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**The Uganda Presidential and
Parliamentary Elections 1996**

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1 Introduction

The Presidential and parliamentary elections examined in this paper are a fundamental step in Uganda's transition to democracy. They are in themselves elements of an ensemble of attributes that characterise a democratic society. It is therefore important to analyse the flow of major events in the conduct of the elections. The paper begins with a historical review of the role of elections in Uganda. It then analyses the electoral drama beginning with the scenic choice of Yoweri Museveni as President and the election of Members of Parliament as the second scene. The results are presented in terms of who won and who lost followed by explanation of the electoral choices.

2 Background

2.1 The rarity of elections in Uganda

In Uganda, the selection of leaders through elections has been a rare event. The British ruled Uganda from 1900 to 1962 as a colonial administrative state based on appointed leaders. As Uganda approached independence, the British attempted to introduce democratic institutions such as:

- the separation of the three organs of government: the executive, the legislature and the judiciary.
- the introduction of quasi-federal independence constitution in 1962.
- the introduction of Cabinet based on an elected Parliament in which the leader of the party with a majority in Parliament becomes the Prime Minister.
- constitutional head of state without executive powers.
- a competitive multi-party system.

Uganda's first general election 1962 was part of the package of establishing a system of parliamentary democracy based on the British model.

When Obote was preparing what would have been Uganda's second general elections in 1971, he was overthrown by Idi Amin who transformed Obote's seven years of quasi-military rule (1964–1971) into a fully-fledged military dictatorship. Uganda's second general election was postponed to 1980 following the collapse of the Amin regime. Two observations may be made about the plans for the 1971 elections which were never held and the 1980 general elections which were held but rigged. There was indication of a desire to introduce an executive President elected nationally, not merely the leader of the majority party in Parliament. Obote shied away from this knowing that most of Buganda would not vote for him. Then there was the idea that each MP should be voted for in four constituencies one from each region. These two ideas, a nationally directly elected President and the need for support from all regions of Uganda, were to re-appear and be formalised in the Presidential elections discussed in this paper.

The second general elections were held in 1980. The elections were rigged in favour of Milton Obote and the UPC. These elections were won by the DP which swept Uganda and Busoga with a landslide. The UPM rejected the elections and the guerrilla war that raged for the next five years began.

The third general elections¹ were held in 1989 as part of the expansion of the elected resistance council system. However the democratic scope of these elections was limited by (1) being based on electoral colleges, (2) by not allowing parties to compete, and (3) by not allowing the procedure of secret voting.

These then were the antecedents of the Presidential and Parliamentary elections discussed in this paper. This background clearly shows that there was no culture of democratic elections in Uganda and for the presidential elections, it was a leap in the dark.

¹ For a detailed analysis of Resistance Councils see Brett. E.A. For a detailed analysis of Resistance Councils see Apollo R. Nsibambi, 'Resistance councils and committees: a case study from Makerere' in H.B. Hansen and Twaddle (Eds.) *Changing Uganda* PP. 279–296. Nelson Kasfir, "The Uganda Elections: Power, populism, and democratisation" in *Changing Uganda*. pp.247–278.

2.2 Electoral college and indirect representation

During the guerrilla war of 1981–1986, new institutions were established in the liberated areas of the country. The cornerstone of these institutions was an elected council at the village parish community. These were given the name: Resistance Councils (RCs). The lowest of these units was known as the RC1 and consisted of an organic set of residents with common unifying factors and convenient administrative and territorial boundaries. The delegates of these councils were built up to the level of the district. Each resistance council appointed an executive committee of nine officials that was charged with implementing the decision of the council and the management of community affairs. This system of resistance councils was extended through the country in 1986. However, this system of indirect representation was not extended to Parliament (National Resistance Council [NRC]) until 1989.

2.3 Elections under a no party system

Electoral choices are affected by the type of political party system under which they are held. A distinction between three types of party systems is essential to a proper understanding of the electoral choices of the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections discussed in this paper. First, there is the no party systems currently allowed in Uganda. Second, there is the two party system operating in Britain and the USA. In this system a simple (first past the post) majority determines electoral winners. This system tends to eliminate small parties and to encourage the development of two strong and dominant parties. Third, there is the multiparty systems prevailing in Europe. These multi-party systems are associated with systems of proportional (voting) representation.

Uganda has two major parties: the Democratic Party (DP) and the Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC). The author believes that these organisations do not merit to be called ‘national parties’ because they have fragile grassroots presence, they are controlled by anti democratic factions, they have no internal democracy², etc. It is less confusing if they are called ‘factions’. Uganda’s politicians are divided between the current rulers who support a ‘no party’ movement system and the leaders of the party factions who believe in democracy based on many parties but tend not to make the distinction between two party and multi-party systems as defined above. This distinction will be

² For a similar independent of Uganda parties by a sympathetic western diplomat see John Kakande, "Political Parties outdated says envoy" *New Vision*, January 22, 1997. Thomas Scherbeck, the Danish Ambassador is quoted as having said that Uganda political parties are outdated and should not be taken as typical examples of modern political parties.

essential for a clear understanding of the nature of electoral choices under a no party system discussed in this paper.

3 Analysis of the 1996 Presidential Elections in Uganda

The summary of the distribution of votes among the Presidential candidates is shown in Table 1, *Electoral performance of presidential candidates*. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni won with a landslide vote of 74.2%, the main challenger, Dr. Paul Kawanga Ssemogerere, received 23.7% and, the upstart candidate, Mohammed Mayanja Kibirige, trailed with 2.1% of the vote. These results were rejected by both losing candidates.³ The final results released on May 18th, 1996 were: Museveni 75.5%, Ssemogerere 22.3%, and Mayanja 2.2%.

However, both international and domestic election monitors endorsed the elections as valid and urged the losing candidates to concede defeat⁴. At this time of writing, none had conceded defeat. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the winning candidate, was sworn in as president on May 12, 1996.

Table 1: Electoral performance of Presidential candidates

Name	Total Vote	Percent
Museveni	4,428,119	74.2
Ssemogerere	1,416,139	23.7
Mayanja	123,290	2.1
Total	5,967,548	100.0

The results stated in Table 1 reflect overall average performance. As would be expected, there is considerable diversity in the distribution of that average performance by districts (Table 2 presents Presidential candidate performance

³ Erick Ogozo Opolot, "Ssemogerere rejects polls", *The New Vision*, May 11, 1996. P.1; John Kakande, "Mayanja rejects polls", *The Sunday Vision*, May 12, 1996. P.3.

⁴ New Vision, Observers, "Akabway okay polls", *Sunday Vision*, May 12, 1996 P.1; Sam Obodo and Olwono Opondo, "Diplomats hail elections" *The New Vision*, May 11, 1996 p.28; Francis Mutazindwa, "Accept defeat, says Christians", *New Vision*, May 15, 1996. P.1.

by districts). Yoweri Museveni scored over 70% in 28 Districts, over 90% in 17 (44%) of the districts, and over 95% in 12 (31%) of the districts. He lost in only 6 districts (Gulu 8%, Kitgum 10%, Lira 13%, Arua 17%, Apac 22%, and Kumi 43%). In comparison Ssemogerere scored over 70% in only 5 (13%) districts; he scored 10% or less in 19 (49%) and scored below 5% in 15 (38%) of the districts. On the other hand, Mayanja score about 0% in 4 (10%), below 1% in 23 (59%) of the districts, and scored below 5% in all districts.

It may be noted that the northern regions' districts that Museveni lost are the ones that Ssemogerere won with a landslide vote (Gulu 90%, Kitgum 88%, Lira 85%, Arua 79%, Apac 76% and Kumi 53%).

Table 2: Presidential candidates' performance by districts

SCORE	Number of districts in percentages		
	Museveni	Ssemogerere	Mayanja
Above 95%	31%	0%	0%
Above 90%	44%	3%	0%
Above 70%	72%	13%	0%
Above 50%	85%	15%	0%
Above 30%	87%	31%	0%
Above 20%	92%	41%	0%
Above 15%	95%	46%	0%
Above 10%	95%	51%	0%
Above 5%	95%	59%	0%
Above 1%	100%	77%	41%
Above 0%	100%	97%	90%
0%	0%	0%	0%

4 The analysis of factors that explain electoral performance of the Presidential candidates

4.1 Perceived threat of a candidate to regional interests

It was in the interest of the western region for Museveni to retain power. Thus victory by the other two candidates would be perceived as a loss to the region. Ssemogerere was perceived as a threat to Buganda by forming an alliance with UPC and other parties. This was indicated by Ssemogerere's promise to return Obote. Museveni had a record of having served Buganda regional interest by restoring monarchy and returning Buganda's assets confiscated by Obote. Museveni's promise to arrest and prosecute Obote and Amin served to re-enforce the image of Museveni as a defender of Buganda's regional interests. Ssemogerere's promise to return Obote was such a great threat that it overshadowed his promise to give Buganda federalism. The extent to which Museveni was perceived as a defender of Buganda interest was the extent to which he was perceived as the enemy of Northern regional interests. Similarly, as Ssemogerere became more and more identified with northern Regional interests, the more and more, he became alienated to Buganda. This was the decisive factor. Mayanja had nothing to offer in terms of regional interest and issues.

4.2 Benefits and costs of incumbency

Yoweri Museveni enjoyed the benefits of incumbency. He could claim to have picked up the hopelessly shattered pieces of Uganda in 1986 and to have over a period of 10 years moulded them back to self-respect and self-confidence and to have restored the society and the economy. Ssemogerere's strategy of discounting these achievements was a major campaign mistake, especially since he was a key member of the regime until up to the prospect of the new elections. It was seen as ingratitude motivated by miscalculated opportunism. Ssemogerere's better alternative could have been to claim a share in the benefits of incumbency. Mayanja had no record of incumbency to his benefit. His claim to have influenced the decision to expand secondary schools when he was an official in the Ministry of Education did not measure up to the scale of the Museveni and Ssemogerere accumulated public record at the high levels of President or Minister.

President Museveni's rivals failed to capitalise on the costs of incumbency. Ssemogerere tried to do this but was tactless. When he went to Kumi, in Mukula, to offer prayers where the government was responsible for the death of 47 Etesoti⁵, he alienated the Baganda, especially those living in the Luwero triangle, where greater atrocities were committed by the Obote/UPC regime. Ssemogerere had now struck with the latter what the Baganda would soon regard as an un-holy alliance. Throughout the campaign Mayanja had a hard time dispelling rumours that he was a Museveni implant to reduce the Ssemogerere vote⁶. Indeed several of his campaign messages were similar to those of Museveni's. For example, they both support *Mchaka Mchaka*. The opposition candidates failed to capitalise on the fact that the last 10 years' economic miracle was only beneficial to a small class and that for the majority poverty had deepened and widened.

In contrast, Yoweri Museveni being aware of his vulnerable Achilles' heel, effectively covered it up by several months of grassroots campaign promoting the Museveni antipoverty formula. Ssemogerere correctly identified the war in the North as another of Museveni's Achilles' heel. But Ssemogerere over-exploited the issue to the point of triviality, when he offered to invite Kony to State House, to appoint Major Rurangaranga as minister of defence, and to return former president Milton Obote⁷. Whereas this total identification guaranteed landslide votes in some districts of the north, it was suicidal for the votes in the Buganda region. The errors of the Museveni regime were a boomerang in the hands of the opposition. To translate weaknesses of a largely successful President into votes for his opponents required considerable tact, skill, and shrewdness. These were in great short supply among the opposition presidential candidates.

4.3 Winning and losing campaign messages

The Holy Grail of every candidate soliciting for votes is to succeed in putting out messages that win more and more votes and to avoid any message that might result in loss of votes. Since there is diversity of conflicting interests, a

⁵ Charles Opolot, "Mukura survivors dismiss 'condolences'", *New Vision* May 3, 1996, p.1; Alfred Wasike, "Luwero family rejects Ssemogerere wreath", *New Vision*, May 2, 1996 P.11; Nathan Etengu, "Ssemogerere to pray for Mukura victims", *New Vision*, April 7, 1996. P.1.

⁶ Emmy Allio, "Ssemogerere is weak – Mayanja" *New Vision*, May 6, 1996. P.1; Jonathan Angula, "Mayanja denies backing Museveni", *New Vision*, April 4, 1996. P.1. Henry Tumwine, "Mayanja ready to work with winner", *New Vision*, April, 9 1996. P.4.

⁷ Emmy Allio, and Peregrine Otonga, 'I'll invite Kony to State House', *New Vision*, May 4, 1996. P.1.

message that may be a winner in one group may be a loser for the next group. It is for this reason that the campaign messages put out by the presidential candidates may be contradictory and inconsistent. All the candidates produced manifestos. The Museveni manifesto begins with several pages sketching his leadership achievements. The rest is a treatise on pre-colonial social formations and the appropriateness of no-party systems. The Ssemogerere manifesto reads like a technical report on governance written by a team of consultants. The Mayanja manifesto is a simple outline of the ills of current governance and Mayanja's JEMA magic for resolving them. The Museveni manifesto was too abstract and philosophical; Ssemogerere manifesto reads like a long boring consultancy report; the Mayanja manifesto is simple and easy to read but it sounds trite.

Since these are carefully constructed statements, they lack dramatic effect and the boundaries between them are not sharply drawn. It is during the free flow of campaign rallies when the heat of crowds stares in the faces of the candidates that sharp and contentious issues emerge. The message perceived by voters is therefore a reconstruction combining formal manifesto statements and the oratorical campaign flourishes that are picked and amplified by the mass media. This is what shaped the popular image held by the voter. Considerable simplification occurs, with Museveni being seen as the leader least likely to upset the existing order; Ssemogerere is seen as a threat to the rebuilding of the last ten years; and Mayanja as an implant of, either Museveni to reduce the Ssemogerere vote, or by the Sudanese/Iranians to promote Islamic fundamentalism.

Somewhere between the subterfuge cover-ups of formal manifestos and the simplistic amplifications of the mass media, one may attempt a reconstruction of the campaign messages that brings out the difference among the candidates (*see* Table 3, Presidential candidates' campaign messages).

The underlying leitmotif of the messages was that Yoweri Museveni guaranteed preservation of recent achievements and their expansion in the future; and the alliance between Ssemogerere and the UPC was a great threat to Buganda.

Table 3: A reconstruction of presidential candidate electoral messages

MAYANJA'S CAMPAIGN MESSAGE			
Economic Issues	Insecurity	Political	Nationalism (Tribalism)
Uganda's economic stagnation has been caused by domestic and international domination and exploitation. There is corruption. Incentive systems reward loyalty to the regime rather than production. The tax structure is inequitable. It is imposed on the poor to subsidise the rich. If I am elected, I will end this economic mismanagement	If elected, I will ensure that army and police have adequate facilities and their welfare will be enhanced, that a military university is set up and that military career is clear and transparent. Yoweri Museveni's rebellion in the Luwero triangle will be investigated.	If elected, I will ensure democracy and popular participation through political pluralism. The issue of federalism will be re-opened, independence of the judiciary will be re-enforced, and a code of conduct for leaders will be enforced.	Mayanja's critique of army composition was subtle. He never degenerated to an appeal to crude (right) nationalism (tribalism). He appears not to have considered xenophobia as a viable campaign strategy. Anybody travelling on the tribalism route could end up in the valley of skulls (Rwanda, Luwero)
SSEMOGERERE'S CAMPAIGN MESSAGE			
Economic Issues	Insecurity	Political	Nationalism (Tribalism)
Museveni's claim of having restored the economy is misleading. It is for the benefit of a few. The economic situation of most Ugandans has worsened. If I am elected, I will eliminate poverty and ensure equity.	Museveni's claim to have restored peace is not correct. There is rebellion all over the country. He has instigated rebellions in neighbouring countries that have intensified internal rebellion in Uganda. If elected, I will end the Kony war by talking peace. I will set up new national security organs that will be well paid and disciplined and national	Museveni manipulated the constitution-making process to deny parties the chance to govern. Using the NRM majority in the CA, which was itself manipulated, he has extended the no party (NRM) dictatorship for another five years. If I am elected, we shall amend the constitution and legalise multi-party democracy. We shall also adopt a federal constitution	The allegation that Museveni was Rwandese, the army dominated by Rwandese, and the threat to expel Rwandan Ugandans proved counter productive. If Ssemogerere had read a few anthropological studies on the Baganda, he would have realised that the Banyarwanda have been absorbed and now form a large percentage of Baganda of mixed ancestry. The Ssemogerere camp also threatened other non-Baganda who have bought land and settled in Buganda. The electoral bloody nose that Ssemogerere received should serve as severe warning that exciting tribalism will not pay off in Uganda

MUSEVENI'S CAMPAIGN MESSAGE			
Past regimes destroyed the economy. During the last ten years, I have together with you, reconstructed the economy. If now you select another leader, you may end up with a shattered economy, rampant insecurity, and corrupt state.	You remember decades of severe insecurity that made life in Uganda miserable. It is my regime that gave you peace and that can guarantee it in the future. Don't put your security interests at state. I am the candidate that enjoys the confidence of the security forces.	A no-party system of government modelled on the movement system is the best political system suited to a pre-industrial, no class, society. A multi party system presumes a middle class society. The articles give Uganda a five-year breathing space. At the end, the Ugandan population will vote whether the system continues or is replaced.	The opposition constantly relayed a message that Yoweri Museveni is not a Ugandan, is a Rwandese, and that the command of the Ugandan army is Rwandese. Museveni seems to have responded (not responded) by the adage that silence is golden. It was as if the allegation was so uncouth to merit attention. Had Uganda not benefited from ten years of his wise rule?

4.4 Creative and innovative campaign organisation and patron-clientism

The Ssemogerere camp tried to set up branches in the country. This ran foul of the law against setting up party structures. The police constantly frustrated this method of trying to reach the voters. There was a simpler and more effective method used by the Museveni camp. It is simply to announce campaign task forces and groups for given locations. While Ssemogerere was attempting to organise by "structure", Museveni was organising by "process". The former violated the existing law; the latter did not. The task force approach recognises the criticality of patrons who mediate the delivery of the votes of their peasant flock. In this approach it is not direct contact with voters, which is not feasible in backward areas with all forms of barriers (language), but contact with the patrons who go through lesser nested patrons to reach the final voters. Yoweri Museveni set up a more effective patron-client campaign network than Ssemogerere's party structure approach. Mayanja was a relatively unknown upstart candidate, yet he managed to get the required nomination sponsorship in one week. This suggests that he was using undisclosed patron clients most likely based on Islamic groups in the various districts of Uganda. Indeed the range of votes between 0% and 5% that he received in various districts reflects the density of the Muslim population in those districts.

Media packaging political sophistication

The Yoweri Museveni camp used the power of the mass media to convey simple but effective voter catching messages. This was a highly subliminal, sophisticated media political packaging that hit the other candidates like a storm⁸. The famous one was a page showing a heap of skulls in the Luwero triangle. These don't need any footage; they are already indelibly imbedded in the mind of the population with unlimited associations. The opposition candidate reeled against this new form of political communication and attempted to get it banned.

Effective symbolic representation⁹

Yoweri Museveni outwitted the other two candidates by constantly inventing (coining) symbolic representation of political messages in the language of the grass roots. To convey that leadership is a burden to be entrusted to a leader with stamina, he carried a grinding stone (Orubengo). This mode of political communication was so evocative at the grassroots that it posed an insurmountable challenge to the other candidates. They were always on the defensive trying to fight off the efficacy of these symbolic representations. Yoweri Museveni kept them running to catch up by ever spinning out new symbols at most rallies e.g. Okulembeka; Olumbugu. Yoweri Museveni also delivered these symbols in the local languages of his audience signifying respect and togetherness. Yoweri Museveni's mode of presentation was attractive, entertaining, and convincing; that of his opponents dull and boring.

4.5 The new election organisation and management

The most important pitfall in recent elections in Africa is the incapacity, real or manipulated, to properly organise and manage election activities and events. Voters may not be adequately registered. The registers may not be displayed to validate their content. Voting materials, and polling stations and civic education may not be adequate¹⁰. In the judgement of internal and external observers the Uganda presidential elections did not suffer from these typical election hazards in Africa. The CA 1994 elections had provided the testing ground (experiment) for Uganda election methods and procedures. The election organisation

⁸ Levi Ocheing and Tolit Olwo Atiya, "Mayanja criticises *New Vision* adverts" *New Vision*, May 8, 1996. P.9.

⁹ Grace Kagwa, "Painting political pictures", *New Vision*, May 6, 1996. P.18.

¹⁰ Vision Reporters, "Ballot papers in short supply", *New Vision*, May 10, 1996.

success may be attributed to the lessons learnt and experiences gained during the 1994 CA elections.

The new constitution provided for transition procedures and a time table. It extended the new government to not later than July 1996. During the two year period, necessary electoral legislation would be passed, electoral institutions established, and presidential and Parliamentary elections conducted.

It would appear that those response underestimated the urgency of proceeding in a timely manner and ensuring that the schedules of activities did not have significant time slippage. It was not appreciated that time was in short supply and needed to be apportioned, allocated and managed; instead of the election process managing time, time became the manager of the electoral process.

The Presidential and Parliamentary laws were not passed on time; there were delays in setting up the interim electoral commission (IEC). Since time had been lost and the constitutional provision could not be extended, the time allocated to revising the voter register, to nomination of candidates, and to campaigning became so short as to become ridiculously impractical.

Presidential candidates were required to be endorsed by 100 votes in at least 26 districts out of 39 districts and this had to be done in one week. The candidates had to collect these endorsements at the district level and present them to the electoral commission on either the 27th or the 28th of March 1996. Not only was it a challenge to look for the endorsements in remote districts, but also, to do so in the short time available. These facts meant that veteran politicians like Museveni and Ssemogerere would easily collect the endorsements using their established district networks. It also meant that upcoming candidates such as Mayanja and Ssemujju were at a disadvantage. Mayanja managed to beat the deadline and collected the 100-voter endorsement from 32 out of 39 districts. Ssemujju failed to make it.

He “turned up at Kololo five minutes to closing of nominations 3.55 pm and asked the commission to be allowed to ‘make a statement of public importance’. Ssemujju, when granted audience asked that the exercise be extended for another week, saying time given to aspiring candidates to collect the 100 signatures from at least 26 districts was not adequate. He said some returning officers had frustrated his co-ordinators and that his national campaign team ‘was interfered with’¹¹. The candidates who were nominated were Museveni, Ssemogerere and Mayanja.

¹¹ Milton Oluput, "Ssemujju: I quit in protest", *New Vision*, April, 16, 1996. P.12. Helen Mukibi "Aspiring presidents nominated to day", *New Vision*, March 27, 1996, P.1; Jossy Muhangi, "Semujju flops in Mbarara, Bushenyi", *New Vision*, March 27, 1996. p.3.

4.6 Campaigning under pressure of time : unofficial and official campaigning

The nominations ended on 28 March 1996. That was also the beginning of official campaigning. The official campaign would last about a month, ending on May 7, 1996. It may be recalled that most candidates who competed in the CA elections 1994 were doing so as preparation for the 1996 Parliamentary elections. It was therefore realised that the momentum gathered during the CA elections should not be lost. Although there was a ban on campaigns, most politicians ignored it and continued campaigning. The campaigns were disguised as consultations by CA delegates, or as explanations of government policies and programmes by ministers. Occasions of social gatherings (marriages) and religious ceremonies (services) were exploited by politicians to greet the people. Thus Ssemogerere had the opportunity to unofficial campaign in CA consultations, just as the President had the opportunity to meet the grassroots people and explain his anti-poverty formula. The presidential candidates at a disadvantage were the new comers, Mayanja and Ssemujju.

The official campaign was given about 39 days. It works out to one day per district. It was therefore a rat race. Yoweri Museveni and Ssemogerere were about equal in trying to criss-cross Uganda's remote districts. Museveni had the edge of relative youth and stamina compared to Ssemogerere. The pressures of the campaign trail soon did havoc on Ssemogerere's frail and aged body. His fainting on the campaign trail was to provide contrast to Museveni carrying the grinding stone.

The shortage of time was most disadvantageous to Mayanja. Museveni and Ssemogerere were widely known at the grass roots level. They could therefore afford to make strategic choices by going to those areas they were least known and to leave out those areas regarded as safe constituencies. Mayanja had to be everywhere like UPC. Although younger than the other candidates, he soon became exhausted, started to arrive late and tired.

Lastly it should be noted that attempts were made to level the ground by providing each presidential candidate with a vehicle and 15 million Shs campaign expenses. They were given equal access to the official media of the radio and the TV. The two mass media newspapers were balanced with the *Monitor* on Ssemogerere's side and *The New Vision* on the Museveni side. Mayanja was at a disadvantage; even if he was supported by Islamic newspapers, these were of limited circulation.

4.7 Political alliance¹²

Opportunistic alliances have influenced the course of Uganda's political history. In 1962 the DP defeated UPC in the 1962 elections and formed the first post independence government. The UPC lured Buganda into an alliance between UPC and Kabaka Yekka (KY). It was not based on shared ideology but a mere tactical step to remove DP from power. This alliance marked the beginning of Uganda's political degeneration into a succession of dictatorial regimes. During the post Amin era political parties joined together to defeat Binisa's proposed Umbrella. While these alliances succeeded in dislodging the existing political order, they never provided a stable alternative. It is in the context of this history of political alliances in Uganda that the establishment of the interparty co-operation (IPC) must be assessed. Ssemogerere made an assumption that he would get the Buganda votes because Museveni and the NRM had disappointed Buganda by not restoring an executive monarchy and granting them federal status. They were also sure that Buganda would vote against Museveni for waging a rebellion on Buganda soil that resulted in widespread destruction. The western region vote could be split into two if religious voting was revived and Ssemogerere seen as the first potential Catholic President. Since Museveni was very unpopular in the North because of the civil war raging in the area, then Northern votes were there for the picking. Since the UPC and DP controlled the Northern vote, then an interparty alliance was seen as a viable tactic to defeat Museveni.

The interparty co-operation group was so convinced of winning that Ssemogerere started naming Ministers and inviting Kony to State House before even the campaign had gathered momentum. It was partly because of this myopic self-confidence that Ssemogerere could not understand where the Museveni landslide could have come from except rigging.

If Ssemogerere had avoided a formal alliance with the UPC, if he had avoided appearing with them in the open, if the various party candidates had competed against Museveni in their own right, then Museveni would have been in serious trouble. If Ssemogerere had stood on purely the DP ticket, he could have picked enough votes in all regions to defeat Museveni who was bound to

¹² Timothy Kalyagira, "Is it violence for violence's sake", *New Vision* May 7, 1996. P.15-16; Vision Reporter, "Ssemogerere fears violence", *New Vision* May 9, 1996. P.1; Vision Reporter, "Voters stay calm", *New Vision*, May 10, 1996. P.1; Vision Reporters, "Voting peace fail in Kampala", *New Vision*, May 10, 1996. P.3; Mulinde Musoke and Joan Kakande, "Country quiet on election eve", *New Vision*, May 9, 1996. P.1.

lose heavily in the north. Ssemogerere was a poor strategist. Northern votes were already out of the Museveni camp. He did not have to make concessions to the UPC and to enter an agreement whose pay-offs were minimal.

This alliance destroyed Ssemogerere's image as a leader. He had won the 1980 elections, yet he joined and served under a government that had denied him the victory. As Lutwa was mopping up to consolidate his coup, Ssemogerere was already giving overtures and knocking on the door to serve the regime. When the NRM government ceased power in 1986, again Ssemogerere was available to serve. He only jumped the NRM ship at the last hour when his analysis convinced him that the opportunity to change government was ripe. As soon as he jumped ship, he launched an attack on the activities of the NRM government of which he was a key member.

This extended profile of Ssemogerere shows that Museveni did not have a credible and strong opposition leader with a sound and solid backbone. Ssemogerere appeared to the Uganda electorate as a puppet of the UPC party. Since the UPC had split into two major factions, he was seen as being manipulated by one of the extremist factions of the UPC that had been responsible for the atrocities of the Obote Second Republic.

When Ssemogerere launched his campaign in the North, with Cecilia Ogwal on his side, when he declared that he would return Obote, when he appointed Major Rurangaranga, who is alleged to have committed atrocities in Ankole, when he invited Kony to State House, it became clear that Ssemogerere had lost control of his campaign. All of these strategic and tactical mistakes were fully exploited by Museveni and his political machine into the unexpected landslide. If there is any single factor that destroyed Ssemogerere's presidential candidacy, it is the interparty alliance.

4.8 Campaign violence¹³

In planning campaigns in Africa, violence must be regarded as a key potential threat to the success of the elections. During the CA elections Ntungamo violent electoral politics demonstrated the reality of campaign violence. In the period of unofficial campaigning the illegal attempt by the interparty alliance to set up branches attracted violence and police intervention. In Mbale there was a shoot-out although nobody was hurt. Even when official campaigning began

¹³ Emmy Allio, "Parties, Mengo sign Agreement", *New Vision*, January 30, 1996, P.1; Emmy Allio, "Lukiiko denies signing protocol", *New Vision*, January 31, 1996. P.1; Paul Tibemanya, "Ssemogerere told to drop alliance", *New Vision*, January 10, 1996. P.3.

violent incidents continued to occur and to increase. Three points may be made on the role of violence during the presidential elections.

First, the initial violence appeared to start from the Museveni camp and to have targeted the Ssemogerere camp. This was a worrying situation if such violence had the support of the regime. This source of violence was soon brought under control. Secondly, and ironically, the violent incidents in the middle of the campaign and towards the end were perpetrated by the Ssemogerere side, especially by the Young Democrats. To be identified as a Museveni supporter was enough to attract vicious mob lynching. Yet the government security machine that had been accused of supporting Museveni appeared incapable of coping with this wave of campaign violence. Thirdly, while the violence that occurred must be condemned, the overall level of violence was small such that the whole exercise was judged orderly and peaceful by the international monitors. It is not a credible basis for the losers not to concede defeat.

4.9 The nationalism (tribalism) appeals

Ever since Museveni came into power with exiled Rwandese in key positions in the army, there has been a refrain about Museveni being a Rwandese, heading a Rwandese-controlled army in Uganda. These claims reached a crescendo during the presidential elections. A simplistic ethnicity analysis would lead the opposition to think that this accusation would be a sure winner of votes.

The claim that Museveni is not Ugandan is malicious. Museveni was born in Ankole and his ancestry is in Ankole and finally, Kanyomozi, who comes from the same locale confirmed Museveni as Munyankole to his interparty alliance colleagues. This admission that Museveni is a Ugandan, came belatedly when his human rights had already been grossly abused. Yet there still remain die-hard, extreme right, nationalists (tribalists), such as those who continue to propagate that false xenophobic claim.

The claim that the NRA was dominated by Rwandese is true but of little significance. When Museveni launched the rebellion against the dictatorship of Obote, Museveni found exiled Rwandese a suitable source of recruitment. If the Museveni rebellion is hailed as a liberation war that restored the rule of law and human rights which most Ugandans are now enjoying, then the Banyarwanda who participated in that war are heroes. It should also be realised that the remnants of forces defeated by Museveni will regard the Banyarwanda as devils.

Even if the allegation that Museveni is a Munyarwanda, heading an army dominated by Banyarwanda, were true, this would not be a sure vote-gunner as the opposition thought. We must turn to anthropology to answer this issue. A quick review of *The King's Men*, would reveal that the Baganda population is so highly mixed with the Banyarwanda that it was politically suicidal for Ssemogerere and others to attack Banyarwanda as a group. Scratch below the skin of most Baganda, and there will be found Kinyarwanda blood. Toward the end of his campaign in Buganda, Ssemogerere must have sensed trouble and began to back track with assurance for the safety of Banyarwanda. It was too little and too late.

This foolish search for tribal purity is causing political confusion in many African countries. All African states are artificial creations of colonial powers whose boundaries embody different tribes; some wholly enclosed, as Buganda, and, others, split between neighbouring states such as Basamia and Banyarwanda. None of the tribes whether central, or at the border, has superior claims to citizenship of such artificially created states. The xenophobic attacks on border people like Museveni, Aggrey Awori, Kaunda and Chiluba merely confirms the level of backwardness that has kept most of Africa in a Hobbesian state of nature. Moreover it has undermined the formation of more economically competitive regions and exposed the continent to international unequal terms of trade and relations.

4.10 Extensive electoral malpractices¹⁴

Extensive electoral malpractices can destroy the legitimacy of elections and cast doubt on the results. It is for this reason that the electoral process is regulated by law, that neutral and independent electoral institutions are created, and national and international monitors are invited to observe the election events. As has been stated above the results of the presidential elections were declared a valid expression of the Ugandan electorate. The election process was regulated by laws administered by an independent electoral commission. Most of the past electoral malpractices (*see* Table 4, Types of electoral malpractices and specific control measures), are presented and their control measures indicated. Where there were electoral malpractices here and there, on the whole the level and the extent of malpractices were curtailed. The author

¹⁴ Joseph Olanyo, "Man held over voters cards", *New Vision*, April 18, 1996. P.3; Francis Mutazindwa, "Kitariko reports cards", *New Vision*, April 17, 1996. P.40; Joseph Olanyo, "Polls suspect pleads guilty", *New Vision*, April 22, 1996 P.9; Notti Mwesigwa, "Illegal voters registered in Mbale", *New Vision*, April 24, 1996 P.3; Nathan Etengu, "Fake posters in Mbale", *New Vision*, April 24, 1996, P.12; Francis Mutazindwa, "Mbale voters register revised", *New Vision*, April 27, 1996, P.3.

considers that the use of single ballot box and open secret voting, and immediate counting and declarations of results were effective barriers to blatant rigging of elections. It would appear that vote buying beyond the polling stations may have been extensive. But this is mere speculation since it is impossible to get data on such clandestine activities.

Table 4: Types of electoral malpractices and specific control measure

TYPES OF MALPRACTICES	SPECIFIC CONTROL MEASURES
1. Bribing voters before or on polling day: voters may be given money and commodities that are in short supply.	1. As long as poverty is widespread, this form of malpractice cannot be controlled. Secret voting reduces it, since the buyer cannot be certain of the goods (votes) being delivered.
2. Destroying, or substituting, ballot boxes. This used to occur when several ballot boxes separate for each candidate were used; when counting was centralised and boxes had to be moved, and when counting did not take place on the same day.	2. Use of a single box and immediate, open counting at each polling station has eliminated this form of malpractice.
3. Printing false voter cards or getting access to official voter cards.	3. Printing voter cards has been made difficult because they are printed in the UK. Getting access to official cards is made difficult by entrusting them to a neutral body. The electoral commission must be independent of Government influence.
4. Buying voter cards of supporters of the opponent candidate and then destroying them.	4. Allowing voters with adequate identification to vote if they are on the register and if they have lost their cards. This has made buying voter cards a useless exercise.
5. Inserting many ballot papers already marked into the ballot box.	5. This is eliminated by proper custody of ballot papers. Voting in the open makes it difficult for a voter to put hands in the pocket, pull out papers, and insert them in the box. Such activity would be seen by those waiting to vote as well as the officials.
6. Making false declarations of results. This happened in the 1980 elections. When the initial declarations of the results by the election commission showed the opposition in the lead, Muwanga, the then President, dissolved the election commission, declared himself the only legal source of announced results. The results were altered in favour of U.P.C.	6. There must be an independent Electoral Commission. Counting takes place at each polling station immediately and in the open. Representatives of all candidates observe the counting and the announcement of results is decentralised to each polling station.
7. Tampering with the register or with the polling process. This is very rare because it requires the conspiracy of a large number of electoral officials. The register was tampered with in Mbale and the polling process was subverted in Isingiro.	7. Having a neutral and impartial electoral commission ensures that the registration process is not corrupted. The polling process is protected from subvention if neutral and non-partisan polling staff are selected.

5 Uganda Parliamentary Elections of 1996: National Level

There are vital links between the Presidential and parliamentary elections. The most important link is the voter. It is the same voters choosing presidential candidates and parliamentary candidates. It is for this reason that there had been a long debate about whether the elections should take place at the same time or whether they should be separate. Separating the elections made the voting decision simpler and more focused.

The second link is that both elections concern the two vital organs of government: the legislature and the executive. It was vital that both these organs be subjected to the will of the electorate.

The third link was that the outcome of the presidential elections might influence the outcome of the Parliamentary elections. The Yoweri Museveni landslide victory was so devastating on the opposition that they met and resolved to boycott the forthcoming Parliamentary elections¹⁵. The reason that the opposition gave for this decision was that the presidential elections had been extensively rigged by the government. If in fact the opposition boycotted the Parliamentary elections by assuming that presidential voting patterns would be repeated with the Parliamentary, they were mistaken. The electorate was capable of voting for Yoweri Museveni in the Presidential and yet vote for the opposition in the Parliamentary if this was the best choice. As the next section will show, many of Yoweri Museveni's ministers were voted out of power.

The parliamentary elections were held on June 27, 1996. Polling took place in 39 Districts of Uganda to vote 214 directly elected members of Parliament. The basic constituency unit was the administrative unit called the county.

*"There were 8,492,154 registered voters eligible to cast their votes for 214 members of Parliament. The 39 districts have 15,600 polling stations where 814 candidates are contesting including women in 26 women in 24 constituencies. Eighteen candidates have sailed through unopposed."*¹⁶

¹⁵ Vision Reporters, "IPFC boycotts Parliamentary polls", *New Vision*, May 15, 1996 P.1; John Kakande, "Ssemogerere standing down", *New Vision*, May 17, 1996. P.1; John Kakande, "Top IPFC members out of Kampala race", *New Vision*, May 22, 1996. P.1; Francis Mutazindwa, "IPFC explains dropout", *New Vision*, May 24, 1996, p.9; Ofwono Opondo, "Obote sacks Cecilia Ogwal", *New Vision*, May 25, 1996. P.1; Emmy Allio, "Obote bars UPC's from next elections", *New Vision*, May 27, 1996. P.1.

¹⁶ Erick Ogoso Opolot, "8 million voters elect 214 MPs", *New Vision*, June 27, 1996. P.1.

One of the virtues of the current decentralised polling and immediate counting at each polling stations is that most tallying and declaration of results can be done on the same day. Most of the results were already known the following day for newspapers to carry some of the leading contentious results. The Rugunda and Ogwal wins¹⁷ were in the news Friday 28 July, 1996. On Saturday newspapers reported¹⁸ many veteran politicians who had been voted out, new comers storming the next Parliament, and multi-partyists (Lukyamuzi, Ogwal, Nsambu Nsubuga) who had trounced NRM politicians. On Sunday July 30, 1996, the Interim Electoral Commission (IEC) presented a list of 266 members out of 276 to the Speaker of Parliament. The 266 included 209 elected on Thursday, 39 women representatives, 10 Army representatives and five representatives of the disabled. The election of five youth representatives flopped. The five pending directly elected results were soon received except for two that had been cancelled (Isingiro and Gulu municipalities). Except for these two, the direct elections can be declared to have been expeditious and the objective of establishing a Parliament directly elected by the people achieved.

5.1 The no party system and the analysis of voting behaviour

In two party and multi-party systems voters are choosing between different political parties and their campaign messages (issues). Individual factors play a role but the dominant factors are the party institutions. In this case analysis focuses on explaining the voter preferences among the parties. The Uganda no-party system context poses a challenge to the analyst to devise new ways of explaining voter behaviour.

Although there are several political parties in Uganda, candidates were barred from campaigning on the basis of membership to the political parties. There were attempts to segment and simplify the choice between those seen as “movementists” and those seen as “multipartyists”. These were labels that may be used for a qualitative and intuitionist integration of broad trends. However, these labels cannot be pushed to quantitative analysis because voting

¹⁷ Vision Reporter, "Rugunda wins, Chebrot trails", *New Vision*, June 28, 1996. P.1; Gilbert Awekofua, "Ogwala defies Obote, wins", *New Vision*, June 28, 1996. P.1

¹⁸ John Kakande, "Ministers voted out", *New Vision*, June 29, 1996, p.1; Erick Ogozo Opolot, "New comers storm next Parliament", *New Vision*, June 29, 1996 p.1; Richard Mutumba, "Multipartyists returned", *New Vision*, June 29, 1996. P.1.

data is not recorded in those terms and, except for extreme cases, most candidates in the middle do not like to be classified (identified) one way or the other. Now that it is the “movementists” who won, it is in the interest of most multipartyists, except the die-hard ones, to identify themselves as “movementists”.

5.2 The qualitative assessment of the relative performance of "movementists" and multi-partyists

In general the majority of members of Parliament are “movementists”. A rough estimate would lie between 70% to 80%. It has already been stated above that the inter-party co-operation forces collapsed under the weight of the Yoweri Museveni landslide in the presidential election. They met and declared a boycott of the Parliamentary elections. They agreed not compete as an organised force, but to allow individuals to exercise their conscience in the decision to compete. According to Patrick Mwendha, Secretary IPFC, who nevertheless competed and reaped his self-fulfilling prophesy,

“The IPFC has completely lost confidence in the electoral process. Any Ugandan wishing to participate in the forthcoming Parliamentary and local council elections may do so well knowing that the rigging machinery is still in place and will adversely affect the results.”¹⁹

In view of the fact that there was organised encouragement for the opposition not to participate, the 20% win must be regarded as commendable achievement. In spite of the odds against them, veteran multipartyists, such as Ken Lukyamuzi, Wasswa Lule, Nsubuga Nsamba, Cecilia Ogwal, trounced their NRM opponents. It is most likely that they would have performed much better if they had not boycotted the election. The statement of boycott demoralised potential strong candidates and contributed to the low voter turn out.

It is hazardous to attempt a voter distribution of regional electoral performance in terms of the above labels. However, depth interviews seem to suggest that ‘movementists’ swept in the west and rural central but faced a very strong showing in urban Kampala. Contrary to the expectation that movementists would be totally rejected in the North, a significant numbers of

¹⁹ Vision Reporters, "IPFC boycotts Parliamentary pools", *New Vision*, May 15, 1996 P.1; Notti Mwesigwa and Josephine Maseruka, "IPFC disagree on boycott", *New Vision*, May 14, 1996. P.1.

them (Adyebo), were returned. That is as far as intuitionist analysis can go about voter behaviour with respect to newly begun group labels.

5.3A quantitative analysis of voter behaviour

The power of quantitative analysis of voting behaviour over qualitative subjective assessment may be demonstrated in this section. The analysis starts with basic assumptions and concepts. Let us take a constituency where the winner wins with over 90%. There is a landslide win. It means that the choice was clear and focused. It also means the elected MP clearly represents the interests of the constituency. Let us take the extreme case in which the winning candidate wins with 25% of the vote and the other 75% is distributed among several losers. Clearly, the elected MP does not represent the majority of voters in the Constituency. A measure of the size of the percentage of winning vote is captured by the concept of plurality²⁰. Since this voting analysis concept may be confused with pluralism, it will not be used in this paper. The term “percentage winning vote” is used.

A detailed distribution of MPs by percentage of winning votes is shown in Table 5, *Distribution of directly elected MPs by extent of percentage winning vote*. 8% of MPs won with 30% or less, 41% won with 50% or less. On the other hand, 2 MPs won with 81% to 95%.

A more meaningful (expressive) analysis of the extent of winning using the above categories is shown in Table 6, *Distribution of MPs by extent of winning categories*. 10% won with 71% or above. In order to give meaning to the extent of percentage winning votes, five categories of percentage winning votes may be identified as:

- (i) Extreme minority MPs whose range of percentage winning votes lies between 21–40 percent, 23% of MPs are extreme minority winners,
- (ii) Minority MPs with percentage winning votes between 41–50 percent, 18% are minority winners,
- (iii) Simple majority winner with percentage winning votes between 51–70%, 42% of MPs are simple majority winners,

²⁰ For application of the concept of plurality see Kasifir and Katorobo contributions to H.B. Hansen and M. Twaddle (Eds.) *From chaos to order*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1995. PP.114–179.

- (iv) Extreme majority MPs with percentage winning votes between 71–95 percent, and finally
- (v) Unopposed : 8% entered this category of MPs.

In all 41% of MPs constitute a situation of misrepresentation in Parliament. In a two party system where parties and groups alternate to govern over time, this situation of simple majority may be characterised as adequate representation in turns over time.

Ten percent of MPs are extreme majority winners. This may mean that Goliath was pitted against David and could mean that voters had no choice. If voters had no choice, if the balance of forces was overwhelmingly in favour of one candidate, then this excessive dominance is not health for genuine representation. If the 8% passed as unopposed MPs is added, then 18% of MPs constitute a situation of **dilution** of presentation in Parliament. It is an irony of this analysis that where the electorate is presented with several candidates of about equal merit and with high levels of competition, the net result is misrepresentation. And where there is low competition because candidate strength is unbalanced, there is unanimity and consensus about the winners, but the landslide winner reflects a poor structured election choice.

Table 5: Distribution of directly elected MPs by extent of winning votes 81% or above

Extent of winning vote%	MPs	
	Number	Percent
21–30%	16	8%
31–40%	31	15%
41–50%	38	18%
51–60%	65	30%
61–70%	26	12%
71–80%	18	8%
81–90%	1	1%
91–95%	3	1%
Total	198	93%
Unopposed	16	8%
Grand Total	214	100%

Table 6: Distribution of MPs by extent of winning categories

Extent of winning	Winning percentage range	N° of MPs	Percentage	Situation (state)
Extreme minority winners	21–40%	47	23%	Gross mis–representation
Minority winners	41–50%	38	18%	Mis–representation
Simple majority winners	51–70%	9	42%	Adequate representation (two party system)
Extreme majority winners	71–95%	42	10%	Excessive dominant
Unopposed		16	8%	Excessive dominant
Total		214	100%	

5.4 The case for proportional electoral procedures in Uganda

The 41% misrepresentation arising out of too many candidates that appear balanced and confuse and divide voters can be resolved by proportional electoral procedures. There are many variants of proportional representation systems but here only two are reviewed. The first is to have a second round of voting between the first and second running candidates. A clear majority winner would then emerge. But this method used in some European countries is expensive.

A second method is to require voters up-front to indicate their 1st and 2nd choices among several competing candidates. If there is no winner with the first choice votes, then second choice votes are considered, then again a majority winner taking into account first and second choice votes will emerge. This procedure eliminates the need for an expensive second round of votes but it may appear as complicated mathematical complication to voters.

Professor Goran Hyden has advocated a system of proportional representation for Uganda²¹. One of the benefits of the system is that if there are several political parties or groups, their voting strength in the electorate will be proportionately reflected in Parliament. This paper should have been available to CA delegates. Unfortunately advocating this system was mediated through the wrong camp (Ssemogerere and the multipartyists) and therefore rejected on partisan grounds. It is also possible the principles and technicalities of the system were not persuasively and effectively communicated to the delegates. Lastly, belief in the British system of voting is entrenched in the mind of the Ugandan elite who regard themselves as the custodians of their British colonial inheritance.

5.5 The indirectly elected component of Parliament

The composition of Parliament is depicted in Table 7, *Composition of Parliament*. The type of representatives and composition of the current Parliament is similar to the composition of the Constituent Assembly (CA). There is the same number of directly elected members (214). However, the percentage of directly elected to indirectly has changed (increased) to 79% (for current

²¹ Goran Hyden, "Political Representation and the future of Uganda", H.H. Hansen and M. Twaddle (Eds.) *From chaos to order*. PP.180–191.

Parliament) from 76% (for the CA). There is the same number of army and women representatives. The major difference is the abolition of Presidential nominees and political party representation. While youth representation was retained, the elections flopped in practice and that may have sealed the fate of special youth representation.

Table 7: Composition of Parliament

Types of Representatives in Parliament	CA 1994	Parliament 1996
Directly elected	214 (76%)	214 (79%)
Army	10 (4%)	10 (4%)
Workers (Trade Unions)	2 (1%)	3 (1%)
Disabled	–	5 (2%)
Women	39 (14%)	39 (14%)
Presidential nominees	10 (4%)	–
Youth	4 (1%)	–
Political Parties	4 (1%)	–
Total	283 (100%)	271 (100%)

The election of special representatives was highly competitive. It should be noted that voting was done by electoral colleges, even if this voting was secret. Electoral colleges are a small and visible group susceptible to manipulation. Indeed there is consensus that election of women was marred by widespread electoral malpractice. For the Army representation, a list of 100 was presented to the President in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief, to screen to 25 names that were voted on by the Army council constituted as the electoral college for the army.

6 Analysis of Parliamentary elections at the grassroots: Kabale Municipality

According to the officially declared results by the Interim Electoral Commission, Ruhakana Rugunda obtained 54.9% of the vote and Rukundo received 45.1%. Rugunda was declared winner and the Elected representative of Kabale municipality. Rukundo refused to concede defeat. Several days after the announcement of these results Rukundo supporters attempted to demonstrate and the demonstration was quelled by the police using tear gas before the fracas could turn into a riot. Rugunda who had held a key post of Minister of Foreign Affairs was appointed Minister of Information. Meanwhile Rukundo filed a case against Rugunda and the Interim Electoral Commission. At the time of writing the case is pending in court.

6.1 Residential voting behaviour

Displayed in Table 8, *Distribution of votes by candidates and by polling stations*, Rugundo defeated Rukunda with 56% against 44% votes. The slight difference between this and the Interim Election Commission result of 54.9% vs 45.1% is due to rounding and to the base used to calculate the percentage. The most important finding in this table is that both candidates obtained landslide votes at polling stations close to their residential villages; with Rugundo scoring 70% in his residential village of upper Bugongi and Rukunda scoring 70% in his residential village of Rushaki.

This residential voting pattern is best displayed in a two-by-two table as shown in Table 9, *Residential voting behaviour*. But an ecological fallacy whereby this residential vote would be attributed to a spatial cause must be avoided. There must be an ensemble of social, psycho, political factors that are associated with closer residence that cause this behaviour such as

- (1) greater identification,
- (2) intimate knowledge of the candidate,
- (3) more frequent contact and communication, and
- (4) greater expected benefits.

During the CA elections of 1994 Rugunda trounced his three opponents with a 77% landslide vote. This landslide was eroded to 56%. This erosion is so significant as to need an explanation.

Table 8: Distribution of votes by candidates and by polling stations

Polling stations	Rugunda	Rukundo	Total
Kijueruta	1059 (73%)	390 (27%)	1,449 (100%)
Upper Bugongi	708 (70%)	310 (30%)	1,018 (100%)
Rutoma	316 (65%)	169 (35%)	485 (100%)
Kabale Central	880 (59%)	603 (41%)	1,483 (100%)
Nyabikoni	591 (54%)	503 (46%)	1,094 (100%)
Kirigime	640 (56%)	503 (44%)	1,143 (100%)
Lower Bugongi	618 (64%)	348 (36%)	966 (100%)
Butobere	394 (48%)	435 (52%)	829 (100%)
Rushaki	253 (30%)	605 (70%)	858 (100%)
Kigongi	498 (60%)	328 (40%)	826 (100%)
Mwanjari	816 (54%)	707 (44%)	1,523 (100%)
Karubanda	375 (38%)	621 (62%)	996 (100%)
Total	7148 (56%)	5522 (44%)	12,670 (100%)

Table 9: Residential voting behaviour

Polling station	Votes Received		
	Candidates		Total
	Rugunda	Rukundo	
Upper Bugongi: Rugunda's residential village	70%	30%	100% (N=1018)
Rushaki: Rukundo's residential village	30%	70%	100% (N=858)

It can be seen that the same voters who gave Yoweri Museveni a landslide vote of 96% gave Ruhakana Rugunda 56%. It does follow that if voters have voted overwhelmingly for Yoweri Museveni in the Presidential Elections, then they would vote overwhelmingly for NRM candidates in the Parliamentary elections.

There are several factors to explain the erosion of Ruhakana Rugunda's CA landslide victory and the strong showing of an upstart candidate, Sepiria Rukundo:

- disarray in the NRM camp
- loss of core Catholic votes
- differences in the campaign message: the town elite vs the lumpen
- the power of money
- benefits and cost of incumbency

Table 10: Trends in voting behaviour

Parish polling station	Total votes Museveni May 1996	Total votes Ruganda CA 1994	Total votes Rugunda July 1996	Total votes Rukundo July 1996
Kijuguta	98%	87%	73%	27%
Upper Bugongi	98%	88%	70%	30%
Rutooma	98%	84%	65%	35%
Kabale Central	92%	80%	59%	41%
Nyabikoni	94%	80%	54%	46%
Kirigime	94%	75%	56%	44%
Lower Bugongi	96%	81%	64%	36%
Butobere	95%	80%	48%	52%
Rushaki	93%	78%	30%	70%
Kigongi	94%	76%	60%	40%
Mwanjari	97%	66%	54%	44%
Karubanda	98%	54%	38%	62%
Average	96%	77%	56%	44%

6.2 Disarray in the NRM Camp in Kabale

A distinction can be made between veteran NRM politicians in Kabale (Ruhakana–Rugunda, Kanyeihamba, Manzi Tumubweine, Shem Bageine etc.) and the young Turks such as Justine Sabiliti, Rwendeire, Bamwanga. These upcoming young Turks were identified with Ruhakana Rugunda. Since Ruhakana Rugunda was a model of a successful politician, they emulated and sought guidance from him. They tended to support and turn up at his meetings. It should also be noted that he was the NEC member for Kabale. He was regarded to be close to Yoweri Museveni.

In order for the young Turks to come up it was inevitable that they would have to comment, and oppose the veterans. The NRM Secretariat had failed to field one NRM candidate in most constituencies throughout the country and this was also the case in Kabale. For example, Kigongo tried to persuade Rukundo not to stand against Rugunda and failed. It is alleged that most of the veteran NRM politicians withdrew their support from Rugunda. They believed that they were being challenged by the young Turks with the encouragement and tacit consent of Ruhakana Rugunda.

Although most of these veteran politicians were competing in rural constituencies, they have considerable influence in Kabale municipality. Most of them have businesses and assets in Kabale and can prevail on their followers not to vote for Ruhakana Rugunda.

It has also been alleged that the veteran NRM politicians did not merely withdraw support for Ruhakana Rugunda but they organised counter attacks and measure. It is alleged that they encouraged and sponsored Sepiria Rukundo to oppose Rugunda in Kabale municipality.

6.3 Loss of core Catholic votes

In the CA elections most Catholics voted for Ruhakana Rugunda. Indeed the author concluded that Ruhakana Rugunda had bridged the divide between Catholics and Protestants and this divide had been transformed not to return. It seems that this prediction was premature and that core Catholic voters rallied behind Sepiria Rukundo on religious basis. It has been alleged that Rukundo received a lot of campaign support from the Catholic Church leaders. This support did not emanate from the level of the Bishop at Rusoroza but rather at the lower levels of the church hierarchy, especially, the Catholic Church located in the municipality.

Soon after the CA elections, Ruhakana Rugunda returned to Kampala and avoided getting involved in the election of the women CA representatives. This Rugunda neutrality was interpreted negatively by both the winning and losing women. The losing candidate regarded Rugunda's absence as abandonment. Mrs Twinobusingye is a staunch Catholic and in an influential leader among the women. She is alleged to have said that the Catholic vote for Rugunda in the CA elections had been an exchange for Rugunda support for Mrs Twinobusingye to be elected women representative. She therefore regarded Rugunda's absence as a breach of contract. Rugunda denies ever having entered such a pact. However, Mrs Twinobusingye is alleged to have vowed to campaign against Rugunda during the next elections.

Mrs Hope Mwesigye the winning candidate also regarded Rugunda's absence as abandonment. Nevertheless she had won in her own right without the support of Rugunda and therefore there was no obligation to support Rugunda during the next elections. Mrs Mwesigye has powerful relatives in Kabale municipality who also withdrew their support from Rugunda. This incident was so decisive in the NRM camp that it threatened a long established political comradeship with the all-powerful, Amama Mbabazi, now Minister of Defence. Mrs Hope Mwesigye is an in-law to Mbabazi. And the Hope family in Kabale municipality have considerable political muscle.

6.4 Differences in campaign messages: the elite vs the lumpen

Kabale municipality has benefited from the economic growth and infrastructural rehabilitation of the last ten years. Ruhakana Rugunda and the NRM can be credited with restoration of Kabale Hospital, repair of most roads, rejuvenation of small-scale businesses in the town, an upsurge in the supply of electricity and telephone services. It is these achievements that provided the cornerstone of Rugunda's campaign message that was so effective in garnering a landslide victory in the CA elections. Robert Kitariko and the other opponents failed to launch persuasive counter attacks on these achievements. Rugunda was able to reap the benefits of incumbency.

Rukundo was a very effective campaign strategist. He realised that all the above achievements were mainly for the benefit of the Kabale middle elite who use electricity, telephones, piped water etc. He also realised that this growing prosperity at the middle was not trickling down to the abject poor masses at the bottom. Rukundo packaged a campaign message targeting what might be

termed the 'lumpen' of Kabale municipality. He promised to end their housing plight, he undertook to set up petty businesses such as poultry. Rukundo's penetration of this lumpen level was swift. He captured most of the *Boda Bodas* to his side. As Rukundo's penetration of the grassroots poor increased with his persuasive lumpen message, the élites became restive and rallied to the defence of Rugunda with his effective elite message.

The power of the purse

Elections in Uganda are providing an opportunity for exchange transactions across groups that are ordinarily living apart. We have already identified the elite mass gap in Kabale. Elections give the abject poor the chance to rake exactions on the elite. This largely takes the form of exchanging votes for money and commodities (food, salt, clothes, etc). Although this exchange took place in the CA elections, it was noted. Rukundo's entry raised the financial stakes in Kabale municipality elections. He was reported to be rich and generous. Although Rugunda had the image of being '*Mukono gamu*'²² in the CA elections, the Rugunda camp had no choice but to match and counter balance Rukundo's power of the purse. Two serious consequences follow. As the financial stakes in elections are raised, politics will come to be dominated by the rich because most of the promising leaders will not be able to afford the cost. Continued bribing of voters will further widen the scope of corruption in society. This may be the time to limit campaigns expenses.

Benefits and costs of incumbency

In the CA elections Rugunda coined the "no change" slogan. This "no change" slogan was raised to the national level during the Presidential Elections. A "no change" strategy is effective when the benefits of incumbency outweigh the costs. As Rukundo has shown there is enough material at the 'lumpen' level to create trouble for a campaign based on benefits that are largely concentrated on elite interests. The major weakness of the opponents of the current rulers is that the 'opposition' élites have the same elite campaign messages that are meaningless to the abject poor voters. Rukundo evoked the language of the poor in Kabale municipality even if his sincerity was in doubt. He is basically a rich man incapable of genuine empathy

²² The phrase may literally translated as the "hand of gum" meaning the hand that does not give money.

with the poor. During the next five years, he has the opportunity to demonstrate his ability to identify with them. Most likely he will abandon them for the comforts of Kampala only to return at the threshold of the next elections. But the voter will have known his true colours.

Several factors have been identified above to explain the decline in voter strength for Rugundo and the rapid growth of support for Rukunda. It is important to realise that these factors criss-cross to provide what political scientists call "cross-cutting ties" that pull and push in different directions creating an integrative web of relationships that prevent schism in the community. If voting were merely a matter of Catholics opposed to Protestants, then schism and tensions would mount and threaten social equilibrium. However, the influence of other factors such as the identity of economic interests, provides cross cutting bridges.

7 Conclusion: the role of the Uganda elections in the transition to democracy

Most societies desire and aim at establishing democracy. While there are different variants of democracy, there is a core of democratic attributes. The centre-piece of this core is changing government leaders on the basis of regular, free and fair elections. Societies that renew their leaders on the basis of elections may be distinguished from those that merely appoint them, or even those that change them on the basis of the gun. Elected governments reflect the will of the majority in society; imposed governments reflect the will of the dictatorial, or benevolent, leader. Many societies, including Uganda, trying to move from dictatorial systems to democratic systems are said to be on transition to democracy.

A transition to democracy entails establishing democratic institutions: elected Parliaments, elected executives, vibrant multi-party systems, and free and competitive mass media. Thus elections are both instrumental (the means), and part of the content of democracy when achieved—elections are part of the end.

A distinction has been made between state led and 'civil society' led transition. In the former, a regime that may have come into power by force (illegitimate) may decide gradually to phase itself out of power. In civil society led democratisation, the dictatorial leader may fail to withstand and resist

democratisation pressures of civil society. This has been the trend in the transformation of the Soviet Union and its East Europe satellites. A current example is the struggle between civil society and the Serbia State. In a 'civil' society-led transition, the leader gradually becomes powerless. The state withers away.²³

The Uganda case is one of state-led transition. It is the NRM regime that has been gradually restoring democratic institutions. The fundamental challenge of a state led transition is the conflict between the objective of establishing genuine democracy, which could mean another group coming into power, and the normal interest of a political group to state in power. It is this dilemma that causes a state led transition to be manipulated by the incumbent leaders in their own favour. This is a fundamental contradiction. In both Uganda and Ghana the ruling regimes have been able to stay in power after the democratisation process. The real test will be when the elections are won by the opposition and the regime leading the transition is forced by the results of free elections to hand over power to the opposition.

One of the pre-conditions of successful elections in the transition to democracy is the existence of a credible opposition, vibrant multi-parties and the feasibility that the security forces of the outgoing regime will be brought under control. The elections reviewed in this paper have revealed the credibility of the opposition to take over power from Yoweri Museveni and to control the army to have been in doubt²⁴. If Ssemogerere had won elections, the country would have been plunged into crisis and the march to democracy reversed by a new army take over.

Uganda will have to go through many successive elections before a democratic elective culture is established and entrenched. The attributes of this culture will be a willingness of electoral losers to accept the verdict and concede defeat. It will be a culture in which the winners do not hound and witch-hunt the losers. It will be a culture in which armed rebellion to change governments will not be necessary. Given the current resurgence of rebellions

²³ This concept was coined by Karl Marx.

²⁴ Fredrick Kiwakuna, "LDM's could be disarmed", *New Vision*, May 7, 1996. P.1; Sheila Kawamara, "Ssemogerere on army", *New Vision*, May 7, 1996. P.3; Sheila Kawamara, " Dr. Ssemogerere warned to stop provoking Army" *New Vision*, May 5, 1996, p.1; Vision Reporter, "Army meets on polls", *New Vision*, May 5, 1996, p.1; Vision Reporter, "Military warns on violence", *New Vision*, May 7, 1996, p.10.

all over the country soon after the elections, Ugandans still have a long, and potholed way to go on the journey to democracy.

As this study has demonstrated Uganda has accomplished a major step in the transition to democracy—the restoration of the elective principle as the preferred method of changing presidents and renewing the legislature. But democracy is not established by the experience of a few elections. It is built over time (institutionalised), by regular repetition of free and fair elections.

There will be two tests of the institutionalisation of democracy in Uganda. The first is when elections are won by the opposition and the new leaders are able to bring the security forces of the outgoing regimes under control. The pre-condition for this is the transformation of personal armies to national ones. This is under way with the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF).

The second challenge will be the transformation of current party factions (DP, UPC, CP, etc.) into national political parties. In order for the election of the president and members of Parliament to reflect the will of major groups in the society it may be necessary to introduce proportional systems of representation.

The Interim Electoral Commission (IEC) did a commendable job. It devised electoral procedures that eliminated the old and known blatant methods of rigging. The cornerstone of these procedures was use of a single ballot box and casting the vote secretly but in the open. There were new method of electoral malpractice largely taking place away from the polling station. These have to be studied and eliminated also. An important step has been to establish the electoral commission as a permanent semi-autonomous institution.

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