuel, which stood at roughly Sh850 per liter of fuel. Many social identities throughout the country joined the opposition in walking to work on April 11th. These protests were attempts to acquire citizen power and to influence the course of government decisions and become active participants in the political process. While initially a peaceful protest against rising fuel and food prices the movement quickly turned violent as the regime moved to curb social identities’ attempts to organize.

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67 This tax represents roughly one-fourth to one-third the price of a liter of fuel depending on the total price per liter. In other words the price would be substantively lower if the government decided to eliminate the tax, even temporarily.
For example shortly after leaving their homes police stopped opposition authorities Kizza Besigye (from the south) and Norbert Mao (from the north) in their attempts to walk to work. The police argued that these individuals were illegally demonstrating against the government and had not properly notified the police of their intentions. Their detentions reshaped the protests from protests against inflationary pressures to anti-government protests throughout the country. It should be noted that these demonstrations were not confined to any ethnic sub region, but rather were nationwide. While not marching side by side, both northern and southern ethnic groups demonstrated against the government’s repressive response and its unwillingness to combat inflationary pressures. This national response demonstrates some possible underlying common interests from which society can leverage to bridge its north/south ethnic divide.

Not only were the protests nationwide, but also the government’s response was much the same in all regions of the country. The government’s response was to fire tear gas and rubber bullets into crowds. In one instance during this initial response Kizza Besigye was hit in the hand by a rubber bullet, breaking one of his fingers. Other similar instances of violence occurred in northern Uganda. After several days of formal protests and several arrests, the Rapid Response Unit (a plain clothed Museveni supporting militia) was deployed against Besigye and violently arrested the opposition leader. Despite this violence protests continued. After a few days of protests the army and military police were called in to restore order and dispel protestors. While the police

fired rubber bullets and tear gas the army and military police used live ammunition resulting in the death of at least four individuals including a two-and-a-half year old girl.\textsuperscript{70} At this point it was clear that the government cared nothing for bridging ethnic divisions, but rather maintaining its systemic power.

Concurrent to this violent response from the government, the government also institutionally represses constitutional rights via decree. In the beginning of the protests the government announced a ban on live coverage of the protests: no media outlet was allowed to produce live videos or pictures of the protests.\textsuperscript{71} The government stated that it did not want the media to incite the country to violence over the protest. This banning of live coverage of the demonstrations has now become the basis for proposed legislation in parliament to ban live coverage of all future protests and demonstrations.\textsuperscript{72} Again the reason given is the need to avoid the media inciting violence throughout the country. One must ask however why the government would ban live media coverage of a peaceful protest over the cost of fuel?

Clearly, the regime feels threatened by the demonstrations and the potential delegitimizing nature they possessed. It was clear from these protests that social identities were seeking to directly influence the course of government policy, and thus acquire power within the system. Their acquisition of power would have directly decreased the regime ability to maintain its systemic power. Facing these threats to its power the

government responded to maintain its power. Thus again, political authorities demonstrated that their primary interest is not to reconstruct structural power in society, but rather to maintain its own power in society at all costs.

**Conclusion**

These three examples illustrate the way in which the Museveni regime has resorted to violence and institutional repression in order to maintain systemic power. While defending its actions under the guise of maintaining stability, which would bring about prosperity, political authorities have institutionally oppressed civil rights and killed many social identities.\(^3\) Closing the CBS radio station due to their alleged incitement of violence during the 2009 Kayunga riots, the banning of protests during the 2011 Walk-to-Work protests, and the banning of live coverage of demonstrations are examples of the way political authorities used institutional means to repress social identities. In each case the government curtailed the freedom of speech and association by governmental decree. The constitution of Uganda enshrines these rights by stating: “every person shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression which shall include the press and other media…[and] freedom to assemble and to demonstrate together with others peacefully and unarmed to petition.”\(^4\) Both of these freedoms are critical to maintaining a truly stable society. Furthermore, the violent responses during all three incidents are typical of how the Museveni government has used violence to repress social identities.\(^5\)

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\(^3\) For further details of ways in which the GoU has both institutionally and violently repressed the citizenry see the following: Human Rights Watch, *Violence Instead of Vigilance: Torture and Illegal Detention by Uganda’s Rapid Response Unit,* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2011);

\(^4\) The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995, Chapter 4.29.1.a and 4.29.1.e.

CHAPTER THREE: CONSEQUENCES OF MUSEVENI’S EXTENDED TENURE

The previous chapter argued that Museveni and his government have focused on maintaining power in Uganda society through patronage and repression. The government has continually argued that the reason for its actions is to promote stability, which would then lead to economic and national development. The chapter further argued that the government’s actions demonstrated its primary interest of maintaining systemic power over reconstructing the structural distribution of societal power. By maintaining its own systemic power, political authorities had several effects on the society in regards to economic and national development. This chapter will now review some of the positive and negative consequences of the government’s choice to pursue its own power maintenance over reconstructing structural power. In other words, what have been the actual positive and negative effects of the Museveni government on Ugandan society in relation to economic and national development?

Positive Consequences

Relative macroeconomic stability and increased national development are the main positive consequences of the Museveni’s decision to pursue the maintenance of his systemic power. While political patronage and repression do have severe negative consequences for any state some minimal efficiencies are gained through an authoritarian system. Specifically, the ability to focus the national government on a narrow range of priorities has allowed the Museveni government to bring about the aforementioned positive changes in Ugandan society. Despite these efficiencies and positive benefits

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flowing from the distinct north/south ethnic divide continues to play prominently in many aspects of these positive consequences. The negative aspects associated with this north/south divide continue to allow political authorities to further maintain systemic power.

*Macroeconomic Climate*

**Inflation**

Inflationary pressures can stifle the growth of any economy and create a tinderbox of political dissent among various social identities. Inflation under the Museveni regime has remained relatively stable year over year and has decreased since the regime came to power. Chart 1 illustrates inflation in Uganda since 1980 as measured in the percent change in consumer prices year over year. Inflation was on a runaway trajectory prior to Museveni’s consolidation of power and was anything but stable or predictable. Once inflation was brought under control around 1992-93 the inflation rate in Uganda has been an average of 7.4%. While 7.4% is relatively high, inflationary stability has existed since the government came to power.

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This inflationary stability is critical for ordinary Ugandans. While the government and Ugandans certainly would like more moderate inflation expectations year over year, the very fact that the inflation rate has hovered around 7-8% per year signals to consumers and investors what they can expect in the marketplace in the following months and year. In other words, while prices have continued to rise in Uganda under the current government, these rises have been fairly predictable; thus allowing the state and its social identities to plan for expenses from month to month and year to year. This predictability within the macroeconomic situation gives the country a sense of calm amidst rising prices.

**International Trade Statistics**

Stability in international trade is a key determinant of the overall stability of a country’s macroeconomic environment. In a country with a stable macroeconomic environment...
environment one would expect to see relatively the same current account and capital account balances year over year. While slight variations will exist depending on the overall health and structure of the world economy, one would expect the current accounts and capital accounts to be relatively stable if a country is pursuing a coherent trading strategy. Since Museveni’s consolidation of power this is what we see in Uganda. What we also see from both the current and capital account charts (Chart 2-3) is that there are no large swings in either direction, positive or negative (with the exception of 1993 and 2006 in the capital account) in either the capital or current accounts. This reveals that countries are viewing the Ugandan state as a viable trading partner: they are not worried about violent changes in the macroeconomic situation of the country that would make trade or investment unprofitable.

Chart 2. Current Account Balance since 1980 (% of GDP)\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{79} World Bank, “World Development Indicators Database 1960-2009”.
International Investment

Stable inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI) are another indicator of an improved macroeconomic climate during the Museveni era (see Chart 4). Previous to the NRM’s consolidation of power in 1986 very little FDI flowed into Uganda. Obote’s “Charter of the Common Man”, the subsequent policy shift towards more socialist leaning policies, and Amin’s expulsion of Asian’s and expropriation of their property left many foreign companies and investors leery of doing business in Uganda. While by no means perfect today, steps have been taken to assure the international business community that Uganda is a safe place to invest and do business under the current government.  

This steady inflow of FDI has contributed to the overall improvement of the economic situation of most Ugandan’s under the Museveni regime. However, there is a distinct north/south aspect to these improvements.

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80 World Bank, “World Development Indicators Database 1960-2009”.
81 Much of these steps have occurred under the liberalization policies pursued during the 1990’s. Given this nature of liberalization there have been no real threats of expropriation or any other harmful investment attraction practices.
National Income

In monetary terms Uganda, as a whole, has experienced rapid development gains over the past 25 years. Chart 5 illustrates the growth in total GDP since 1986. The table reveals that in 1986 the GDP was roughly $4 billion and in 2009 the GDP was just below $16 billion. This nearly fourfold increase in total GDP has been driven by an annual growth rate of 6.5% between 1986-2009. Furthermore, this growth in GDP has translated in the growth in GDP/capita as evidenced in Chart 6. In 1986 GDP/capita was a little over $250 and in 2009 it was $490. What these two charts do not show is the dramatic differences in income between the northern and southern regions of the country. The difference between the amounts of individuals living below the poverty line in the north compared to the south in staggering (Table 3). While the government has made good progress fighting poverty in the north this income disparity is a driver of ethnic tension in the country. Many northerners see this disparity as a result of policies the Museveni government has pursued that are specifically favoring the southern region over the north. 

82 World Bank, “World Development Indicators Database 1960-2009”.

61
Table 3. Poverty Headcount Ratio (% of total population) in Uganda, by region.\textsuperscript{85}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1992/93</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1999/00</th>
<th>2002/03</th>
<th>2005/06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{83} World Bank, “World Development Indicators Database 1960-2009”.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
National Development

Since Museveni’s ascendency and consolidation of power Uganda has experienced consistent national development across many segments of society. Specifically, Uganda has experienced large increases in the receipt of international donor support and in leveraging this donor support towards gains in human capital development. Each of these sectors has been important to the overall development of the Ugandan economy. The national government hopes to continue to build on these previous gains and transform Uganda from a traditional society to a modern one in within thirty years.86 In order to accomplish this task the government must focus on leveraging the gains previously experienced in order to generate further advances in economic development.

International Funding Gains

Museveni’s government has used international donor support as a key pillar in its overall economic development strategy since coming to power in 1986. The government close relationship with the World Bank exemplifies this ability to attract international funding. The regime’s active courting of this aid support has contributed towards to overall economic development in Uganda since 1986.87 However, this active courting has not been without ulterior motives. Despite the positive benefits have occurred as a result of this funding political authorities have used this relationship as another mechanism to maintain societal power.

Table 3 outlines the number of World Bank projects during the four major administrations of Uganda’s post-independence political history. The average number of projects per year under Milton Obote, including both tenures, is roughly 2.5 projects per year. Under Amin the average was less than one project per year and the majority (4 out of 5) of the projects were in some way related to the East African regional integration scheme. Under Museveni, Uganda has received an average of 5.3 projects per year. While some of these projects are relatively localized projects most deal with the national economy as a whole. These national level projects characterize the top down development strategy the government has employed since 1986. Securing these projects has brought the regime legitimacy among some portions of society. This legitimacy translates directly into increased political power. Therefore this relationship with the World Bank is another mechanism the government is using to acquire systemic power.

Table 3. Number of World Bank Projects by Major Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administration (Years)</th>
<th>Number of Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obote I (1962-1971)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amin (1971-1979)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obote II (1980-1985)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museveni (1986-Present)</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 charts the total amount of loans received from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association.

(IDA). Both agencies are part of the World Bank Group. The loan amounts trended steadily upward prior to the 1986 power transition. However, this upward trend alone does not account for the increase in average amounts received under the Museveni regime. Since 1990 Uganda has received nearly $1 billion dollars in assistance from the IBRD and IDA each year and as the table indicates an average of nearly $1.6 billion dollars a year since 1986. These loans and credits have dramatically strengthened the power of political authorities as they have given legitimacy to Museveni and others who have been able to secure these funds for the country. Thus, the government can claim (albeit probably falsely so) that its presence is necessary for further international funding. Regardless of the validity of their claims in this regard, political authorities continue to make them and increase in attempts leverage over society.

Table 4. Average Yearly IBRD Loans and IDA Credits (Current US $)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administration (Years)</th>
<th>Average Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obote I (1962-1971)</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amin (1971-1979)</td>
<td>41,076,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obote II (1980-1985)</td>
<td>143,045,833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museveni (1986-Present)</td>
<td>1,597,053,667</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Human Capital Gains

Measuring gains in human capital are difficult due to constraints on the quantifiability of these measures. However, it is not impossible. Any measures that can quantify greater capabilities of individuals can proxy for gains in human capital. These

89 The difference between them is that IBRD loans are given at prevailing market rates and IDA credits are loans given at concessional rates.
90 World Bank, “World Development Indicators Database 1960-2009”.

65
gains involve increasing the capabilities of individuals in order to allow them to have the greater agency. This involves educational training, health, longevity, and so forth. While these areas do create more self-confidence, leveraging these gains towards personal economic development is contingent on the broader economy. In other words, an individual can experience gains in their personal human capital stock, but without the opportunities to put these gains to use in the broader economy they cannot tangibly extract benefits; people need jobs to translate human capital gains into the benefits associated with a higher standard of living. While the monetary gains in Uganda are significant and have contributed to a higher quality of life for Uganda’s under Museveni, gains in human capital have not translated as tangibly to a higher quality of life.

Several statistics reveal in what areas these human capital gains are occurring. Table 6 charts the percentage of Ugandans living to age 65 since 1998. A greater percentage of a cohort population suggests at least two human capital gains. First, the population as a whole has greater access to nutrition. When a population has access to a more nutritious diet, they will naturally live longer. Second, the population has greater access to health care services. Without this greater access it would not be possible to overcome the disease burden a population encounters throughout its life cycle. Simply, put without greater access to health care more individuals would die prior to reaching age 65.
Table 6. Percentage of Population Cohort Living to Age 65.91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 7-9 illustrates the progress the government is making in educating its population. Recently the government has made the education of its population a priority. In line with this priority the government has consistently devoted roughly twenty percent of its government expenditures to education. Table 8 shows what impact this is having on the number of children that progress from primary school to secondary school. The amount of students progressing onto secondary school has nearly doubled since 1995. While this does have the potential to cause societal conflicts once these students graduate and find it difficult to contract employment, increasing the amount of education individuals receive is a positive step for Uganda. It also directly increases its human capital stock.

Table 9 further illustrates the gains Uganda has made in educating its social identities. When contextualized the decrease in per student expenditure that this table demonstrates actually reveals some positive gains. The government has kept public spending on education constant. The decrease in per student expenditure measured as a

91 World Bank, “World Development Indicators Database 1960-2009”.
percentage of GDP/capita reveals that more students are attending school at each age level. Again this increased attendance facilitates gains in the human capital stock in Uganda.

Table 7. Public Spending on education, total (% of government expenditure)\textsuperscript{92}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>18.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>18.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Progression to secondary school (% of children in primary school)\textsuperscript{93}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>34.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>42.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>39.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>37.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>36.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>37.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>42.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>58.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>61.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Expenditure per student by age level (% of GDP per capita)\textsuperscript{94}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age level</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>10.68</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>8.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>32.17</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>27.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>178.83</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>121.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While these gains have been positive for the entire society, these gains in human capital are not evenly dispersed between northern and southern Uganda. One statistic reveals these disparities clearly. The net primary school enrollment by region between

\textsuperscript{92} World Bank, “World Development Indicators Database 1960-2009”.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid.
1992/1992 and 2002/2003 is significantly lower in the northern region than in any other region of the country (Table 10). Here is another instance of a distinct north/south divide of the benefits under Museveni. These disparities represent the same forms of neglect seen previously in relation to income disparities. The government has not pursued, or worse ignored, the development of human capital in the north. As with the other instances of neglect one must begin to question the sincerity of political authorities attempts to facilitate national development. More and more these attempts become actions to acquire societal power. Neglecting the north in this manner creates further dependencies from which political authorities can acquire greater political power.

Table 10. Net Primary School Enrollment by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>85.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>89.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>73.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Negative Consequences

The Militarization of Uganda

Uganda has always had a militaristic strain running through its political culture. The Museveni tenure has only served to strengthen this aspect of political life in Uganda. This strengthening gives the government greater power as they possess the means of...

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95 Table and figures from Kate Higgins, *Regional Inequality and Primary Education in Northern Uganda*, Policy Brief No. 2, Overseas Development Institute (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2007):5, downloaded at http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/2504.pdf (accessed 20 August 2011). The chart is disaggregated into the four main regions of Uganda. Higgins notes that the wider northern region, of which I am primarily referring to throughout this thesis, composes both the sub-regions within the northern and eastern regions of Uganda. When this wider north construct is used the statistics still reveal a particular level of neglect. The net school enrollment for girls in 2002/03 is 81.1% in the wider north and 86.6 in the south. For boys the rate is 81.45 in the north and 84.7 in the south.
military violence. Museveni’s personal background as the military leader of the NRA only bolsters his own perceptions of the necessity of military power in governmental leadership positions. To Museveni his military credentials are some of his strongest qualities. This growing militarization can be most clearly seen in the growth in the size and capability of the army, the rise in military expenditure under the regime and the growth of private regime supported militias. While the militarization of Uganda can easily be seen empirically, it is the role militarization continues to play in society that is most disturbing.

The first place from which to view this militarization is with the central government expenditures. When measured in terms of the overall percentage of government expenditure and spending as a percentage of GDP, the regime has kept military spending relatively stable at around 14% of total government expenditure and 2.4% of GDP. While this does not seem to be particularly alarming recall that Uganda has experienced a near quadrupling of their national economy under the Museveni regime. One would expect that the spending relative to total expenditure and GDP of a non-militaristic regime would decrease over this economic growth. The stability of spending under the regime signals its militaristic nature. Furthermore, the actual spending on military expenditure (measured in local currency units) reveals a fuller picture of the regime’s activities.

96 Museveni recently stated his desire to be buried in his military uniform. By choosing this over another form of burial clothing Museveni signals that his allegiance to the military and his former military life defines him as a leader. This is particularly clear when one recalls that Museveni had little formal military training that would qualify him for service as a military office, but rather he self-appointed himself as such. See Anne Mugisa, “I Won’t Allow Distuption – Museveni,” New Vision May 31, 2011, at http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/756296 (accessed 23 July 2011) for the story.
The regime spending on military has increased faster than inflation every year since 1993 except between 2008-9. What this reveals is that the regime is using economic growth partially as a cover to hide the growing militarization in Uganda. Frankly, the regime hides its military expenditure growth behind stable expenditures relative to overall expenditure and GDP. Table 10 bears this out more clearly as total real expenditure is compared against what expenditure would hypothetically look like if spending only grew with inflation. This increased spending has translated into steady gains in both numbers of military personnel and in military equipment.

Table 10. Real Amount of Military Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Real Amount (Uganda Schillings)</th>
<th>Inflation Matched Amount (Uganda Schillings)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>74,852,000,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>101,987,000,000</td>
<td>79,642,528,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>123,055,000,000</td>
<td>108,514,168,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>141,632,000,000</td>
<td>130,930,520,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>151,206,000,000</td>
<td>150,696,448,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>191,892,000,000</td>
<td>160,883,184,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>232,343,000,000</td>
<td>204,173,088,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>232,370,000,000</td>
<td>247,212,952,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>239,046,000,000</td>
<td>247,241,680,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>255,597,000,000</td>
<td>254,344,944,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>299,232,000,000</td>
<td>271,955,208,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>354,848,000,000</td>
<td>318,382,848,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>385,813,000,000</td>
<td>377,558,272,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>400,234,000,000</td>
<td>410,505,032,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

97 The publication Military Balance states that Uganda had roughly 6000 regular troops and very little high quality military equipment (International Institute for Strategic Studies. The Military Balance, 1986-1987. London: The Institute, 1986). The 2011 edition of the same publication stated that the Uganda now has roughly 40000-45000, a substantive air force and a formidable arsenal of semi modern military equipment. Uganda has substantially upgraded their numerical size and weapons capabilities during the Museveni era.  
98 World Bank, “World Development Indicators Database 1960-2009”
Concurrent to the growth both in size and strength of Uganda’s military the
regime has utilized various paramilitary and security service organizations to ‘maintain
order’. Table 11 gives a list of these groups, their primary function and the year the group
was organized. This development is clearly alarming.

Table 11. Paramilitary and Security Groups in Uganda.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>Primary Function for Regime</th>
<th>Approximate Year Organized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kiboko Squad</td>
<td>Harass Political Opponents(^99)</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens Concerned</td>
<td>Pre-Election Mobilization(^100)</td>
<td>~2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boda-Boda Association</td>
<td>Intelligence Gathering(^101)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kalanga Action Plan</td>
<td>Special Operations Unit of UPDF(^102)/Harass political opponents(^103)</td>
<td>1996(^104)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Oil Wells Protection Unit</td>
<td>Physical Security for Oil Interests/Intelligence Gathering in Oil Area(^105)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Crime Crack Unit (VCCU)</td>
<td>Crime Fighting(^106)</td>
<td>2003(^107)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.independent. co.ugindex.php/cover-story/cover-story/82-cover-story/1769-kiboko-squad-

\(^100\) Ibid.

\(^101\) Ibid.

\(^102\) Tripp, 138.

\(^103\) Human Rights Watch, *State of Pain: Torture in Uganda*, 20

\(^104\) Independent Team, September 15, 2009.

\(^105\) Ibid.

\(^106\) HRW State of Pain: Torture in Uganda, 21

As an example of the behavior and utilization of these militias one of them, the Kiboko squad, will be briefly discussed. While, the government does not ‘formally’ employ them, or any of the other informal security groups there is a little doubt among Ugandans what is really taking place. These judgments are not based solely on a distrust of Museveni or on unfounded conspiracies; rather, militia authorities often slip as to where their groups receive support and for what causes. For example, one Kiboko squad member told a foreign journalist that their infamous sticks used to break up demonstrations and riots were kept in an underground room in the Central Kampala

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presidential Guard Brigade</th>
<th>Museveni Praetorian Guard</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Mamba Squad</td>
<td>Anti-Terrorism Group/Harass Opponents</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Anti-Terrorism Task Force</td>
<td>Fighting the Lord’s Resistance Army</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid Response Unit (successor to VCCU)</td>
<td>Crime Fighting/Political Harassment</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence</td>
<td>Intelligence Gathering/Extrajudicial Killing</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

108 Tripp, 137.
110 Independent Team, September 15. 2009
113 Ibid.
114 Tripp, 138.
116 Allan Tacca, “Can Kiboko Ruffians Save NRM From the Citizen,” Sunday Monitor July 4, 2010, http://www.monitor.co.ug/OpEd/OpEdColumnists/AllanTacca/-/878694/951524/-/u6j07jz/-/index.html (accessed 20 July 2010). A quick perusal of local papers demonstrates the citizen’s recognition of the regime’s involvement in the creation and funding of the militias. The above author’s article is exemplitive of many others. He wrote: “One of President Museveni’s dilemmas must be how to continue to unleashing the men in army uniform to clobber and silence unarmed civilians without tarnishing the image of the uniformed soldier. Enter the Kiboko squad.”
Police Station. Another said that they were told not to beat up opposition authorities but “small people”. Officially, the regime claims that the Kiboko militias, and others like them, are only a “community who organized themselves in a self-defense group against rioters.” However, one Kiboko member discounts Museveni’s statement about the local nature of the militia. Following the Kiboko’s break-up of a demonstration at the Clock Tower in Kampala this member said: “Everything has an owner. Uganda is owned by President Museveni, so we shall fight to protect him in power.” This disturbing allegiance directly to the president represents the sentiments of many of these private militias.

This militarization of Uganda has several negative impacts on Uganda. First, the ability of the regime to create multiple ‘private’ militias to enforce its interests throughout the country is problematic to social identities seeking to check runaway political power. Second, the growing militarization of society is another example of the way in which the Museveni government has sought to acquire systemic power in order to pursue its interest. This movement to acquire systemic power via force signals to the rest of society the political authorities’ desire to retrench their systemic power at all costs. Lastly, an ethnic dimension surrounds these militaristic tendencies. The majority of these militia groups originates from and operates within the southern half of the country. This continues the trend of Uganda’s political authorities shaping military power from their general ethnic region. Obote and Amin both did this and now Museveni is doing the

118 Ibid.
120 Ibid.
same. The lack of ethnic diversity within these groups is another sign of political authorities’ intentions to hold onto systemic power by any means necessary. The general exclusion of northern ethnic groups from this militarization of society strengthens the government’s ethnic base, thus further dividing Ugandan society along ethnic lines.

**Decreasing National Unity**

Despite its attempts to achieve national unity through its broad based governance approach, the government has failed to unify the country through the development of political cohesion. The reasons for this have been argued above, but the conflicting patronage system, repression and the unequal distribution of development gains have dramatically hindered Museveni’s attempts at creating national unity. The clearest evidence of this can be found in the election returns since the reintroduction of elections in 1995.\(^{121}\) This reintroduction of elections was the result of both international pressure and an internal government motivation for electoral legitimacy, which was critical in moving forward and to staying in power for longer. The inability to manufacture national unity has hindered the reconstruction of power within society. Furthermore, the hijacking of electoral legitimacy has served to retrench political power, and the political authorities who hold it, as the dominant power in Ugandan society.

During the first election in 1996 the NRM and Museveni won with a large percentage of the national vote (see Table 12). While the election was a landslide in favor of Museveni this election is largely believed to represent the will of the people throughout the entire country. This election was the first sign of an emerging national

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\(^{121}\) These elections are good evidence of this decreasing national unity as the major players have stayed essentially the same in all elections. Because the major players have remained the same the ethnic north/south divide becomes irrelevant in determining national unity.
identity and consensus apart from ethnic division. Despite the presence of multiple candidates in the first election under the NRM, all candidates were from the NRM and failed to represent a viable difference to Museveni’s candidacy. The inclusion of only NRM candidates for presidential office effectively allowed Museveni to run unopposed. Nonetheless, the results of this election do show Museveni’s popularity and the potential for leveraging that potential towards the creation of national unity.

Table 12. 1996 Presidential Election Results.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes Received</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yoweri Museveni</td>
<td>4,458,195</td>
<td>74.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Ssemogerere</td>
<td>1,416,140</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six years later cracks began emerging in national support for the regime.

Following his fallout with Museveni, Dr. Kizza Besigye, broke with the NRM party line and decided to run for the presidency against Musevni. Accusing Museveni and the regime from deviating from a truly democratic environment Besigye garnered 27.7% of the vote in the 2001 elections (see Table 13). It is during this election that cracks in nascent national unity began to percolate only to boil over during the 2006 elections. Besigye’s candidacy represented the opportunity to demonstratively signal collective frustrations to the government concerning corruption and general dismay. Following this threat to its systemic power the regime moved to secure its power via patronage and repression.

Table 13. 2001 Presidential Election Results\textsuperscript{123}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes Received</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kizza Besigye</td>
<td>2,029,190</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoweri Museveni</td>
<td>5,088,470</td>
<td>69.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intimidation and violence towards Besigye and his colleagues marred the 2006 elections.\textsuperscript{124} The arrests and intimidation of Besigye illustrated the fear the government felt that Besigye represented to the continuation of the Museveni tenure. As Table 14 shows Besigye garnered 37.39\% of the vote to Museveni’s 59.26\%. Museveni and the regime had clearly begun to lose legitimacy among large sections of the country. While the rise of a challenger candidate and opposition parties does not necessarily illustrate a decrease in national unity they do illustrate the growing sense that the Museveni regime was beginning to develop runaway political power. Furthermore, the polarizing rhetoric of Museveni and his regime against Besigye, and the larger opposition that he represents, is beginning to decrease the possibility of any sense of national unity or identity forming under Museveni. This became dramatically clear during the 2011 election and its aftermath.

Table 14. 2006 Presidential Election Results\textsuperscript{125}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes Received</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kizza Besigye</td>
<td>2,592,954</td>
<td>37.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoweri Museveni</td>
<td>4,109,449</td>
<td>59.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{124} For a description of the level of this violence the personal account of Besigye’s sister is helpful. It can be found in the following work: Olive Kobusingye, *The Correct Line?*, (Author House: Central Milton Keynes, UK: 2010).

The 2011 election cycle in Uganda was highly contested. In the months leading up to the election both Museveni and Besigye canvassed the country for support. Large turnouts for Besigye revealed the growing discontent with the Museveni regime. It was clear that the growing support of Besigye and coherence within the opposition movement was a threat to the systemic power of political authorities. Table 15 reveals the election results. Museveni won the election by the largest margin since the 1996 elections. This was not a signal of increased support for the regime, but rather a more concerted effort a vote rigging and buying. This concerted effort dramatically skewed the vote in Museveni’s favor. While the exact level of skewing may never be known, the aftermath of the elections clearly demonstrate a growing lack of national unity around Museveni.

Table 15. 2011 Presidential Election Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes Received</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kizza Besigye</td>
<td>2,064,963</td>
<td>26.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoweri Museveni</td>
<td>5,428,369</td>
<td>68.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, the regimes actions during the 2011 election season further demonstrated the lengths to which the regime would go to maintain its own power in society. Several months after the elections the Walk-to-Work protests began. As previously discussed these protests began as demonstrations against high food and fuel prices; however following the arrests of Besigye and other opposition leader the protests transformed into anti-government riots. The riots lasted for several days on end before subsiding and reigniting several days later. The regime has lost legitimacy with some parts of the general population, but certain portions continue to support the regime. The lack of a

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truly competitive democracy in Uganda is causing national unity to decrease within the
country, with some worried openly about civil war during times of tension. The
presence of a growingly coherent political opposition does not itself portend national
disunity, but the regime’s reaction and that of its supporters does. What should be of
concern to those in society is the continued centralization of political power in Museveni.

The Institutionalization of Personal Rule

The final consequence and perhaps one of the most troubling consequences, yet
least quantifiable, of Musveni’s rule on Ugandan politics is the institutionalization of
personal rule. It is not just that Museveni is an archetypal charismatic leader, as per
Weber, that is the main negative consequence, but rather it is the enacting of laws that
center large amounts of political power with the president via the ability to appoint many
key government positions throughout the country. For all of its corruption and human
rights abuses the Museveni regime has facilitated some positive changes in Uganda as a
result of their political foresight and action. That said, what happens when Museveni
chooses his successor and his foresight or political ability fall short? With institutional
power centered within the president the country could soon digress towards dictatorial
rule.

Several scholars have noted this trend beginning to take place in Ugandan society.
Andrew Mwenda argues that the personalization of power is taking place across several
arenas of government, but all centered on reshaping the constitutional powers of the

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128 Interview with author, April 9, 2010, Kampala, Uganda.
president towards more personal rule.\textsuperscript{130} And Tripp argues that the reshaping of constitutional powers, specifically the elimination of presidential term limits, was the “quid quo pro of political liberalization\textsuperscript{131} in Uganda politics. Furthermore, Tripp notes that troubling practices in relation to the independence of parliament and the judiciary are emerging.\textsuperscript{132} Michael Keating also argues that parliament is losing its effectiveness in the face of the increasing personalized nature of presidential rule.\textsuperscript{133} This increased centralization of power in Museveni leads to the repression of the opposition, which serves to further entrench the status quo power relationships. Roger Tangri further details this repression of political opposition to personal rule by noting the number of ministers fired in the run-up to the 2004 constitutional changes.\textsuperscript{134} Lastly, as argued previously the number of presidentially appointed cabinet positions have increased and this has served to further entrench personal rule in Uganda.

As is illustrated in the previous paragraph numerous elements of personal rule are emerging in Uganda and one of the most disturbing is the parliamentary independence. The longer Museveni stays in power the more wedded to his personal rule the composition of parliament becomes. The longer Museveni is in power the less likely the party composition in parliament is going to change (Table 16). With this increased likelihood of inertia against change MPs will continue to promote Museveni’s rule in attempt to promote their own NRM credentials and inadvertently further entrench

\textsuperscript{130} Andrew Mwenda, 2007, 24.
\textsuperscript{131} Tripp, Museveni’s Uganda, 75-108.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 86, 91.
personal rule. Thus, the possibilities exist that if parliament continues in its current party composition Ugandan democracy could erode as power is gradually shifted more and more towards the president.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total NRM Seats (% of total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>206 (69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>279 (83%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As argued the effect this institutionalization of personal rule could be devastating for Ugandan society. Institutionalized personal rule can only survive so long as the charismatic figurehead of the institution still exists. Once a power transition takes place in Uganda the chances of political life spiraling out of control in Uganda are high. One merely has to recall the erratic nature of the Amin years for an example of personalized rule run amok. The lifting of presidential term limits and the continued possible weakening of parliament likely portend a possible return to the chaos of the Amin years. While the level of mass killing is not likely to happen again the level of personal corruption and governmental collapse are strong possibilities once Museveni leaves office.

**Conclusion**

From the evidence presented in this chapter and the previous one it is clear that Museveni and other political authorities’ effects on society are mixed. Ultimately he achieved some of his desired end results of stimulating economic and national development, but at what

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135 Information from the International Parliamentary Union at www.iup.org.
137 Keating, *Can Democratization Undermine Democracy*, 430.
cost? There is little evidence that the north/south ethnic tensions have subsided as a result of these positive effects and the negative consequences only serve to further entrench these ethnic divisions. Furthermore, far from shifting power towards social identities Museveni’s initiatives have further entrenched his own political power and institutionalized personal rule. By further entrenching his own political power Museveni has further entrenched the status quo power distribution in society. The longer Museveni says in power the more likely it will be that power will only be redistributed away from Museveni via revolutionary means.
CONCLUSION: MUSEVENI’S ECONOMY OF AFFECTION

The preceding chapters modeled how societal power structures have shifted under Museveni, the mechanisms of Museveni’s power maintenance and the consequences of Museveni’s presidential tenure. The model outlined in chapter 2 describes how societal power has shifted during Museveni’s tenure, but it fails to capture the full political logic of Museveni’s actions. This concluding chapter will attempt to synthesize some of the arguments presented in chapters 1-3 in order to fill in the gaps the model presents in understanding Museveni’s motivations and political logic. This logic illustrates that Museveni’s governed Uganda according to the underlying political landscape of Ugandan society, namely the ethnically fractious nature of society. His choice to govern in this manner has led to his declining favorability in Western circles. These realities are central to developing a proper understanding of Museveni’s centralization of power. This final section will briefly elaborate on the historical nature of these realities and the role they play in shaping Ugandan politics.

Ugandan Political Realities

A distinct north-south ethno-linguistic divide and kinship loyalties underscore Ugandan society. Each of these realities interconnects with the others to form a complex political landscape outside of which the actions of political actors cannot be understood. These realities are products of the distinct historical context of Uganda. While not wholly unique to Uganda, these realities both constrain and facilitate Museveni’s actions during his tenure.
**North-South Ethno-linguistic division**

Uganda is ethnically divided along a north-south demarcation. This division is the result of migration patterns beginning in the early fourteenth century. Around that time the continental Bantu migration was underway, which migration brought Africans of Bantu ethnicity to southern Uganda.\(^\text{138}\) The sedentary nature of these tribes facilitated and enhanced their organizational opportunities.\(^\text{139}\) Tribal structures soon began to emerge according to kinship linkages in specific localities and over time became highly organized ethno-political kingdoms. Concurrently to this migration there was also a migration from the region of present-day South Sudan.\(^\text{140}\) However, unlike the mainly sedentary patterns of southerners, northern tribes were more diffuse after coming from less sedentary living styles of their origin. Thus, northern tribes established more fluid tribal structures than those in the south.

These two broad ethnicities were juxtaposed in a single state as part of the British colonial empire. Favoring indirect colonial rule, the British used the more organized southern Bantu tribes, principally the Buganda but others as well, to administer colonial affairs and the northern tribes in providing security for the colony.\(^\text{141}\) Ugandan society was constructed under this division of labor and this system continued until independence in 1962. The historical legacies of this division of labor continue to be seen with most of the professional class coming from southern Uganda and much of the military, until

\(^{140}\) Mwakikagile, 29.
\(^{141}\) Mwakikagile, 31
Museveni’s tenure, coming from the north. This informal class system permeates Ugandan social thinking and interaction. It is difficult for parties from both halves to interact constructively on many issues. This ethno-linguistic division has entrenched kinship loyalty as a dominant political reality in society.

Kinship Loyalties

The strength of kinship loyalties derives from the ethno-linguistic distinctness of Ugandan’s north-south division. The absence of a unifying state apparatus allowed localized tribal structures to construct themselves around kinship linkages. British colonial structures, to include British government paradigms, were then superimposed upon these localized, informal structures. Under the influence of colonial rule and post-independence mirroring of colonial political structures, formal institutions gradually gained some level of societal legitimacy within prevailing informal institutions. Over time a syncretic mixture of formal and informal institutions began to emerge. The syncretic nature of the institutional structure has influenced, and continues to influence Ugandan society today. An anecdote will illustrate how this syncretic system operates.

No Cameras in the Market

While filming a documentary in 2005 Steve and his Ugandan friend Prosper were shooting footage in the St. Balikudembe (Owino) Market. The purpose of this footage was documentary in nature and apolitical. However the entourage of several Americans with expensive looking camera equipment intrigued market security guards. These guards

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143 Ibid.
144 While the anecdote is real the names have been changed as permission has not yet been received to use originals.
held formal positions within the local government security forces and were paid through public funds; they represented the formal institutions and the legitimacy of these institutions. With AK-47’s in tow the security guards confronted the film crew and escorted them to offices above the market. Upon further discussion it was made clear that filming in the marketplace was no longer going to be permitted. However, during the conversation a distant kinship linkage emerged between Prosper and the lead security guard. The situation was then diffused and Steve’s entourage was let go without any further complications or questions. All parties in the filmcrew understood that the kinship linkage allowed them to avoid complications. Thus, the underlying informal relationship between Prosper and the guard overrode the formal enforcement.

This anecdote is representative of the broader societal picture the model developed in chapter 1 overlooks, but can be understood by a more hybrid model of society. By simply modeling the structural power shifts that occurred, the model has a tendency to underestimate the importance of underlying political realities. Now that these two dominant political realities of Ugandan society have been briefly sketched one can now understand why Museveni governed in the manner that he did.

**The Affection of Patronage**

Within the context of the Ugandan political realities outlined above one can begin to understand Museveni’s political logic. As argued in chapter 2 Museveni has constructed different patronage systems in the north and the south. Far from being mere schizophrenia the differing mechanisms of distributive patronage underscore the underlying ethno-political dynamics of Ugandan society. These underlying dynamics
constrained Museveni’s ability to govern Uganda in a manner acceptable to Western
governments. In order to maintain stability and the territoriality of Uganda Museveni
needed support from both northern and southern ethnic populations. Hyden’s model of
“economies of affection” further illuminates this political logic.

In short, Hyden’s ‘economies of affection’ model describes a number of the informal institutions underlying African politics. Hyden argues that the core principles of an economy of affection are: “(a) whom you know is more important than what you know, (b) sharing personal wealth is more rewarding than investing in economic growth and (c) a helping hand today generates returns tomorrow.” Hyden further argues that this political economy is not established as a system of graft, but rather as a system of “informal social support.” This system of informal social support is interwoven with and apart of kinship linkages. Hyden argues that these sentiments of duty are “socially embedded in the sense that [they] presuppose personal interdependence.” Simply put those to whom you have a kinship linkage deserve, if not require, your social support and you theirs. The social responsibilities one has to kin are unavoidable and constrain political action in Uganda. Recognizing and operating within these constraints has allowed Museveni to extend his presidential tenure to the extent that he has.

The two most prominent features of Museveni’s patronage regime that have led to his centralization and personalization of power (decentralization and the cabinet) can more fully be understood as economies of affection. Museveni has used decentralization

146 Hyden, 72.
147 Ibid., 88.
148 Ibid., 83.
to purchase northern ethnic loyalty, thus reducing northern elite’s claims to clientelistic support and cabinet positions to reward southern ethnic loyalty. Not only has Museveni established himself as the provider of benefit in both cases, but has allowed those directly receiving benefits to establish their own economies of affection. This establishment of cascading economies of affection further entrenches Museveni’s centralization of power. Both patronage mechanisms can be understood as distinct political choices and Hyden’s model suggests several reasons why these distinct political choices were made.

*The Affection of Decentralization*

As argued above the ethno-linguistic divide between north and south underscores Ugandan society. Most often individuals will self-identify with their broader ethnic group above any other. This reality constrained Museveni’s political vision of national unity: without the support from northerners no national unity could be established. However, Museveni’s southern identity constrained his ability to garner support from northerners. Hyden’s model would suggest that Museveni decentralization scheme was organized as such to allow Museveni to establish himself as benefactor to the north at the expense of already existing ethnic patron/client structures.

Establishing himself as benefactor to the north undercut political and traditional leaders. Through the establishment of ever-smaller districts Museveni allowed new political authorities to emerge that were loyal to him. Undercutting current regional political authorities through the decentralization process has allowed Museveni to purchase spaces of political loyalty in northern Uganda. Furthermore, these new authorities, captured by Museveni, could then establish their own clientelistic network
loyal to Museveni. Through this process Museveni has made it more important that northerners recognize Museveni as the political patron, then local political or traditional leaders. Furthermore, the process of rebuilding the conflict ravaged north will further erode the standing of ethnic regional leaders as they have little monetary support to offer individuals. Conversely, Museveni has the multitude of state resources to rebuild the northern economy. This erosion will likely shift support away from these leaders and towards Museveni once northern Ugandan begins to see the benefits of Museveni’s economy of affection.

*The Affection of the Cabinet*

Hyden’s model further suggests that southern ethnic groups expected Museveni to distribute powerful cabinet positions to them. One could even go so far to say that Museveni was constrained by these ethnic affiliations to provide such positions and failure to meet this obligation would not be seen as a viable option. Given Uganda’s powerful ethnic relationships Museveni’s southern affiliations could not go unrewarded if he was to accomplish his national vision. With many of his cohorts entering power with him in 1986 it was an uncomplicated task for Museveni to distribute political positions to these individuals. As his tenure progressed it became more ever more important to reward loyalty.

As previously demonstrated Museveni’s cabinet size has dramatically increased since his tenure began; this growth suggests Museveni’s growing need to reward loyalty and establish himself as premier benefactor to the south. In expanding the size of his cabinet Museveni not only purchased southern loyalty, but established a system whereby
recipients of cabinet positions could establish their own economy of affection. There would be no reason to fear coup attempts so long as this economy of affection continued to grow. Hypothetically once Museveni’s patronage recipients established fulfilled their own ethnic obligations their recipients would develop a loyalty to Museveni.

Through both of these patronage agendas Museveni personalized Ugandan politics. The most interesting aspect of this personalization is that it has occurred through the informalization of formal institutions (decentralization and the cabinet). This informalization is a product of the realities of Ugandan society and has proceeded according to a political logic. Constrained by ethnic division in the north Museveni pursued a patronage strategy constructed to undermine local traditional and political leaders. Further constrained by expectations of patronage in the south Museveni further informalized power according to these expectations. His distribution of power cabinet positions to southerners concretized Museveni’s position as the head of a series of cascading patron-client relationships throughout southern Uganda.

**Conclusion**

The previous paragraphs have been an attempt to fill one major gap in the model developed in chapter 1. Placing Museveni’s centralization of societal power within the context of Hayden’s economies of affection model has given a more complete analysis of the dynamics of societal power structures in Uganda. The conclusions of this thesis also illuminate several avenues for further research into Ugandan society and politics, as well as African politics in general. First, this thesis primarily dealt with the domestic societal power structures of Uganda. It has said nothing of how these structures affect Uganda’s
international political and economic relations. Understanding how patronage structures affect Uganda’s integration into the international economy would be useful in determining the full consequences of authoritarian patronage systems. Second, Museveni’s dual patronage system has allowed political authorities to maintain their political tenure for nearly three decades. More research should be conducted into the extent that multiple, differing patronage schemes operate within African countries experiencing similar governing tenures. Third, the informalization of formal political institutions may lead to the collapse of institutional structures once Museveni leaves office. Research into the possible processes of reformalization of institutions after their informalization will develop possible policy implications for societies that experience these types of political systems.

Given the realities of Ugandan politics the question remains as to why Western states acclaimed Museveni (and the other new generation of African leaders) as watersheds in African politics. From the standpoint argued in this thesis Western leaders fundamentally misunderstood the realities of African politics. This fundamental misunderstanding primarily stemmed from the apparent denial of kinship realities within African politics. It is not so much that Museveni has fallen short of his acclaim; rather it is more that this acclaim was too hastily given without an understanding of Ugandan politics in specific, and African politics in general.
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