



Research Paper

The Price of Politics in Uganda

Madinah Nabukeera(PhD) *

Lecturer Kyambogo University

Political affairs in Uganda, particularly at the advanced end of the administrative arrangement has in contemporary times grown into progressively the reservation of a minor personal-handpicked illiterates, semi-elites and elites who can mobilize huge resources (money) required to compete for effective crusades (movements) to be voted to civic offices. Since 2005 when the public voted for reinstatement of multi-party politics, rivalry for somewhat inadequate voting offices has become extremely harsh. This paper used conversations with some politicians and documentary review i.e., secondary sources, tertiary, unpublished thesis, published articles, academic and non-academic sources, including newspapers looking for court cases on voter buying; informal conversations, election observer reports, political talk shows on different television channels and radio stations like CBS, NTV, NBS, BBS, radio one, conversations and recorded interviews with politicians of different classes at all stages of the government structure. The author maintains that, a campaign Finance Bill should be drafted and offered to the 14th Assembly of Uganda for presentation and debate into law that will control the use of cash throughout the voting process.

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I. OVERVIEW

Political affairs in Uganda, particularly at the advanced end of the administrative arrangement, has in contemporary times grown into progressively the reservation of a minor personal-handpicked illiterates, semi-elites and elites who can mobilize huge resources (money) required to compete for effective crusades (movements) for voting to civic offices. Since 2005 when the public voted for reinstatement of multi-party politics, rivalry for the somewhat restricted voting bureaus has proved extremely harsh. MPs in ruling party (NRM¹) as well as in opposing-party systems in Uganda, offer outsized stakes of their crusade monies to custom-made linkages, connections and networks. Those who win seats in parliament do so not on the foundation of the desirability of their philosophies, but for the reason that they out smart their opponents in as far as “tradeoffs in vote sale” is concerned. Such a system has unbroken consequences for the electorates and the extensive government structure. To the electorates, retailing your vote plainly liberates the purchasers of the obligation for accountability as a representative of your opinions and interests. For the broader government structure, it eliminates talented, skilled, experienced, proficient and knowledgeable people who, fail to present themselves due to shortage of funds and eventually no involvement. Electorate should appreciate that failure is a detour, not a dead-end street while one representative fails another one can succeed.

The unavoidable inquiry into the explanation advanced is: What can government and populace do about it? Precaution must be put into consideration to analysis and get practical way out to glitches that twig from the present politics of crusade funding.

There is a huge body of literature written on Uganda, predominantly the studies by many authors including but not limited to (Carbone, 2003, 2007; de Torrenté, 2013; Goodfellow, 2010; Kagoro, 2013, 2016; Kagoro & Biecker, 2014; Kasfir, 1998; Makara, 2010; Makara, Rakner, & Svåsand, 2009; Médard & Golaz, 2013; J. Rubongoya, 2007; J. B. Rubongoya, 2004, 2013; Singh, 2014; Speight, 2009; Tripp, 2004, 2010; Vokes, 2016) fundamentally lusters over the no-party era and the recent alteration to multiparty politics. However, to my understand of the historical fights over political structures and the international nature of the Ugandan state affirms the significance of queries about what Ugandans in reality experienced in the changeover to multiparty democracy. If Achille Mbembe’s opinions of African supremacy were assumed truthful, and private indirect government and illusion power arrangements are widespread across the continent, then the alteration to multiparty politics in 2005 could just as easily be assumed as a nondemocratic move, or at least as a

¹ National Resistance Movement

shift to acceptable form of democracy that has many undemocratic penalties to the country in the long run (Jezer & Miller, 1994; Kagumire, 2006).

This paper is a continuation of previous works done by different scholars (Angelo Izama, 2011; Byaruhanga, 2013; Conroy-Krutz & Logan, 2012; Falguera, Jones, & Ohman, 2014; Golooba-Mutebi, 2016; Mwirichia, 2011; Singh, 2014; William, 1997) and twelve sources of information were used. These included: documentary review i.e., secondary sources, unpublished thesis, published articles, academic and non-academic sources, including newspapers looking for court cases on voter buying; informal conversations, election observer reports, political talk shows on different television channels and radio stations like CBS, NTV, NBS, BBS, radio one, and recorded discussions with politicians of dissimilar classes at all stages of the government structure over one decade; and conversations with politicians who competed in the recent concluded elections of February 18th, 2016, in four categories, losers, winners, incumbents who retained their seats, incumbents who lost and LCV the first time. Altogether, 08 contenders campaigning under the banners of the ruling party (NRM), the Democratic Party (DP), the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) and the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) were cross-examined not in-depth during the campaigning period October 2016- early January 2017 before the election date concerning their lived experiences, what they had thought from fellow candidates and the general observations. Five research assistants were used to follow up the campaign rallies of several candidates (parliamentary and LCV) as one of the sources of data collection. Data collection continued until when there was nothing new coming out of the informal interviews and rallies. Data was analyzed using themes and sub themes.

II. VOTE BUYING

Vote-buying is the comprehensive sense of using money, material inducements or promises of politicized 'goods' such as new districts took place in the presidential, parliamentary and local council elections (Kiiza, 2011). Vote buying is referred to as an offering particularistic benefits in exchange for vote choices (Nichter, 2008). Vote buying is often considered to be a simple transaction in which a candidate hands over money in return for a vote. This has led some observers to wonder how vote buying can be an effective vote-gaining strategy, since the 'buyer' normally cannot know how the voter actually voted (Collier & Vicente, 2012; Vicente, 2014). There is an attempt to view vote buying as a purely economic exchange. A vote is literally "bought" or "sold" depending on whether one adopts the perspective of the candidate or the voter. The act of vote buying by this view is a contract, or perhaps an auction in which the voter accepts to (Schaffer & Schedler, 2007) although it is considered to be illegal (Hasen, 2000). While it's a common practice in many developed and under developed countries, the practice of vote buying is common practice in many Latin American countries (Gonzalez-Ocantos, De Jonge, Meléndez, Osorio, & Nickerson, 2012). In Argentina vote buying is a common practice as a payment by political parties of minor benefits in form of (food, clothing, cash) to citizens in exchange for their votes (Brusco, Nazareno, & Stokes, 2004).

Vote buying and political intimidation are characteristic dimensions of African election campaigns and offering money instead of innovative political ideas to convince individuals to vote for a certain candidate is not unique to Africa (Falguera et al., 2014). According to survey-based estimates, almost one out of five Nigerians is personally exposed to vote buying and almost one in ten experiences electoral threats (Bratton, 2008). While vote-buying is common in many countries in the world, little is known concerning ways on how politicians control who to target. Finan and Schechter (2012) argues that, vote-buying can be persistent by an internalized norm of trade which is commonly happening in Uganda where the electorate are directly demanding for money from the politicians which practice of receiving money prompts feelings of no obligation to the populace. According to Schaffer and Schedler (2007) this vice had died but it has come back in recent decades in style as primarily as a by-product of democratization. Vote buying is a corrupt election practice according to Vicente (2014). Vote buying bribe is a situation that involves a monetary value which practice was banned in United States. Vote buying is a threat to the conduct of fair elections (Dekel, Jackson, & Wolinsky, 2006; Simpson, 2013).

Frederic Charles Schaffer has argued that 'Vote buying and vote selling can be no longer be understood as an economic transaction between those who sell their freedom and those who buy them in the hope of regaining their investments when they get into power. From the standpoint of ordinary people, elections are the times when equality and justice are temporarily achieved as their patrons fulfil their financial obligations to support them in times of need (Schaffer, 2000; Schaffer & Schedler, 2007).

III. INDIRECT PUBLIC FUNDING

Indirect public funding is the provision of state resources other than money to political parties or candidates. The main form is free or subsidized access to public media, but other versions include tax relief for parties or their donors, free access to public buildings for rallies or other party activities, and the provision of space for electoral advertising (Mietzner, 2007; Van Biezen, 2004). It is important to realize, however, that abuse

of resources does not always involve spending money. It can also consist of the state media favorably covering the incumbent party or engaging civil servants in campaign activities while on duty and using state resources (Scarrow, 2007). Candidates often finance their own election campaigns, and correspondingly they also spend their money independently (Falguera et al., 2014). It can also take form of using government cars and fuel to facilitate the candidates' rallies (Katz & Kolodny, 1994; Pierre, Svåsand, & Widfeldt, 2000).

This form of funding has straight benefits such as the use of public resources and money in the operations of the governing party. Second, an indirect gain is connected to a cultured benefactor system (patronage) that invades the political and bureaucratic domain in Uganda. Although the direct and indirect usage of public resources is intertwined, the forces at work play a diverse role (Helle & Rakner, 2013).

According to William (1997) in October 1990, President Yoweri Museveni declared that the use of money during elections was not democratic. Contrary to this declaration, the 1996 presidential and parliamentary elections were characterized by the massive use of money and other material inducements. From winning the election to keeping the seat; politicians have to dig deeper in their pockets. "Everyone doesn't like it but everyone is doing it". Emmanuel LumalaDombo knows how to win an election. He has done it four times in Bunyole East constituency in Butaleja district. But he was worried of 2016 election as it approached, the 52 year old alleged that, he noticed a worrying trend; the influence of money on how elections are won or lost (Nassaka, 2015). Museveni used the parliament to remove presidential term limits in the constitution reportedly paying each parliamentarian up to \$3,000 for their support, though the government said the money was to help parliamentarians consult with their constituents (Barigaba, 2013; Gatsiounis, 2012; King, 2016; Mpagi, 2016; Namayanja, 2014; Oguttu, 2016; Reporter, 2005, 2016).

According to Tusiime (2017) Ninsima Ronah Rita the ambitious Kabale District Woman Member of Parliament who stood on the Independent ticket, appealed to the electoral management in Uganda (EC²) condemning Minister Hope Mwesigye of using government resources. She alleged that, the Minister is in abuse of authority of her office and power. Referring to the parliamentary Elections Act, 2005, the electoral commission Act cap 140 specifies that a candidate involved in such a case is presumed to be ineligible from the race. Mwesigye was suspected of immensely using government resources i.e., two double cabin pickups which was conflicting to electoral commission act cap 25. It was further alleged that in the process the minister plucked off the number plate UG 1986 A belonging to Ministry of Agriculture and replaced it with number plate UAF 012E which belonged to Peter Mugimba, a trader in Kampala.

The after month of 2011 elections prompted the civil society, local experts and opposition politicians to blame government's expenditure before and during the election movements as one of the factors driving inflation at that time (Helle & Rakner, 2013; Søreide & Williams, 2013). This situation prompted a crusade commonly called "walk to work"³.

According to Article 25 in the Parliamentary Elections Act of 2005 it stipulates that aspirants shall not use government or public resources for the aim of crusades for appointment into a public office. However, clause 2 states that, members of the executive and any titleholder of official office can use official facilities generally committed to her or his office as long it is used to simplify 'the implementation of his or her office work' (GoU, 2005b). The implementation is not clear and this leaves substantial scope for the authorized individual to use public resources for campaigning drives. There is a growing number of executive members in the ruling party NRM with a biased nature of political affairs of the state (Helle & Rakner, 2013) it's clear that, the NRM candidates take advantage of utilizing state resources compared to candidates from opposition since 2011 to date. According to (COG, 2011, 2016) there was no separation between official ceremonies of government from crusade assemblies of the ruling party (Athumani, 2010; EUEOM, 2011; Gowda & Sridharan, 2012; Watch, 2006).

Further the Presidential Elections Act of 2005 provides the sitting president with robust resource benefits. The law provides that, 'a contender who benefits from the office of president, can carry on with the use state services during the campaign period' (GoU, 2005b). The president is limited to resources are customarily assigned to his office, given the circumstances at hand this law leaves a lot to be desired since there are no deterring processes in the system. The consequences are serious because the law puts the entire State House resources at the disposal of the president's crusades. The 2010 Presidential Elections (Amendment) Act as

²Electoral commission

³ Walk to work was a protest spear headed by the leader of opposition for Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), the real motivation was the bad economy and high prices of basic necessities, such as food, which in some cases almost doubled in price. Most Ugandans expected some urban demonstrations if the incumbent win (President Yoweri Museveni) perhaps in places like Rukungiri, Gulu, Kasese Masaka, Kampala, Jinja nearby and Soroti in the north, which would inevitably bring some violence and tear gas.

amended reinforces the consequences for disrespecting the law. In day to day operations, office bearers of NRM utilize state resources lawfully during their crusades. According to Athumani (2017) the spokesperson of NRM party accepted as he explained that, “*the entitlements for the President quoting section 27 of the Presidential Elections Act. Ofwono says it's now upon the Public service ministry to table before Parliament the list of presidential entitlements and make them public otherwise the president was operating within the law*”. He further argued that, “*even well-established democracies the ruling party and the sitting president takes advantage of state resources*” hence unfair advantage to the level that numerous electoral monitoring missions commented about the unlevelled ground (COG, 2011; EUEOM, 2011; Helle & Rakner, 2013; Kakaire, 2014; Kalyegira, 2006; Nalugo, 2010; Naturinda, 2010).

There are various avenues that provide an advantage such as;

(a) Substantial budget for the president for ‘presidential endowments’ available for his spending even to individuals although limited for expenditure after three months of the commencement of the campaigns. Museveni as quoted to have pledged USD 1 million for 166 pledges by March in 2010 and Shs 2.4 trillion spent on 2016 election (Kiggundu, 2016; Museveni, 2010). The continued passing of the supplementary budgets.

(b) Lack of accountability since NRM does not hand in examined accounts to the Electoral Commission as prerequisite by law hence challenging to establish the exact source of their bankrolling and how public money is spent throughout the crusade period. Priority is given to the army other than sectors like education, health and agriculture. The concern of the indirect funding benefit re-counts directly on the benefaction linkage (patronage) of the governing party.

(c) All NRM members of parliament contribute a percentage of their income to the party and party well-wishers too fund the party. The party is gratified and in turn uses it to support its flag-bearers commercially during election movements. The more NRM carders occupy public positions, the further assets will remain to their availability for use. The NRM government has enlarged steadily over the past 20 years (ACODE, 2015; Tumushabe., 2009). By 2012 the cabinet counted 76 including the president and vice president.

(d) By 2011 elections Electoral Commission pronounced 18, 629 posts for which a nomination fee were committed to the game, and encompasses Local council three (3) level (DEMGroup, 2011). The amount of positions have amplified expressively over the last decade consequently the increasing number of electoral and managerial districts in the country (Helle, 2011; Helle & Rakner, 2013; Tumushabe., 2009). Therefore, the growth of the state in Uganda conveys an indirect monetarist advantage for NRM as a ruling party although party members have remained defensive (Atuwhera, 2006).

There are many reasons to explain why President Museveni is so strong-minded to grip on to power in Uganda. Although they might be similar to the ones that used to motivate other African leaders pursuing to establish themselves in office. Museveni believes that he is inseparable to Uganda's steadiness and wealth, particularly in a country whose past is explained by distressed of bad leadership during post-independence periods. Additionally, clinging on power in Africa is no more especially after the fall of Mugabe through his own system (Tangri & Mwenda, 2010).

ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

There were quite a number of challenges observed in the past campaigning period (2016) these are not limited to; inadequate resources where some candidates especially in remote East and North eventually resorted to door-to-door campaigning, violence, election material arrived late at many polling stations, vote rigging at all electable positions, lack of funding, allegations of vote buying by candidates was widespread across the country. Many interested party as observers noted that, “*voter bribery had become part of the political culture, and voters had become used to receiving money from candidates after campaign activities*” (IGAD, 2011; Report, 2016; Van Biezen, 2010).

Candidate usually have mobilizing teams and once the candidate is given time to talk to the voters and they do not leave any money for supporters, commonly called ‘*facilitation*’, the populace found it right to often ask ‘*how does he/she come and go back like that?*’. In Central (Kampala) it was reported that, “*followers anticipated to receive money in order to participate in electoral campaigns*”. This same practice was observed in parts of Western Uganda. In the East, the ruling party was alleged to have given out money in millions to each village in the pretext of supporting women to start businesses in their regions. The common terminology commonly used while giving out money to the electorate is referred to as the ‘*Malwa⁴ Scheme*’. Reports of vote buying increased noticeably in the days before election day (IGAD, 2011; Report, 2016).

⁴Local brew taken with hay from the same pot.

The use of money by candidates to bribe voters was widely reported by observers and in the media across the country. Some candidates gave their supporters money after attending their rallies, while some were allegedly handing out cash to individuals in their homes. It was also reported that the president distributed 250 000 Uganda Shillings to each village (Ladu, 2016).

Throughout Amama Mbabazi's crusades in far East, the campaigning team was told by the campaign managers that people were frightened to carry Mbabazi's posters since the incumbent president Museveni had a planned visit in the area so they did not want to elude financial benefit since they will be targeted as opposition (Report, 2016).

In Mbale region, vote buying and voter bribery was a serious emerging issue among stakeholders. In Soroti, for instance, Mr Paul Omar from the FDC accused the First Lady of giving 50,000 shillings to potential voters at the government guesthouse. Meanwhile, NRM Administrative Secretary Mr. Esugu Richard denied all allegations. He said that the money given to party structures was for logistical support to party members who had to undertake different tasks. Other stakeholders informed the team that there were unknown people who had been making rounds in the evening and at night giving people money while campaigning for votes. In the North particularly the Acholi region, there were claims that candidates and military officials were openly distributing money during NRM meetings. The team in Acholi witnessed some NRM candidates promising money to youth, women and elderly groups during campaigns (Report, 2016).

In the Western part of the country particularly in (Kigezi sub-region) all stakeholders also complained about the role of the prime minister, as he was allegedly campaigning for the NRM while using state vehicles. Other ministers were rumored to have been using state-owned vehicles as well. They include mostly ministers utilizing state resources for campaign purposes, amongst them: Gen. Jim Muhwezi in Rukungiri, Gen. Chrit in Kanungu, Hon. Banyenzaki Henry, Bahati in Kabale. All stakeholders in Kigezi complained about the alleged donation of 250,000 Uganda Shillings by the president to each village. In addition, the district level officials in Kigezi such as the Resident District Commissioner were regularly accused of using/abusing state resources to influence people (Report, 2016).

According to the FDC flag bearer in Kabale Municipality who didn't mind name disclosure, Mr James Tugume Magabo said that, the "*prime minister in the company of a local individual were alleged to have left 2,000,000 Uganda Shillings to workers at a company in the area in what was seen as a case of vote buying*". The NRM candidate in the same area was also alleged to have distributed money to groups of people. Additionally, in Kabale other NRM members allegedly used publicly owned facilities and vehicles for their personal campaigning purposes. For example: the prime minister was reported to have used a state helicopter to campaign for Museveni and NRM candidates in the district (Report, 2016). Observers acknowledged that they were informed and witnessed the use of money during elections in Uganda as the report noted and cited that, "*the Mission observed the influence of money on the election process*" (Report, 2016).

The use of money to influence election processes and outcomes is a reality in Uganda. It was evident in the 2001 and 2006 elections, and occurred again in the 2011 and 2016 elections. The NRM is said to have spent a huge sum of money during its campaign, some of it on campaign organisation and the balance on bribery to influence voters (Group, 2011). This definitely gave the ruling party unfair advantage over the opposition parties, which they did not have at their disposal. Voter bribery was common in Lira and Gulu district as well. The 2011 elections were the most expensive polls to have been held in the political history of Uganda. The Commonwealth observer group referred to the NRM campaign as the '*commercialization of politics*' in a country where the ruling party dominates almost all public sectors, making it synonymous with the state (Mwirichia, 2011).

THEMES

COMMERCIALIZATION OF POLITICS

According to Sarah Sali, as cited in Ahimbisibwe, she warned that commercialisation of national politics will edge out good leaders who don't have money from politics. "The ruling party mirrors in other political parties in the country. She, however, advised the electorate to take the money offered by the politicians but deny them votes if they are convinced, they will not serve their interests. Further, Prof Yasin Olum, echoed that, the crisis among the youth across the country and within political parties arises from failure to mainstream youth issues. "There parallel messages from the youth wings and the mother parties. They are "frustrated and tired of being used by politicians to achieve their own political and material interest," (Ahimbisibwe, 2014). Interviewees commented on the use of money in politics as follows;

A good, competent, energetic politician who is trusted by the people won't have any problem raising funds to run a successful campaign against an empty headed stooge running around aimlessly with printed cash. This is a fact that can't be ignored. The problem we have in Uganda politics is lack of a politically mature electorate, poverty, and elections organized on a corrupt foundation, sponsored by the western world that is eager to keep a dictator in power for their own interests.

The use of money in politicking has not just started with Museveni. Show me a poor man that won elections in 1962, 1980, or even in a country outside Uganda without passing as a surprise. I don't encourage voter bribery and for sure we need laws to guide fundraising for political activities but I am also sure, politics is never a game of the poor except for voters.

"Politics is a game for both the rich and poor (voters). What do you vote for? How could one vote for a candidate without hearing what he stands for? And what is the electioneering process, not politics? We can do better.

What we seem not to understand are some fundamentals of elective politics. Politics and money in any democracy in the world are bed fellows. What we need in Uganda is legislation to guide the collection and use of campaign funds. Otherwise it is unreasonable to think that those seeking elective offices should not finance their campaigns. How do you do it?

Stopping the use of money in politics is a little bit late. I have seen with my own eyes poor competent fellows who have already been edged out by rich incompetents, some of who cannot adequately explain how they got their wealth in such a short space of time, who then go to cause embarrassment in the National Assembly. Didn't Jacob Oulanyah (deputy speaker of parliament) himself raise a complaint about the quality of debate in the house?! If you are to ask me though, I think the electorate themselves, particularly the younger ones, are to blame for allowing themselves to be mesmerized by "bling-bling's" instead of voting competent fellows who will articulate matters properly in Parliament.

The period of using money in politics to keep in leadership will for sure come to an end. It started with Museveni's NRM, grew up with Museveni's Government and the vice has spread the whole Country because of Museveni using free Money from Government meaning in future after Museveni there will be no reasonable leader to use money in politics.

World over in big and powerful economies help make fundraising, solicit for money from powerful corporates, beg for donations, members contribute, tell me where in the world, political parties win election without using money! Even FDC and DP use EU's donations.

Both the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party (1986 – to-date) and the leading opposition party, that is, Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) were involved in the use of money during campaigns.

IV. PRESIDENT'S SPENDING

In Uganda, party leadership funding is commonly done by the ruling party but this is not necessarily seen as unfortunate by the electorate. According to NRM interviews the most commonly approved form of funding (21 per cent, placing it ahead of membership dues at 15 per cent). This view may be linked to an emotion that politicians who are interested in political gains sometimes use their own money to achieve their goals. Since NRM politics is majorly funded by party leaders, the predictions for internal party democracy are likely to be inadequate and restricted (Ssenkumba, 2005).

There are many attempts to raise money for elected positions within the ruling party. Among them, they are deducting money from the salaries of elected officials who belong to a party and in effect, a form of indirect public funding since the salaries of elected officials are paid from the state budget. Democratic Politics in any country needs money to oil its wheels. Winning elections and securing power means paying for campaigns and ensuring wide networks of political patronage (Falguera et al., 2014).

The president is spending freely on government patronage in a campaign to extend his three decades in office while teachers go unpaid and hospitals run out of drugs. In January 26th 2016 at an election rally, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni awarded city status to the town of Mbarara a minor distinction on the face of it, but one that promises more public sector jobs for local voters and hence increase in public expenditure. Analysts say this presidential vote follows a trend since each election season, Museveni creates new local government districts, each with upwards of 100 new jobs (Biryabarema, 2016). Interviewees' further alleged that;

His former longtime allies Mbabazi and Dr.Kizza Besigye but current political rivals claimed that president Museveni's a former rebel-turned- into a statesman so he treats the treasury as his personal fiefdom in a nation that remains among the poorest in Africa (Biryabarema, 2016). It is believed by political rivals that Museveni "simply believes that anyone has a price, and he is purchasing people as if they are some stuff in the market"

According to government aides that were interviewed, they claimed that, the idea that Museveni's party was using taxpayers' money on the campaign was "purely speculative". The respondent further said that, a costly bureaucracy was the "the price of democracy".

Opponents claim that "his entire governance is based on a system of patronage," the renowned layers in town who requested not to be disclosed echoed that, "the line is so blurred that you often can't tell which is

the state and which is the ruling party. Museveni is the state and the state is Museveni in Uganda just like it was in Zimbabwe."

Further they added that, the scale of election spending is hard to establish. Museveni's party, the National Resistance Movement, does not release financial reports. "The State House covers the president's campaign travel and accommodation costs, but does not say how much it spends" hence lack of accountability.

A 53-year-old interviewee, who did not want to be disclosed claimed that, "for 30 years, it has been the same face, the same system, the economy in the hands of a few people". "Museveni has the state machinery buying mechanism during the election."

FAIRNESS FROM THE PRESIDENT

The use of money to influence election processes and outcomes is a reality in Uganda. It was evident in the 2001 and 2006 elections, and occurred again in the 2011 and 2016 elections. The NRM is said to have spent a huge sum of money during its campaign, some of it on campaign organization and the balance on bribery to influence voters.

National Resistance Movement (NRM) has a huge level of funding and overwhelming advantage of incumbency, once again, challenged the notion of a level playing field in the entire process. Indeed, the 'money factor' and widespread allegations of bribery, and other more subtle forms of buying allegiance were key features of the political campaign by some, if not all, the parties.

"The February 2011 Ugandan Presidential elections were characterized as nothing more than an attempt to satisfy the international community who believe that holding elections are proof of democracy. Money always Matters see Financing Illiberal Democracy in Uganda By (Kiiza, 2011).



Picture of President of Uganda asking for his sincerity when he says he is not happy with money in Uganda elections. Source: <http://billkiwanuka.blogspot.ug/2014/12/is-president-museveni-sincere-when-he.html>

ELECTION OBSERVER MISSION

After the 2011 election, the European Union's observer mission commented on the, "distribution of money and gifts by candidates, especially from the ruling party was inconsistent with democratic principles"(observers, 2011).

There is no legal limit on campaign expenditure and the law is limited on the issue of declarations on campaign financing and expenditure (GoU, 2005a) facilitating the excessive use of money during the campaign. "Presidential candidates are to disclose accounts after the elections, but it is not clear how rigorous this process is, noticeably in light of the cash-based nature of the campaign". Even parliamentary candidates have no such disclosure requirement. Interviewees' commented as follows;

Observers describe a variety of problems, ranging from blatant vote buying and distribution of "vast amounts" of money and gifts, to "other more subtle forms of buying allegiance" (Mission, 2011).

Although concrete examples of these practices are relatively limited, the observers' reports offer a few details concerning the suspicions and accusations that were widely circulating about the role of money in the elections (Conroy-Krutz, 2011).

In January 2011, just half way through the fiscal year, parliament approved a Supplementary Budget of 602 billion Ugandan Shillings (USh) (approximately US\$260 million), of which 85 billion shillings (US\$37 million) was assigned to the presidency (Conroy-Krutz, 2011; Conroy-Krutz & Logan, 2012; Mission, 2011). There were widespread suspicions that these funds were allocated largely for campaign purposes.

“the pervasive use of money to decide elections has become an entrenched norm in Uganda” (DEMGGroup, 2011). Further this view was by no means limited to the community of election observers. Ugandan Journalists also alleged that they experienced money being used during elections so, “Clever campaign strategies notwithstanding, Museveni won mostly because he threw overwhelming state resources into his campaign” (Angelo Izama, 2011).

The main concerns regarding the campaign, and indeed regarding the overall character of the election, were the lack of a level playing field, the use of money and abuse of incumbency in the process.

The NRM, the ruling party in Uganda, is by far the largest and best-resourced and, after many years in power, elements of the state structure are synonymous with the party. Reports of “commercialisation of politics” through the distribution of vast amounts of money and gifts were most disturbing. Numerous allegations were made that, during campaigns, many candidates distributed cash and other direct benefits to voters (such as refreshments and food, cooking oil, salt, sugar, soap and blankets).

According to a study by DEMGroup (2011), the “use of money in elections has become a culture in Uganda and voters have become accustomed to receiving bribes for their votes. However, section 64 of the Presidential Elections Act and section 68 of the Parliamentary Elections Act prohibit a candidate from giving or providing any money, gift or any other consideration to a voter. Violation constitutes the offence of bribery and the accused on conviction is liable to a fine not exceeding seventy two currency points (1,440,000 Uganda Shillings - UGX) or imprisonment not exceeding three years or both” (Ladu, 2016).

The report, on Money in Politics, shows pervasive vote buying but warns of skewed outcomes that do not reflect the will of society. Further it stresses that the use of money has “become a culture with voters becoming accustomed to receiving bribes in exchange for votes” (DEMGGroup, 2011; Speck & Olabe, 2013).

POLITICS AND THE ECONOMY

Uganda is one of those countries relying on foreign financial assistance which in the long run significantly affects the flow of money into and out of politics. Increased dependency on foreign aid can raise the stakes of electoral competition, as politicians compete for access to aid money. Uganda and many African economies remain relatively dependent on cash transactions. This dependence destructively affects the economy as a whole and makes it more problematic to monitor the role of money in politics (IMF, 2005).

More guidance is provided by the EAC East African Community (SADC), which has stated that electoral management bodies (EMBs) should be ‘legally authorized to exclude certain types of expenses so as to limit the unwarranted impact of money on the democratic process and the outcome of an election’ (Community, 2012).

The youth MP argued that, “people should only spend the bare minimum and not the huge sums of money that have become a true characterisation of Uganda’s elections leaving people in debts”. He added that, “huge sums of money spent during election are not only despondent but have created voter apathy and are a danger to the economy”. The money, which in most cases is unaccounted for, has spill over economic effects which creates problems for the economy because it is “consumptive rather productive”.

Museveni has tended to reward his most loyal ministers and govern with political and local factions that do not challenge his hold on power. For instance, Health Minister Jim Muhwezi, who was censured by parliament in 1998 for corruption, is currently under investigation for channeling international anti-AIDS grant money into his own parliamentary campaign (Grainger, 2007; Manyanga, 2006; Mugabe, 2013; Ntegyereize, 2007; Odongtho, 2006; Oluka, 2011; Project, 2016; V. Reporter, 2006; Rumanzi, 2015; Wesaka, 2012).

According to Britain’s Secretary for International Development Hillary Benn’s announcement that, “\$26 million in direct assistance to Uganda will be diverted instead to relief projects, especially in the north”. She cited Besigye’s arrest and the use of state money to support Museveni’s ruling National Resistance Movement as the main reasons for the shift (Crane, 2006a; Eichstaedt, 2005).

Unlike much of the European aid, however, U.S. aid funds to Uganda have never taken the form of direct budgetary assistance, and have traditionally been channeled into specific humanitarian programs.

Officials at the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) consider Uganda a close partner to, and supporter of, initiatives like the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the Presidential Malaria Initiative, and the Millennium Challenge Account for development funds. Further they argued that, "*funds for these programs, which in 2005 totaled nearly \$200 million, are often de-linked from politics to ensure civilians receive the help they need*". The United States therefore faces a real dilemma, Lyman says, "*between taking money away from humanitarian programs and making a statement on Washington's commitment to democracy*". "*We don't have the kind of leverage people assume,*" (Crane, 2006b).

Another interviewee added that, "*the source of huge sums of money, which he says could be diversions from productive projects to aid short term political gains. The impact is usually immense and to the veteran politician, the repeat of the 2011 mess could come back to haunt the country not forgetting that after the 2011 electoral period, inflation rose to more than 30 per cent with allegations that Bank of Uganda had issued promissory notes to fund election activities of the ruling NRM party*". While Bank of Uganda was quick to dismiss allegations the question still remains, "where do these people get the money from" (Ladu, 2016).

Money talks louder than American rappers, it can be the best tool to defeat an opponent if it is used wisely. Money brings a certain momentum that shake human being in a three-dimension shape. Please Museveni ask the tax payers first before misusing their money. Ugandans should remember that for 30 years Museveni has been president and he has done very little for the country but stolen so much out of the country, we should not extent his looting habit. Please take the money but don't vote for him.

Shame and the guy he is glittering showing the whole entire country that he is happy. Oh God what is this happening to our banana republic

I weep for my country! It is like being raped in a public square with everyone watching yet no one comes to your aid, no one says anything, the rape continues!

The onlookers would be clapping and chanting: "Jjayonteekeyo" literally meaning that "money for the ballot"!

We all weep and have been weeping and no help to come from anywhere to help this country

As far as we are concerned enforcement of rules is a must! And the Central Bank doesn't finance any election...says Mr. Kasekende!Well... put it this way.... and it is common knowledge amongst many Ugandans that a lot of the money released by the Central Bank over the years to Central government has ended up being diverted to such things as election campaigns, ignoring or shelving those very things for which the money was meant for! On many occasions teachers, health workers, security officers, have been paid in arrears, after months without pay or half of what they are entitled to! On many occasions the MOF would request Parliament for more billions of shillings through unjustified supplementary budgets! It doesn't mean anything to the Public...to enforce rules in the Central Bank, when the money ends up being wasted, misused, diverted any way, then and then the Central government comes back to you for more! What was the main intention behind those enforcement rules, if the Central government gets money from the Central Bank for security of Wanainchi through for example the Ministry of Internal Affairs, then that same money ends up in bags for Kamusoga, the youth chair person?If there is no way the Central Bank can confirm that these monies have been put to the purpose for which they were meant, then spare us that BS about enforcement rules because they serve no purpose!



Picture showing President Museveni (L) hands over Shs250 million to Busoga youth Chairperson SanonBwire recently. Source: <http://www.monitor.co.ug/Business/Prosper/Election-handouts-scourge-economy/688616-2949400-tt2nmtz/index.html>

V. OBSERVATIONS

There are many campaign tactics used by the ruling NRM regime and particularly the President to strive for and amalgamate political support. These include use of money, processes and systems: while government tries to explain its achievements by outlining government works, however substandard and damaged by corruption (roads, electricity, health centres, UPE, USE, student loans etc); Presidential donations from public resources; jobs given or promised especially for those who have fallen out of the NRM primaries; presidential pledges; paying debts/loans for NRM politicians or even opposition politicians and buying off opponents (Barya, 2015).

Many politicians seem to have learnt from the President and are also using money to win support as the saying goes, “*a fish stinks from the head down*”⁵(Corruption starts at the top)(Martin, 2017). “Politicians are forced to use distressed approaches of raising capital since Uganda’s elections have been custom-made and commercialized. They loan their property; involve in heavyweight borrowing; pursue backing or straight money donations from the President to help finance their elections” (Barya, 2015).

However, money is not the only technique used to sway or influence elections. “It is simply one of the means. The other two significant tools used in the elections are publicity/media and the military,” The President and his allies especially those that have been in parliament for long (MP) use the military; the police and intelligence services to frighten the opposition and the populace. “This aggressive tactic includes using militias and what is commonly called “Crime Preventers”. This has been so since 1996 when President Museveni offered himself for election the very first time. Former local government minister BidandiSsalai said, “*Olinakyewekoledde*”literally meaning have you done something for your self-vote Museveni? Make a reflection from 2001 elections several unconstitutional para-military groups were created (militias) such as; Kalangala Action Plan (KAP), Popular Intelligence Network (PIN) known as Nyekundiire in Western Uganda, Arrow Boys, Amuka Group, and Labecca group in Gulu(Barya, 2015).

Several laws have been passed during Museveni’s hegemony with the intention to reverse the democratic process. These include the Kampala Capital City Authority (Amendment) Act 2015 focused in contradiction of the Lord Mayor EriasLukwago individually by putting a condition that for elections of the Kampala Lord Mayor to be made by Councilors rather than by universal suffrage system. The Public Finance Management (Amendment) Bill No. 25 of 2015 passed on 11th November 2015 eliminates the powers of Parliament to regulate spending of Public resources and as an alternative “allows the President and the Executive to raid the Treasury unrestricted”. Commenting on Public Finance Management (Amendment) Bill No. 25 of 2015, this infringes on the democratic rights of Ugandans to meet and mobilize themselves for support to take over power (Barya, 2015).

Money plays a critical role in elections, both lawfully and unlawfully. While Museveni has not strengthened institutions, they have remained weak and unable to meet the changing demands of the populace. There is general lack of establishments and organized political forces that work for general interests of the public. There is need for a refurbishment of the complete arrangement in direction to deal with matters of voter buying off, terrorization, rigging, un-biased Electoral Commission and all the complications related with Uganda’s electoral processes (Barya, 2015).

There is a predisposition to over exaggerate the role of money in politics but it has some appropriate uses,” were all parties everywhere in the world organize resources for elections/political purposes (de Torrenté, 2013). “Politics in Uganda, especially at the higher end of the political system, has in recent years become increasingly the preserve of a small self-selecting elite, those who can raise the vast amounts of money needed to conduct successful campaigns for election to public office” (Golooba-Mutebi, 2016).

Money does not automatically transform into political backing. For example, of the current Member of Parliament of Butebo County, Dr Patrick Mutoni, who in the 2001 general elections made massive investment, especially in the health sector but did not win. While money matters in all polities in America and Europe as well as Asia and Africa, political financing risks blocking people’s struggles for increased democratic space (Kiiza, 2011; Pinto-Duschinsky, 2002).

On the other the opposition politicians would desire to use money if only they had it but many donors fear to found them since they don’t want to be seen supporting and associating with them. According to Golooba, “the reason for the NRM’s greater access to donations is that many potential donors to the opposition fear to be seen to associate with, let alone donate money to, opposition parties” (Golooba-Mutebi, 2016; Kobusingye, 2010; Nogara, 2009).

⁵ It refers to failing organizations and how the blame of it should be on its ‘head’ that is its leadership.

Politicians seek to retain their position and remain in influential positions and that is why they are forced to request for bail outs from the president and further they too pursue office or seek to safeguard their positions as members of parliament or even as local leaders through the use of money and gifts (Golooba-Mutebi, 2016) as a result, they too spend vast amounts of money on election campaigns.

On the other hand, voters keep asking for money when contestants go to them seeking for votes. This means that a vote has a price since voters are unpredictable. The campaigning managers on ground too ask for facilitation in terms of drinks in order to mobilize voters for the candidate to address. They always ask for “facilitation” and for money to give to voters (de Torrenté, 2013; Golooba-Mutebi, 2016).

The use of money in elections has become a culture in Uganda. Voters have become accustomed to receiving bribes for their votes. Voters seek to extract resources from candidates because they feel that it is the only way they can gain from their vote. In most cases, when politicians get to the office they never return to the voters or deliver the required social services during their term of office. This is not particularly surprising since a large number of the electorate are poor and vulnerable a monetary gift can have an outsized impact. Besides money, other items used to bribe voters include gifts like foodstuffs, traditional wares i.e., (Gomesi), drinks, salt, soap, mattresses, plates and cooking pans.

VI. CONCLUSION

Few observers and stake holders of African politics would deny that money plays a role in its political dynamics. In fact, how political parties and candidates raise and spend money can have a more significant impact on the fairness of an electoral process than anything that happens on Election Day. Unfortunately, many domestic and international election observers fail to take this crucial truth into account. Much more must be understood about how election campaigns are funded in Uganda, and how these resources are spent.

The political arena and access into politics for interested parties in Uganda has turned out to be a class enterprise, to such an extent that those who are lucky are the well-off families, individuals and networks with the ability to mobilize resources by any measure either acquiring loans, sell of personal property and call for friends and family fundraising meetings. This was not the situation in the first two decades of president Museveni’s rule 1986-2005 when Uganda was under a one-party system until 2005 when multi-party dispensation was inaugurated. Prior to National resistance movement, well-wishers, sympathizers, supporters and devotees used to mobilize resources, had solidarity and some would buy things kind and donate to the parties for their smooth running and fund crusades for their candidates. Philosophy for party was given priority by the candidates.

Nevertheless multi-party dispensation brought the ideology of individual merit and for a period close to twenty years of Museveni’s rule political parties were operating under cover hence crippling party activities including funding since individuals feared to be named protestors of the movement system (Omugendo). The frustration of party activities welcomed a new wave of using money to canvas for votes and the twist to multiparty politics by 2005 was incapable to reverse monetary politics that had spread like a cancer in the country. The ruling party has not built strong structures in its party in spite of the long existence hence the decision to allow political parties to operate by 2005 under multiparty democracy has not helped since crusades twisted from ideology to “single value” of the person standing for the position hence personal funding.

For the time being several current and prospectus electorates stay trapped in the “single value”, approach requesting and expecting nominees to give them “money or material benefit” as a way to buy their vote. While the vice is rampant in rural areas evidence shows that urban towns, peri and semi-peri towns have not been spared in form of facilitation.

While laws are in place, they are not deliberately being used since the ruling party is a culprit of the same vice hence the existing state of affairs remains. While many elites who claim for new laws to be put in place, their effective implementation remains uncertain. There is need for government commitment to end the vice otherwise elections cease to be meaningful if representatives are not accountable to the electorates.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

A Campaign Finance Bill should be drafted and presented to the 10th Parliament of Uganda for enactment into legislation that will regulate the use of money during elections. There is need to “regulate the amount of money that may be spent by or on behalf of a candidate or party in respect of any election”. A similar bill for Kenya was not passed and the electoral process took place without any campaign finance regulations in place (Commission, 2013). The Ugandan legal framework lacks provisions for regulating spending during campaigning, including requirements for ceilings on spending and disclosure of funding sources. There is need for an amendment of the legal framework governing elections in order to enhance the fairness and the transparency of election campaign financing.

To management members of the electoral commission are selected and employed by the president using his preference without the input of political parties yet Uganda embraced multiparty politics in 2005. The chosen members can serve for a maximum of 14 years, which is soundly too a long period. Given the political history of deep-rooted incumbency, such a method of selection nurtures anxieties, due to over bearing incumbent's influence. Since the situation is such that the one appointing the commission members is a competitor, combined with over stay in power, this created suspicion of the commissioners and their capability to remain unbiased. There is need for a revision of nomination mechanisms for the Electoral Commission members to involve a broader discussion and safeguard representation of different stakeholders before the appointments take effect. In addition, deliberations should focus on term limits for election commissioners by reducing the period of each term and/or the number of terms that a person may serve as an election commissioner (Austin & Tjernstrom, 2003).

Significant electoral functions such as demarcation of constituencies and registration of voters should be controlled by the electoral commission to avoid diluting the commission's control over a process for which it is accountable. The law should restrict overall management and key electoral processes.

The normal judicial functions is not good enough hence need for the establishment of a specific mechanism such as an electoral court or tribunal in order to facilitate the expeditious management of electoral cases.

The challenge of the deep-rooted incumbency and abuse of state resources during elections needs to be addressed.

Removal of the powers of the police to approve or disapprove the conduct of a political campaign. Additionally, the powers to control campaign schedule should be conferred in the EC, which should accomplish the schedule to ensure that there is no clash of venues or times between parties but that is off course an Independent electoral commission.

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