



Research Paper

Elections Without Democracy: A Case Study of Uganda.

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ABSTRACT

Informed by the central claim of the democratization by elections theory that elections [even flawed ones] under an authoritarian regime can eventually bring about democracy by raising the costs of repression and lowering the costs of toleration, this paper explores the case of Uganda to examine the conditions which have deterred democratisation and instead facilitated authoritarianism persistence regardless of the regular multi-party elections. Adopting four theoretical proposals from eight propositions developed as the papers analytical approach from Andreas Schedler's electoral authoritarianism framework and Staffan Lindberg's democratisation by elections theory, the paper argues that electoral democratisation has failed to occur in Uganda due to the immense presidential powers; patronage distribution and clientelism networks; weak and antagonised opposition parties coalitions; and the regime strength hinged on the presence of natural resources, the security role the regime, and alliance with international actors whose interests are less concerned with democratisation. In this way, these arguments have implications in the growing literature questioning the democratisation power of regular multi-party elections under electoral authoritarian regimes that seem to be increasingly normal political conditions of most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, conclusive results situate Uganda's empirical case in the larger conversation on electoral authoritarianism and electoral democratisation.

KEYWORDS: Uganda; democratisation; elections; authoritarianism.

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I. INTRODUCTION.

As governments around the world swing between the realities and ideals of democracy, hybrid regimes have gradually increased ([cf] Miller 2012, 154; Schedler 2002, 36; Gandhi and Lust Okar 2009, 404; Levitsky and Way 2010). Upon this, Staffan Lindberg's democratisation by elections theory has featured as a sounding explanation for how elections [even flawed ones] under these regimes can advance the democratisation process (Lindberg, 2006, 2009a, 2009b). Research revolving around this theory has been carried out around the world especially in regions where authoritarian regimes have been thought to exist for instance in Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, North Africa, South East Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa ([cf] Morgenbesser and Pepinsky 2019, 4; Donno 2013). At these regional levels, literature has increasingly indicated that there is a causal relationship between regular elections under these authoritarian regimes and the democratisation process ([cf] Brownlee 2012; Donno 2013; Lindberg 2006, 2009a).

Despite these findings, single cases at the national level contradicting this theoretical proposition especially in South East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa are drastically increasing ([cf] Repucci 2020, 26; Morse 2012, 161-162; Morgenbesser 2017). After observing the failure of these transitional models, Thomas Carothers argued that there is a need for a paradigmatic shift in the whole theoretical and empirical focus of research in the transitional field ([cf] Carothers 2002). Carothers contended that the transition paradigm had out-leaved its usefulness period as many country cases no-longer conformed to the models' propositions ([cf] Carothers 2002, 6).

Upon this backdrop, this paper presents the case of Uganda with which various studies have concluded that the country suits well into the picture of an Electoral Authoritarian Regime (EAR) ([cf] Freedom House Annual Reports 2019, 2020). Despite continued regular multi-party elections in the country, Uganda continues to fall into authoritarianism rather than democratising ([cf] Helle and Rakner 2012, 1; Omara-Otunnu 1992, 449-451; Wilkins 2021; Tripp 2004; Adejumbi 2000, 66).

Literature on EARs has pondered with two major questions. One, why these regimes are increasingly

becoming the ‘normal’ of contemporary regimes? Second, why these regimes still organise elections besides increasing evidence that these elections do not necessarily accelerate democratisation processes ([cf] Wahman *et al* 2013, 26; Schedler 2002, 36; Gandhi and Lust Okar 2009, 404; Levitsky and Way 2010). The answer to the first question has been an increasing research interest enquiring about hybrid regimes. In the second case, the common answer is that elections are organized for the sake of international regime legitimacy and post-election policy intervention concerns ([cf] Miller 2015; Levitsky and Way, 2010; Schedler, 2002). However, Miller has also noted that many of these regimes organise these elections even when they are facing international pressures ([cf] Miller, 2012), hence leaving room for more other explanations about this question.

Also, other scholars have developed and analysed the various typologies of hybrid regimes ([cf] Levitsky and Way 2002, Schedler 2006). Outstandingly and most central to this paper is Andreas Schedler (2002, 2006) works. Schedler has developed the label ‘Electoral Authoritarianism’ to account for regimes where multi-party elections are used to instead legitimise authoritarianism than advancing democratisation. Therefore, with the increasing theoretical studies stressing the democratisation powers of even flawed elections under these authoritarian regimes [especially in Africa] ([cf] Lindberg 2006, 2009a), and the recognized transition failure within the same region, this study uses the empirical case of Uganda to examine the conditions as to why the country’s EAR has succeeded in deterring the democratisation by election forces envisioned in regular multi-party elections.

This study contributes to our understanding of the contemporary EARs and how these regimes have managed to survive the democratisation forces coming along with regular multiparty elections. Second, as most Sub-Saharan African countries increasing express electoral authoritarianism political conditions as plausibly the normal conditions of the contemporary regimes in the region ([cf] Carothers 2002, 18), this study contributes to the literature highlighting the current political, social, and economic conditions of the EAR regimes within Sub-Saharan Africa [using a case of Uganda] in the larger conversation of the democratisation by elections theory. Further, results contribute to the empirical evidence underscoring the fundamental conditions of any EAR, hence taking forward literature on hybrid regimes and the transition paradigm.

Methodologically, the study is qualitative and employs single case study techniques. Although there is no agreement on a single definition of a case study, Yin (2009, 14) defines a case study as “an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident.” McNabb adds the concept of being an “intensive enquiry” while studying the chosen case (McNabb 2010, 237). Therefore, the study chose a single case study approach for its plausibility of offering the researcher an opportunity to review and understand in-depth the selected theoretical proposals under Uganda’s EAR.

Although case study data is usually gathered through direct interviews, simple observations, and the analysis of internal and external documents ([cf] McNabb 2010, 241-242; Maxwell 2005, 94), this study bases on documents and archival data analysis as the primary methods of data collection. The study uses official public documents from the government’s websites, published books, internal and external reports, journal articles, briefs, news articles, and papers relevant to the study question. Content analysis is used to study these sources ([cf] McNabb 2010, 242), allowing the empirical case description and explanation to strictly follow the structured theoretical analytical propositions developed in the theoretical section ([cf] Yin 1994, 103-104).

Following this introductory section, the rest of the paper is structured into four main chapters. Chapter two begins with a precise contextualisation of the study. Defining and characterising authoritarian regimes. Distinguishing democratic regimes from EAR, and a more concrete theoretical sub-section which starts with an overview of the democratisation by elections theory and then followed by the papers’ central analytical framework. The third chapter operationalises the empirical case study. A brief overview of Uganda’s political regimes from 1962 to the present is offered. Four theoretical propositions are selected from the main analytical framework developed to examine the strategies employed by the country’s current EAR in carving democratisation efforts postulated through regular multi-party elections. The last chapter concludes the study by summarizing key arguments on the findings established in the empirical case analysis section and throughout the paper. Emphasis is directed to the conditions which have aided persistent electoral autocracy in Uganda. A concluding statement is offered to situate the whole study within the larger theoretical conversation on EARs and the democratisation by election paradigm.

II. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL APPROACH.

2.1. Authoritarian Regimes.

Previously, authoritarian regimes have been looked at as a single regime with their democratic counterparts. However, authoritarian regimes are not a homogeneous group, but rather comprise of different regimes with different sets of structures and institutions ([cf] Wahman *et al* 2013, 20). Based on political power access and maintenance, different authoritarian regimes have been categorised as, Monarchies, Military Regimes and Electoral Regimes. In the larger lenses, two regimes have been always distinguished as either being competitive or hegemonic authoritarian regimes. Under the former, the regime tends to dilute the capacity of opposition parties, intentionally contravene civil liberties, and regularly abuse state resources to create an uneven playing field, and in the later, they lawfully counter opposition parties if there is any, violate basic civil liberties through the use of open repression, and monopolize access to resources, media, and the law ([cf] Levitsky and Way 2010, 53-55; Donno 2013, 704).

2.2. Democratic Regimes and Electoral Authoritarian Regimes.

Daniel Donno (2013) has argued that drawing a clear line between democratic and EAR is not an easy job. This implies moving beyond minimal definitions of democracy to a plausibly more complex understanding of the various aspects of democracy including but not limited to elections which most democratic studies tend to over concentrate ([cf] Donno 2013, 704). Meanwhile, theoretical and empirical features have been put-forward to distinguish democratic and EARs, nonetheless, conclusions remain a matter of debate ([cf] Wahman *et al* 2013, 22). Andreas Schedler has it that, “democratic norms are not perfectly realised anywhere, even in [the so-called] advanced democracies” (Schedler 2002, 38). Therefore, “the exact boundary between electoral democracy and electoral authoritarianism depends on the direction of the scholar’s bias” (Morse 2012, 168).

Besides, free and fair elections, the right to vote by all adults, political rights and civil liberties, including freedom of the press, freedom of association, and freedom to criticize the government without reprisal, and possession of real authority by the elected authorities; remain as the main normative criteria upon which a line between modern democratic regimes and authoritarian regime can be drawn ([cf] Freedom House Annual Reports 2019, 2020; Levitsky and Way 2002, 53).

2.3. Electoral Authoritarian Regimes (EAR).

As authoritarian regimes are not a homogenous group, EARs have also been categorised into; Multi-party regimes [under which competition with opposition parties in an election is allowed], No-party regimes [which prohibit all other parties from taking part in an election competition], and the One-party [which only allows the ruling party to take part in an election with individual candidates standing on personal ‘merit’ and not any party ideology or affiliation ([cf] Wahman *et al* 2013, 20-27). Nonetheless, EARs have been argued to adopt many of the formal institutions and elements of democracy ([cf] Miller 2012, 153) though in actual practise, they manipulate these institutions and structures in favour of the regime ([cf] Miller 2015, 693; Levitsky and Way, 2010).

2.4. Overview of the democratisation by elections theory.

Democratisation by elections theory argues that elections can cause gradual shifts of an authoritarian regime into a democracy. Here, elections are said to have inherent capabilities that can undermine an authoritarian regime hence forcing it into transition overtime ([cf] Lindberg 2006; 2009; Hadenius and Teorell 2007, 100). It has also been argued that this line of argumentation derives from Robert Dahl’s 1971 classical work which postulates that the lower the costs of toleration, the greater the security of the incumbents’ regime; the higher the costs of repression, the greater the security of its opponents ([cf] Dahl 1971, 15). So, Lindberg argues, with time, regular elections, even flawed or manipulated ones, increases the costs of authoritarian rule, hence creating room for eventual democratisation ([cf] Lindberg 2009, 86). However, various empirical studies contradicting this postulation as highlighted in the introduction section of this paper, are increasingly indicating that the very same elections are instead aiding authoritarian regimes overstay ([cf] Gandhi and Lust-Oker 2015, 412; 2009, 417; Miller, 2015).

2.5. Theoretical debate on the survival of an Electoral Authoritarian Regime.

While surveying the complex and controversial frontier between electoral democracy and electoral authoritarianism, Andreas Schedler developed a preliminary list, portraying several tactics and strategies employed by any authoritarian regime to cut the democratisation process assumed out of regular elections ([cf] Schedler 2002, 41-42). On the other hand, as he developed his democratisation by election theory, Lindberg analysed the various electoral-control measures that any authoritarian ruler is likely to adopt to deter the democratisation process envisaged in regular multiparty elections ([cf] Lindberg 2009b). Therefore, the following sub-sections combines Schedler’s (2002) authoritarian framework with Lindberg’s (2006, 2009a,

2009b) democratisation by elections' theoretical propositions to form eight theoretical conditions under which EARs are said to manoeuvre in the face of regular multi-party elections.

2.5.1. Uncontrolled presidential powers and the lion share.

Uncontrolled presidential powers and the resultant control of the socio-economic and political opportunities shadow democratisation efforts under an EAR leading to persistent autocracy. In scenarios where the president directly or indirectly controls the economic resources [in essence the economy], international aid contracts, local development projects and investments opportunities, democratisation transition even blurs more. These opportunities and deals are usually offered as rewards to the regime loyalists and used to buy-off strong opposition members, hence weakening and diverting opposition efforts away from democratisation efforts ([cf] Lindberg 2009, 331; Gandhi and Lust Okar, 2009, 405). Consequently, resources end up distributed in the hands of a few regime elites surrounding the all-powerful president, creating socio-economic inequalities. Socio-economic inequalities serve as an added advantage to the regime for controlling the elites both within and on the opposition side. Hence the consequence is "corrupt political entrepreneurs" in the words of Andreas Schedler whose clients are the poor voters who do not mind about the power and choice of their vote, but only care about survival under the regime ([cf] Schedler 2002, 44).

2.5.2. Absence or weak opposition parties' coalitions.

Opposition unity, coalitions, or cohesion is vital in electoral democratisation ([cf] Morse 2012, 176). The nature, conduct, institution and structural organisation, and the general behaviour of the opposition side [parties in particular] speak volume to the continuation of an EAR or its transition ([cf] Donno 2013, 705-706). Strong opposition parties have been argued to be central collective points of action against any EAR deterring democratisation, hence where they are weak or absent, electoral autocracy becomes inevitable ([cf] Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009, 409).

According to Schedler (2002), most transitional regimes lack consolidated opposition party systems, giving the incumbents' authoritarian regime an advantage of splitting and marginalising the opposition even more. Here, incumbents can either accomplish this through attempted or actual murder of opposition critics, ban the opposition parties, tight evaluation of their [opposition] leaders in events leading to an election, or even disqualify key opposition candidates from taking part in an election through the state-controlled electoral commission. Therefore, EARs can manipulate the legal instruments to permit them grounds for excluding the opposition-side from participating in electoral competition, giving themselves a free ticket and rider to a massive election "win" that ensure their persistence ([cf] Schedler 2002, 42-43).

Electoral Authoritarian rulers also tend to cause fragmentation within opposition parties through harassing and bribing their leaders especially in case of new parties to cause defection of the ring-leaders ([cf] Lindberg 2009, 331). More so, such strategies intended to lower opposition within the population, are an absolute factor that drastically decreases the cost of oppression since the potential for mass protest mobilization would be lowered as there are a few members on the opposition side within the larger country population. Thus, in case of any protested election results, protesters will easily be neutralized or crushed out. Again, cases of low protests do not gain legitimacy, hence allowing authoritarian persistence ([cf] Lindberg 2009, 332-334; Schedler 2002, 43).

Internally within the opposition parties themselves and across each other, it is postulated that coordination challenges also hinders democratisation efforts ([cf] Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009, 412). It is said to be worse where a competitive EAR combines with voting that is geographically concentrated and where the government controls significant patronage powers and wealth ([cf] Lindberg 2009, 332-333, Miller 2015, 694). Under these conditions, opposition parties, and some members, are easily swept by money and appointments which are always the playing cards of the EAR, hence weakening, destabilising, and creating further splits within the opposition side that make it prey to authoritarianism persistence.

2.5.3. Patronage distribution and clientelism networks.

Patronage distribution is one of the vital survive strategies said to be foundational to any EAR ([cf] Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009, 408). However, some scholars have argued that it remains a debate regarding the extent to which patronage distribution plays out for the incumbent ([cf] Greene 2007; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009). According to Greene (2007, 5), "[d]ramatic resource advantages allow the incumbent [party] to outspend on campaigns, deploy legions of canvassers, and, most importantly, to supplement policy appeals with patronage goods that bias voters in their favour." Therefore, EARs rest upon patronage distribution especially when it comes to fighting out their assumed opponents ([cf] Greene 2007; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009). As earlier highlighted, when it comes to the opposition forces, patronage can drastically reduce it through buy-offs and rewards or even just make it costly for those who chose to remain as opposers ([cf] Miller 2015, 697). Regime loyalists, elites and the poor are easily silenced by patronage favours, giving way for continued autocratisation

([cf] Lindberg 2009, 334). This leaves the political ground skewed in favour of the incumbent [authoritarian ruler] against the available democratisation forces ([cf] Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009, 408-409).

2.5.4. Media censorship and information control.

Electoral Authoritarian Regimes tend to prevent voters from acquiring knowledge regarding the available choices from the opposition side, an act that results in media censorship and information control. As the regimes enjoy ample access to public funds, favourable public exposure, and government-run media, the opposition is often harassed and intimidated from accessing even privately-run media ([cf] Schedler 2002, 43-44). Thus, campaign messages from the opposition side are deterred from reaching the population through such unwarranted curtailing of the oppositions' freedoms and rights of speech, peaceful assembly, and free movement; all of which are fundamental human rights.¹ Hence, these highly restrictive measures withhold all the possible opportunities to the regime opponents and only leaves the incumbent as the champion ([cf] Schedler 2002, 43; Lindberg 2009, 330).

2.5.5. Strategic interests of the international actors.

There is increasing literature confirming the role of the international community as an important player in EAR politics ([cf] Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009; Donno 2013). International actors have been argued to supplement domestic democratisation pressures against the EAR through for instance election monitoring, cutting democracy aid, imposing sanctions, and exerting other more forms of diplomatic pressures ([cf] Donno 2013, 706, 708; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009, 409, 416). However, their roles and efforts tend to disappear totally in scenarios where there are strategic interests to gain, protect, or promote ([cf] Lindberg 2009, 329). International interests are argued to come from the presence of natural resource, international agendas, and joint security missions. Thereby international actors who could have sanctioned or condemned the regime's oppressive actions under this circumstance, rather become allies with the very EAR government in exchange for resource-based deals and investment opportunities, allegiance and cooperation for the joint security missions or implementation of say an international agenda through which these actors have vested interests ([cf] Lindberg 2009, 330).

2.5.6. Presence of natural resources and regime strength.

Natural resource availability is closely related to the all-around factor of regime strength. This is because, the presence of natural resource wealth facilitates and strengthens regular regime patronage networks and actions of buying off mass support from either side of the regime loyalists and the opposition at the same time, hence only leaving room for an opposition headed to the pursuance of "self-defeating electoral tactics" (Donno 2013, 704-705). Consequently, this leads to regime strength manifested in the overly concentration of economic powers into the rulers' hand.

Also, internal and institutional-wise organisation shields possible regime loyalists and elite defections, which keeps the regime strong enough against any possible opposition efforts aimed at democratisation. In scenarios where the EARs receive support from international actors or international institutions which are alike in terms of not considering or seeing democratisation as a major priority, democratisation even blurs more ([cf] Lindberg 2009). Staffan Lindberg contends that such regime scenarios contribute to the lowering of the costs of oppression, hence creating more room for continued electoral autocracy ([cf] Lindberg 2009, 331).

2.5.7. Electoral fraud, manipulation and informal disenfranchisement.

Gandhi and Lust-Okar argue that EARs will always engage in various electoral manipulation and fraudulence through the ruling elites and regime loyalists to ensure their persistence over and over again ([cf] Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009, 412, 413). Although it is hard to measure and detect, electoral fraud has been argued to involve; the introduction of biases into the administration of an electoral process right away from voter's registration, candidates vetting processes, campaigning freedom, and the composition of an electoral commission which is in charge of the final tallying of the ballots and final results declaration ([cf] Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009, 412, 413).

Other plausible biases could involve forged voter identities, burning ballot boxes, or cooking the vote totals for the favoured parties and candidates especially when the electoral commission has been appointed by the incumbent ([cf] Schedler 2002, 44). It is such fraudulent practices that "distort the citizenry's preferences by denying voting rights to some citizens while amplifying the voice of others" (Schedler 2002, 45). Furthermore, EARs control the electoral outcomes by controlling the composition of the electorate. Schedler (2002) has

¹ United Nations. 2021. Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Accessed, March 23, 2021. At <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

argued that while as today, formal control of the voting freedoms can be hardly practised, EARs have adjusted accordingly to informal disenfranchisement involving; ethnic cleansing, voter persecution, physical elimination, and forced displacement of certain groups of citizens who may be against the regime ([cf] Schedler 2002, 44).

2.5.8. Intimidation, violence and creation of fear.

Using intimidation, violence, and created fear among the voters and opposition at large through the use of state power, money, and security forces aimed at influencing the electoral free choices, is another projected strategy at the hand of an EAR to deter democratisation processes ([cf] Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009, 412). The assumption is that, if violence is induced against opposition candidates, civil society, and independent media outlets, incumbents may or may not succeed, but the action in itself is adequate to communicate and indicate the extent upon which the EAR has compromised democratisation efforts ([cf] Schedler 2002, 44).

III. ELECTORAL AUTHORITARIANISM IN UGANDA.

3.1. Brief introduction.

The empirical scope of this sections' analysis, begins with a brief historical overview of Uganda's political regimes since 1962 when the country attained its independence. As the case develops, the attention is directed to the current regime of Mr Museveni and his National Resistance Movement party (NRM) because it is the only regime that Ugandan's have seen since 1986. Although eight theoretical analytical propositions on how EAR deter democratisation processes have been developed and discussed in chapter two, only four are empirically analysed here; the uncontrolled presidential powers and lion share position, absence or weak opposition side [parties] coalition, patronage distribution and clientelism networks, and the regime strength hinged upon the presence of natural resources. Empirical discussion is held along these factors to establish whether these are some of the conditions that have ensured the persistence of Electoral Authoritarianism in Uganda regardless of the regular multi-party elections.

These factors are selected because they have been empirically researched among various cases in Southeast Asian countries like Singapore, Malaysia, and Cambodia ([cf] Morgenbesser and Pepinsky 2019, 6). More so, in Latin America and Africa these aspects form key plausible conditions upon which most EARs rest as they deter democratisation forces envisioned in regular multi-party elections ([cf] Pepinsky 2007, 136; Miller 2015, 694-699; Muhumuza 2009, 6). Second, they are central theoretical propositions both within the electoral authoritarian theorem ([cf] Schedler 2002; Miller 2012, 2015;) and the democratisation by election theory ([cf] Lindberg 2006, 2007, 2009a and 2009b).

3.2. Overview of Uganda's political regimes from 1962 to the present.

Attaining her independence on the ninth of October 1962 from the United Kingdom, Uganda's political history has been argued to be a violent one. Makara *et al* (2009) indicate that, on independence onset, the country had a multi-party system, but this ceased to be the case in 1966 as the country went into a One-party system under Dr Milton Obote. Obote was overthrown through a military coup' in 1971 by one of his topmost General, Idi Amin Dada who ushered the country into eight years of political terror [1971-1979] following his brutal open dictatorship that later was ended in 1979.

In 1980, the country went into general presidential and legislative elections where Dr Milton Obote was yet again voted in for the second time although the opposition was not satisfied with the electoral process and the outcomes. The controversy surrounding Obote's 1980 election win could be linked back to his remarks that "an election was a way of controlling the people, rather than being a means through which they could control him" (Adejumobi 2000, 63). Thus, the 1980 election results were hotly contested, forcing many on the opposition side to resort to armed resistance. By 1985, Obote had been overthrown yet again through a military coup by General Tito Okello who was also subsequently overthrown in 1986 by the National Resistance Army (NRA) under the leadership of Mr Museveni who had been fighting Obote's government using guerrilla warfare tactics since 1981 ([cf] Makara *et al* 2009, 187). Since 1986, Mr Museveni has been the ruling President of Uganda [head of state and the government] through his NRM party [he has also been the party chairman since 1986].

In terms of elections and party systems, from 1986, the country had no major election until 1996 when the presidential and general parliamentary elections were held, marking Uganda's first general elections in sixteen years ([cf] Linnee 1996; Electoral Commission Uganda 2020). More so, for the period between January 1986 and July 2005, the country had a No-party system of government ([cf] Electoral Commission Uganda 2020). However, due to changing circumstance that scholars have attributed to various reasons like the internal cracks within this Movement system, and the international pressure from development partners at the time, Museveni's regime adopted a multi-party system in 2005 as the country was heading for the 2006 general elections ([cf] Ugochukwu Nwosu 2012, 20).

Despite opening for multi-party politics and continuously holding regular multi-party elections for the presidency and the legislature every after five years as illustrated in Table 1.1, Museveni continues to rule the country amidst ambiguous democratisation ([cf] Makara *et al* 2009). It is plausible that Museveni eyes a life presidency, following his controversial attacks on the 1995 Constitution in 2005 that saw the scrapping of presidential term limits and presidential age limit in 2017 ([cf] Muhumuza 2009, 5; Ugochukwu Nwosu 2012, 20). All these actions were timely to Museveni's advantage and plausible indicators of his continued autocracy as the president is now free to stand for any re-election with the most recent being the January 14th 2021 elections that saw him assuming the presidency office for the next five years ([cf] Reuters 2021).

Table 1.1. Four multi-party presidential elections since 2006 with key opposition contenders against the incumbent Mr Museveni.

S/N	Presidential Candidate	Political Party	Election Year	Votes	Percentage (%)
1	Yoweri Museveni Tibuhabwe Kaguta	National Resistance Movement (NRM)	2006	4,109,449	59.26
			2011	5,428,369	68.38
			2016	5,971,872	60.62%
			2021	6,042,898	58.38%
2	Kizza Besigye Kifefe	Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)	2006	2,592,954	37.39
			2011	2,064,963	26.01
			2016	3,508,687	35.61%
			2021	-	-
3	Kyagulanyi Ssentamu Robert	National Unity Platform (NUP)	2006	-	-
			2011	-	-
			2016	-	-
			2021	3,631,437	35.08%

Source: Compiled from the General Electoral Commission's Reports on Presidential Elections from 2006 to 2021.²

Election results of the various multi-party elections organised by Museveni's regime since 2006 as observed in table 1.1 are one part of the interesting stories underpinning the regimes continued electoral autocracy. The following subsection, therefore, analyses the regimes' strategies employed to such regular multi-party elections that altogether have only ensured the persistence of electoral authoritarianism in Uganda under Museveni's rule.

3.3. Strategies employed by the regime to deter democratisation by elections.

With the most recent highlights from the Freedom House's Annual reports (2019, 2020) on political rights and civil liberties designating Uganda as being "Not Free" and therefore among the worst governed and non-democratic countries in Sub-Saharan Africa ([cf] Repucci 2020, 26), the following paragraphs examine the empirical evidence against the four selected theoretical propositions of the uncontrolled presidential powers and lion share position, absence or weak opposition side [parties] coalition, patronage distribution and clientelism networks, and the regime strength hinged upon the presence of natural resources.

3.3.1. On the uncontrolled presidential power and the lion share.

Over time, various indicators have illustrated that Museveni's presidential powers have immensely grown both constitutionally and unconstitutionally, hence subordinating democratisation efforts that he [Museveni] once stood up for ([c] Muhumuza 2009, 2). Museveni's regime has managed to play the security forces and ensured their loyalty to him. He has created various 'ideally' democratic institutions, but only for legitimating his rule and crystallising of powers in his hands, instead of protecting these institutions, he [Museveni] only runs over the very institutions to ensure his continued rule.

As the sole NRM party chairman and the country's president, for now, three decades and a half ([cf] Izama and Wilkerson 2011, 65), Museveni's regime has sanctioned four multi-party presidential elections as observed in table 1.1. With multi-party politics since 2005, Muhumuza (2009, 5) argues that this was a clever move by the incumbent to assure himself of the future political interests, and so timely for the regime to meet the donors' demands and the international community legitimacy. Since then, Museveni has sealed his bid for continued participation in the country's elections although his constitutional term limits were due to end in 2006

²Archive for Election Results in Uganda since 2006 to 2021. See, <https://www.ec.or.ug> Accessed, March 16, 2021.

([cf] Muhumuza 2009, 5). Thus, Museveni's regime adopted multiparty politics not because it wanted to give way for democratisation through opening up space for opposition parties to participate in the country's electoral politics but due to the international pressure and the incumbents' plans for continued stay in power under the guise of the new multi-party-political umbrella, which has worked out in his favour since 2006 to present.

In all the four multi-party elections organised by the regime, scepticism has been rising as Abrahamsen and Bareebe put it, "nobody expects President Museveni to be declared a loser in a game where he appoints the referees [Electoral chairperson and all the commissioners] and commands the security forces" (Abrahamsen and Bareebe 2016, 751). President Museveni himself has openly kept saying that, "[h]e would never hand over power even if defeated in an election" (Abrahamsen and Bareebe 2016, 761). No wonder now, some scholars look at Uganda's electoral politics as a "national drama" (Gibb 2016, 94), arguably for its persistent promotion of electoral authoritarianism at the expense of democratisation. Therefore, it can be construed that Museveni's uncontrolled presidential powers have seen him 'winning' over time through manipulations that come at the cost of democratising the country.

With the most recent national elections, more can be observed about Museveni's EAR. Although the Electoral Commission (EC) of Uganda is in charge of organising an independent election ([cf] Electoral Commission 2021), their ability to do so has become a big question on the side of the country's opposition basing on the fact that the very incumbent who is at the same time a presidential contender in all these subsequent elections, is the same person who appoints the country's EC chairperson and all the entire commissioners ([cf] Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995, Art.60(1)). While after the appointment these are supposed to be vetted by the parliament, it can be argued that since Museveni's NRM party has the majority members in the National Parliament, most of whom are well known for standing with the party ideology and their chairman's decisions unquestionably ([cf] Donner *et al* 2020, 9), it only leaves doubt whether such a house could denounce the proposed appoints than only stamping up the appointees as it has always been the case.

To illustrate this, controversy surrounds the current chairperson of the EC, Mr Simon Mugenyi Byabakama and Chief Justice Alfonse Owiny-Dollo. Mr Byabakama's appointment in 2016, generated critical public attention from both human rights advocates, politicians and political commentators who accused him of being a government loyalist whose appointment came at the time when Mr Museveni was planning to stand again for the 2021 presidential elections ([cf] Biryabarema 2016). Although the civil society and the opposition side had demanded electoral reforms and pointed out this conflict of loyalty in the appointment of a credible Independent Electoral Commission, the status quo held as the country headed to the 2021 General Elections ([cf] Biryabarema, 2020b; Donner *et al* 2020, 9-10). No wonder, Mr Byabakama's EC has been accused to have done less to nothing in these just concluded presidential elections whereby the incumbent used state resources and machinery like the military, army and police to politically intimidate, coerce, induce violence, and fear against his opponents and the entire population in the events that led up to the real election date, during and after the voting day ([cf] Khan 2021; Monitor 2020; Athumani, 2021).

For Chief Justice Alfonse Owiny-Dollo, conflicts of interests are cited in his ability to effectively handle the election petition taken to the High Court challenging Mr Museveni's win of the 2021 elections. First, Mr Museveni is the one who appointed Mr Owiny-Dolo into that position and second, in the 2006 presidential elections when the then opposition leader Dr Kizza Besigye was challenging Museveni's presidential election win, Mr Owiny-Dollo [now the Chief Justice of the High Court], was President Museveni's defence lawyer ([cf] Wesaka and Kasozi 2021), hence casting more doubt in his ability to deliver justice under such circumstances. These among other reasons have forced the National Unity Platform (NUP) leader Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, better known as Bobi Wine, to withdraw his election petition against Mr Museveni as he continues to accuse him of having all the country's institution into his pockets ([cf] Kamoga 2021).

Besides, various fundamental constitutional amendments have occurred under Museveni's uncontrolled presidential powers. First, was the uplifting of the presidential term limits and later the age limit. In 2005, the Speaker of Parliament tabled a bill seeking to amend Article 105 of the 1995 constitution of the Republic of Uganda. It sought to make clear that a person elected president under the constitution may hold office for more than a two five-year term. Consequently, the article was amended ([cf] Makara *et al* 2009, 195-196). In ensuring the successfulness of this amendment, Muhumuza (2009, 6) has also pointed out that Mr Museveni bribed and manipulated the parliament to the extent that 223 out of 333 Members of Parliament each was given UGX 5 million in exchange for their 'Yes' vote towards the amendment of the constitution. For the regime 'loyalists who decided to vote against the amendment, four of them [then Ministers] were dropped in the aftermath of a cabinet reshuffle by Mr Museveni ([cf] Muhumuza 2009, 6). All these came at a time when President Yoweri Museveni was serving his second official term in office and therefore if the status quo was to hold, it meant that the 2001-2006 term, was going to be Museveni's last term in office.

In 2017, Mr Museveni was once again on it. He dramatically influenced the Parliament using his NRM Member of Parliaments number advantage to vote for the amendment of the Constitution Article 102(b) that sought to remove the seventy-five years age limit. The move was an open indicator of how Museveni intended

to once again prolong his presidency, for it came at a time when President Museveni was due to turn seventy-five years, and hence if Article 102(b) of the constitution was upheld, Museveni could not be eligible to contest for the presidency office in the just concluded 2021 Presidential elections for he would have exceeded seventy-five years ([cf] Africa Center for Strategic Studies 2018). Just as the earlier term limit amendments, the age limit amendment was also passed regardless of the critical resentments and opposition from mostly the opposition legislators, civil society fraternity, and the international community ([cf] Goitom 2017; Wesaka and Kiyonga 2020; Africa Center for Strategic Studies 2018).

Museveni has fundamentally personalised power, and all security forces in the country are under his tight control. As the Commander-in-Chief, his son Muhoozi Kainerugaba, a Lieutenant General, serves as the commander of the Elite Guard and Special Forces Command (SFC) which provides security to Mr Museveni. At the same time, Mr Muhoozi acts as of the ten Army Representatives in the National Assembly, something that has overtime raised various questions especially on the relevance of army representatives in the country's parliament in particular and politics in general? ([cf] Kasasira *et al* 2020, 2021). Based on these bonds and the firm grip of Mr Museveni over the country's security organs, these have always taken over the electoral process in the country in the days leading to the real voting date, on the voting date, and even after the election day to secure Museveni's win under the guise of providing security ([cf] Namwase 2021; Abrahamsen and Bareebe 2016, 761).

Strategically, Museveni's regime has established itself as the security engine/security master within and beyond the East African region. For instance, Museveni contributes to the joint security forces against terrorism in the Somalian conflicts, central Africa, and in South Sudan, something that has given him immunity against international actors who now instead of criticising and condemning his authoritarianism, only cooperate with him for his forces' particular role in these joint missions, hence allowing him space for entrenching further his home electoral authoritarianism without consistent international pressures ([cf] Goitom 2017).

3.3.2. On the absence or weak opposition parties' coalitions.

According to Uganda's EC statistics (2021), the country has 26 officially registered political parties.³ Out of these, NRM has been the ruling party from 1986 to the present. However, before examining the repression, and attacks from the ruling party to these opposition parties, a look at the organisation, coordination, and cooperation of the country's opposition parties deserve attention.

Following the introduction of multi-party politics in the country in 2005, Uganda's opposition parties have been trying to come up with various political and electoral coalitions aimed at working collectively against the dominance of the ruling party [NRM] ([cf] Biira 2013). Professor Mwambutsya Ndebesa has traced the country's political party coalitions back to the 1960s ([c] Ndebesa 2020), however, a look at the recent coalitions like the Inter-Party Coalition (IPC), and The Democratic Alliance (TDA) which were formed in the wake of 2011 and 2016 elections to mobilize the opposition against the incumbent, illustrate to us how their consequent failure both due to their internal challenges and regime sabotage have greatly aided the continuation of electoral authoritarianism in Uganda ([cf] Butty 2015; Ndebesa 2020).

According to Ndebesa (2020), opposition coalitions both before and after elections in Uganda have failed to succeed against the incumbent due to various factors like consistent mistrust among the coalition members themselves and the regular defections of the members from one party to another, hence demoralising and neutralising their opposition forces against Museveni's rule. Recently in the concluded 2021 elections, the Inter-Party Organization for Dialogue (IPOD) was formed to harmonise the opposition and the ruling party NRM but this has also failed as commentators upon its most recent summit say that it has only left these parties [especially the opposition parties] more divided than never before ([c] Wandera 2021). Therefore, the failure of the country's opposition to effectively mobilise itself through coalitions against the regime is one of the conditions that have facilitated Museveni's continued electoral autocracy in the country.

Following such opposition failure, Museveni's regime has exploited the gap by continuing its repression and oppression against a fragmented opposition side which is now very easy to defeat than never before. For instance, since the 2006 multi-party elections, the regime has limited and on various occasions denied the opposition access to the media like radios and televisions ([cf] Makara *et al* 2009, 197). Throughout 2011, 2016, and the 2021 elections, the internet and social media were shutdown besides the ECs declaration for digital campaigns in the later elections due to the corona pandemic in the country ([cf] Bobi Wine 2021; Abrahamsen and Bareebe 2016, 755-756). In 2008, the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) Television [which is directly under the government's management], refused to broadcast Dr Kizza Besigye's campaign adverts which were meant to convince the public to vote for him for the 2011 presidential elections ([cf] Ssali 2017; [cf] Abrahamsen and Bareebe 2016, 755-756). So, deliberately, despite the constitutional freedoms of free

³ More on political parties in Uganda, see: <https://www.ec.or.ug/political-parties>

speech, association, and the ECs call for a levelled ground for both the incumbent and the opposition, Museveni's regime has blatantly operated against these provisions to frustrate his opponents and leave his regime propaganda unchallenged just as stressed in theory ([cf] Schedler 2002, 43-44; Lindberg 2009, 330).

From the recently concluded 2021 elections, various reports indicate that, just as in the earlier elections, chaos, violence and brutalisation befell onto the opposition side by state security forces under the incumbents' command ([cf] Ortagus 2021). Most international election observers were not allowed to observe these elections by the country's EC, while others decided to pull out themselves citing the electoral commissions' refusal of considering their earlier recommendations ([cf] Biryabarema 2020b; Microsoft News 2021). These recommendations included humble calls on reforms like ensuring more independence of the EC body, elimination of excessive use of force by the armed forces, and having more transparency in vote tallying and results declaration ([cf] Biryabarema 2020b). Therefore, the absence of these international observers implied that many had lost confidence in the electoral process of Uganda's EAR, a factor that on the other hand gave the regime a blank cheque of suppressing the opposition democratisation efforts.

3.2.3. On the patronage distribution and clientelism networks.

Over time, Mr Museveni has been portrayed as one who prefers working through informal networks of patronage and clientelism networks ([cf] Muhumuza 2009, 8). Patronage is distributed across the regime elite and the voter section ([cf] Abrahamsen and Bareebe 2016, 763; Green 2010, Muhumuza 2009, 10). Loyal party members [who are voters and officeholders at the same time] are rewarded with political and civil office appointments ([cf] Gibb 2016, 98). For instance, besides Mr Museveni having declared that he [Museveni] did not need any one's political advice, in 2016/2017, it was noted that he had 141 officially paid advisers, rising questions of; to whom are these advisors and why should they be paid if the president needs no one's advice? ([cf] Kaaya 2016; Muhumuza 2009, 10). In this case, there is no regard to the consequences of such expenses to the country's economy and local development, for instead of using such national resources to foster democratic institutions and development programmes, they are instead wasted on rewarding loyalty, buying off political critiques and opponents, and bribing of eligible voters ([cf] Muhumuza 2009).

A new vice of Museveni's patronage and clientelism network that has risen is the persistent creation of new districts under the rhetoric of service delivery and increasing local political participation ([cf] Green 2008; 2010). Recent studies into this paradox have indicated that Museveni's act of creating new districts is an indirect action that helps him gather parliamentary numbers that work in his favour especially when it comes to instituting various controversial constitutional amendments and partisan bills in the house ([cf] Green 2010, 83). In other cases, it is a patronage act of rewarding local elite voters who promise to vote for him in return for a district status as a campaign promise. Stein and Bickers (1994 cit. Green 2010, 94) have argued that,

“[i]ndeed, the increasing number of new districts, coupled with Museveni's diminishing electoral support over the years, fits in well with the literature on patronage that suggests the more vulnerable an incumbent politician is, the more likely he/she is to rely upon patronage to win votes.”

Therefore, political patronage is one of the underlying bases upon which Museveni's EAR establishes its political support, which has crippled democratisation endeavours in the country ([cf] Tripp 2004, 7).

3.2.4. On the presence of natural resources and regime strength.

With the presence of natural resources, Uganda becomes one of the richest and most diverse countries in Africa ([cf] Amanigaruhanga and Manyindo 2010, 5). It was in 2006 that the country discovered large quantities of oil and gas in the Albertine western region. It is assumed that its exploitation will propel the country among a few significant oil-producing and exporting countries in Africa ([cf] Langer *et al* 2020, 13-14; Bukenya and Nakaiza 2020, 103-124). However, scholars certain about the country's historical political regimes and the contemporary governance challenges battling Museveni's EAR, are already sceptical about the fact that negative impacts of oil and gas are most likely to outweigh the positive impacts of this oil and gas ([cf] Mosbacher 2013; Bergo 2015).

Museveni's regime is already implicated by high levels of corruption and patronage that blurs any ones hope for effectively utilising these resources for the betterment of the country. To use Jack Mosbacher words, “Uganda appears to be a perfect candidate for the resource curse”⁴ (Mosbacher 2013, 43). According to Mosbacher (2013, 43), Uganda's regulatory framework in the oil sector has wider gaps that will only invite further corruption and mismanagement of these resources, hence deteriorating further the country's ability to uphold the rule of law and democracy ([cf] Bergo 2015). More so, President Museveni has on several occasions

⁴ Olanya, David Ross. 2015. “Will Uganda Succumb to the Resource Curse? Critical Reflections.” *The Extractive Industries and Society* 2(1), 46-55. Accessed, March 8, 2021, at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2214790X14000677>

referred to the country's oil and gas as "my oil" (Honan 2016). He has continued to mirror the country into uncontrolled debts on account of oil discovery as the payback security ([cf] Muhumuza 2019). This implies that the regime is ready to exploit the country's resource only for the regime's political dominance [strengthening] and not for the benefit of the countrymen and women.

The country's possession of oil and gas, therefore, supplements the regimes' strength through securing more international alliance and cooperation with countries like the Peoples Republic of China, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America ([cf] Biryabarema 2020a; Reuters 2018). Besides being close partners with the regime on various regional security-based missions like in Somalia in what has come to be known as the 'War on terror' against the Al-Shabab in the region, Museveni's regime has fundamentally found new alliance with these countries on grounds of spotted opportunities and deals in the country's oil and gas sector ([cf] Biryabarema 2020a; Fowdy 2020). These consequent natural resource-based relationships that supplement other strategic interests of these international communities in the current regime has only left them as spectators and sometimes toothless barking dogs with a deaf-and-dumb ear against the regimes' oppression and suppression of democratisation efforts in the country ([cf] Fowdy 2020).

Museveni's EAR has enjoyed an atmosphere whereby most of the International Actors tolerate the regime's crackdown on human rights, civil liberties, and political rights in one way or the other. Recently, the country's opposition leaders reached an extent of blaming the regimes continued authoritarian to the international community in general and the United States, the International financial institutions [specifically World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in particular] for being key actors in financially and militarily facilitating Museveni's authoritarian regime that has cracked down democratisation efforts in the country ([cf] Wine 2021). Bobi Wine (2021), the opposition leader has said;

"[O]ver the years, Museveni has managed to position himself as a military ally and development darling of many Western governments that look the other way when it comes to his horrendous human rights record [...] today, Ugandan forces fight in the U.S. and European-supported African Union Mission in Somalia and serve as guards under U.S. command in Iraq [...] Museveni's government has received tens of billions of dollars in direct foreign aid from Western countries, including the United States and multilateral institutions [...] Much of this money has been properly spent on projects such as AIDS treatment and malaria prevention but much has also been siphoned off by Museveni's henchmen."

Although such records are open to these international actors, they have only continued to flow funds to the regime which now only ends up being used to strengthen the regime and facilitate its tormenting and suppression of all those who are opposing its actions through purchasing military hardware, tear gas and enhancing military and police facilitation than allowing democratisation processes.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has brought the empirical case of Uganda into the large theoretical conversation on electoral authoritarianism regimes and democratisation by elections theory. The aim has been to establish the conditions that facilitate these regimes persistence besides regular multi-party elections that have been argued to induce democratisation. Combining the central proposals of the democratisation by elections theory ([cf] Lindberg 2006, 2009a, 2009b) and Schedler's (2002) authoritarian characterisation framework, the paper developed and discussed eight central theoretical analytical propositions upon which the empirical case analysis derived a more focused discussion. The uncontrolled presidential power and the lion's share; absence or weak opposition parties' coalitions; patronage distribution and clientelism network; and the presence of natural resources and regime strength have been established as the key strategies which Museveni's EAR has employed in deterring democratisation power assumed through regular multi-party elections.

The failure of the transformative power of elections in causing democratisation in Uganda can therefore be fundamentally linked to the regime's reliance on; the immense presidential powers evidenced by the control of almost all social, political, and economic aspects of the country; reliance on patronage that services as the rulers political tool in preventing any emergence of reform-minded elites both within and outside the regime; weak and antagonised opposition parties coalitions due to internal and external sabotage; and last the regime strength hinged on the presence of natural resources, the security role the regime players in the region, and the alliance with international actors whose vested interest are less concerned with democratisation. All these conditions have therefore inhibited the emergency of pro-democratic institutions like independent executive, parliament, judiciary, media, strong opposition, and security organs which would have propelled electoral democratisation processes. So, the four multiparty elections in Uganda can only be said to have entrenched further authoritarianism. This dilemma represents a steady reversal of the country's democratisation efforts that the country had embarked on in the early 1990s ([cf] Muhumuza 2009, 1-2).

With this obvious failed case of Uganda, it is plausible that regular multi-party elections under Museveni's EAR, instead of leading to democratisation as postulated by Lindberg's democratisation by elections theory, only offers the regime neutral grounds for its persistence and pursuance of selfish interests like more

power appropriation, life presidency, and wealthy accumulation ([cf] Gandhi and Lust-Oker 2015, 412; 2009, 417). However, as the democratisation by elections theory do not prescribe a given time frame for democratisation to occur or either describe a limit to the number of multi-party elections for consequent democratisation ([cf] Lindberg 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009b), political scientists focused on democratisation by election cases [just like the case of Uganda] remains forward-looking upon how things might overturn for such an electoral authoritarianism regime in the long-run.

Also, the explored EAR conditions in the case of Uganda have more significant implications for our understanding of democratisation and electoral authoritarianism regimes in a single-country case which previous research had ignored. This shift from regional focus to specific country cases offers an opportunity to understand the theoretical propositions with the empirical evidence in a more in-depth way just as herein established. Unlike regional studies, most of which have found a correlation between regular multiparty elections and consequent democratisation ([cf] Brownlee 2012; Donno 2013; Lindberg 2006, 2009a), single country cases that are not conforming to the theory are becoming the dominant scenarios, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa just as the case of Uganda has illustrated. This will automatically contribute to changing the trend of only concentrating on the literature and cases that have conformed with the proposition of democratisation by elections power in the entire conversation of transition literature and hybrid regimes.

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I hereby certify that this paper has been composed solely by me and, therefore, is based entirely on my work, unless stated otherwise. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in this paper. All references and verbatim extracts have been quoted and all sources of information, including data sets have been specifically acknowledged.