"For God and My Stomach"

Democratisation understood in relation to the perception of power among young Ugandans

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ABSTRACT

"For God and My Stomach" Democratisation understood in relation to the perception of power among young Ugandans

A sustainable democracy can only be achieved if the demand for it exists among a country’s citizens. If and how people choose democratic paths depends upon how the surrounding power structures are experienced and perceived. Arguing that people’s perception of power is vital when designing a democratisation process, this study seeks to investigate how young Ugandans understand and relate to power in order to analyse their perception of power.

The definition of power here, is identified in patterns of use, which brings attention to the underlying often hidden mechanisms that perpetuates these power structures.

Establishing how power is perceived attained and maintained, my informants refer to wealth and violence as the main sources and/or means; indicating a complexity of problems when approaching a fertile ground for democratisation.

The dissertation is the result of a two-month Minor Field Study conducted in Uganda during the summer 2003.

Keywords: Uganda, power, democratisation, violence, wealth, gender, Bourdieu.

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INDEX

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
   1.1 Question at issue 5
   1.2 Power, democracy and democratisation 5
   1.3 Background to the field 7
   1.4 Aim of the study 9
   1.5 Method 10
   1.6 The field 11
   1.7 The informants 12
   1.8 The interviews 13
   1.9 The surveys 14
   1.10 Outline of study 15

2. POWER AND INFLUENCE
   2.1 Defining power 16
   2.2 Informants on what constitutes power 18
   2.3 Informants on where power comes from 18
   2.4 Informants on influence 20

3. ATTAINING AND MAINTAINING POWER
   3.1 Coercion 23
   3.2 Wealth 27
   3.3 Concluding discussion 29

4. POWER AND GENDER
   4.1 “Men are by nature more powerful than women are.” 32
   4.2 The distinction between private and public spheres 34
   4.3 Affirmative action 37
   4.4 Concluding discussion 40

5. POWER AND DEMOCRACY; CONCLUDING REMARKS 42

6. REFERENCES 45

APPENDIX: Questionnaire 48
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Question at issue
Democratisation understood in relation to the perception of power among young Ugandans.

The main focus of this study is how perceptions of power among people inform the development of democracy. A scholarship from Sida enabled me to conduct a two months fieldwork in Uganda and the paper is based on interviews with informants conducted in June-July in 2003. The majority of the fieldwork took place in the capital Kampala, but I also spent a fortnight in the town Masaka.

The study is centred on the hypothesis that the way people conceptualise, understand and experience power forms the base for the ruling system. The paper intends to establish how the perception of power among young Ugandans, based on their experiences informs the understanding and deliberation of democratisation.1

The aim of the study will be further developed on page 9, together with the method and the complete outline towards the end of this introduction. First, I will introduce the concepts of power, democracy and democratisation, followed by a brief historical background to the field.

1.2 Power, democracy and democratisation
Searching for a definition of power, I have adopted a combination of thoughts by scholars such as Arens and Karp in Creativity of Power Cosmology and Action in African Societies, 1989, and Bourdieu in Gledhill’s Power and Its Disguises, 2000. As a working tool the meaning of power is identified in patterns of use, whilst addressing underlying reasons to self-perpetuating power structures.2 In chapter two, I will provide for a thorough discussion on the obstacles of defining power and how this working definition was obtained.

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1 The term perception of power encompasses peoples experiences of power, as well as their understanding of power and how they relate to power.
2 Power structures/relations are used interchangeably throughout the paper.
The interpretation of democracy, ‘the rule of the people’, is highly contested around the world, among academics as well as among politicians. In politics, democracy is normally divided into a broad and a narrow definition. The latter concentrates upon the existence of free and fair elections and the establishment of formal institutions, and is popular in that it enables quantitative comparisons and provides means to measure the level of democracy in a country. The broader definition encompasses the narrow criteria, but more importantly the role of informal institutions and the actual possibilities for participation. In addition, the narrow definition misses out on cultural and social aspects that are vital for a country's democratisation process to function.³ Further, through stressing the relation between democracy and the context in which it is exercised, Ottoway undermines the narrow perception of democracy as an ideological concept with a universal content.⁴ When asked to define democracy my informants referred to what they had been taught in primary school; an agreement made by the people, for the people, of the people. The Ugandan national hymn, ‘For God and My Country’, was also mentioned signifying God as being for everyone and the country including every individual in Uganda. This paper argues that each context should have a further say in determining what its democracy entails and thus supports the usage of, and uses the broader definition of democracy.

Democratisation is the dynamic process of events gradually taking place when a democratic ruling system is implemented. Relying mainly on Dahl, Kasfir talks of meaningful democratisation as achieved when people can organise and discuss political issues openly, vote freely in elections that genuinely put the government of the day at risk, and when the government is expected to shape its policies in response to the election.⁵ When used in this paper, the democratisation process is understood along the criteria mentioned above, stressing the importance of founding a democratic culture.⁶

⁶ A democratic culture provides the opportunity for all people to express their own will, with an experienced ability to influence.
1.3 Background to the field

Pre-colonial Uganda\(^7\) consisted of different ethnic groups living and co-operating within regional networks of economic exchanges. Occurring conflicts were commonly solved through the adherence to forceful means, and Mugaju argues that "regardless of their scale or complexity, all pre-colonial social systems were rooted in varying degrees of authoritarianism, conformism and compliance".\(^8\) This sign of authoritarian culture was passed on from generation to generation and was replicated at higher levels politically and socially.\(^9\)

In 1894, Uganda was declared a British protectorate. The British colonialists, eager to secure control, encouraged ethnic segmentation through introducing tribal districts. "The colonial mapping … made ethnic and cultural boundaries more rigid in explicit and formalised contexts such as politics and education".\(^10\) British interests were inconsistent with the theory and practice of democracy.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the quest for decolonisation grew stronger, and although party politicians in Uganda used democratic messages in their rhetoric, their prime inspiration was "the pursuit of power as an end, rather than as a means".\(^11\) This Machiavellian perception, or attitude, towards power is still prevalent, as exemplified by one of my informants commenting on Uganda’s president Yoweri Museveni:

> Once you have power, you hold on to it until you die! Like Machiavelli! You try to manipulate, like Museveni. But if you come to power through dubious means, you will not care how you maintain your power. Our president once said that: "I came through the gun, so you have to use a gun to remove me". (27, male, Masaka)\(^12\)

Uganda became independent in 1962, and following a questionable election Milton Obote came to power. The results of this ‘shadow multiparty election’, was a lack of credence for the electoral system as being free and fair and a

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\(^7\) More accurately the area of land that was to be called Uganda by the British.


\(^9\) Recognising the potential complex of problems and difficulties to determine a Ugandan system democratic or not from a Westerner’s point of view, this paper by no means argue the complete lack of former, alternative (democratic) ruling systems in Uganda.


\(^11\) Mugaju, 2000, p. 18.

\(^12\) Informants are quoted followed by age, gender and their home region.
government without democratic legacy that did not represent the population.\textsuperscript{13} Within a few years after independence, multiparty politics ceased to exist. By 1964 Uganda was de facto a one-party state that laid more importance and gave more attention to military support than public opinion.\textsuperscript{14} Political opposition was restricted or forced into silence and in 1969, Obote banned all opposition political parties. Two years later a coup took place, with Idi Amin overthrowing Obote. On the surface, one of the promises made by the Amin military junta was to hold elections and restore multiparty democracy.\textsuperscript{15} However, once in power, Amin ignored his promises, declared all political parties illegal and announced himself life president; the no-party state was further strengthened.

Anyone can be powerful as long as you have the tools, like the gun. If you get power through the gun, of course people will not respect you for the sake of respecting that power; they do it out of fear. (26, male, Pader)

Anybody is mandated to power, as long as he/she has used force. (27, male, Mbarara)

The need for total control did not stay with the masses or the political opposition, but as Mugaju describes it, “once formal organised opposition was silenced, these problems shifted to the ruling party and the army”.\textsuperscript{16} Amin was overthrown in 1979, and Obote was soon back into power, again through elections that were questionable. Led by Yoweri Museveni, the National Resistance Movement/Army, NRM/A, launched a guerrilla war aiming to replace Obote,\textsuperscript{17} and the period that followed was characterised by an “aberration of democracy, intensification of militarism, ethnic mobilisation and violence”.\textsuperscript{18} In 1986, the NRM/A captured Kampala and Museveni took over power by military means. Museveni restricted the movement of political parties in favour of introducing his non-party Movement system,\textsuperscript{19} in short the

\textsuperscript{13} High politicians within the Movement, today admits to have participated in rigging the 1962 multiparty election. Mugaju, \textit{No-Party democracy in Uganda}, eds. Mugaju and Oloka-Onyango, 2000, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{14} Mugaju, 2000, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{15} Mugaju, 2000, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{16} Mugaju, 2000, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{17} Finnström, \textit{Living with Bad Surroundings}, 2003, p. 100.
\textsuperscript{19} Finnström, 2003, p. 101.
Movement. Without going into detail, the following unfair distribution of power between different groups in Uganda greatly contributed to the assiduous armed conflicts that ravage the country up until today.

Genuine competitive multiparty politics has never been practised in Uganda, either before or after independence. However, the Movement chose to portray multipartyism as one of the main sources of conflict, disunity and instability, and thus legitimised their creation of no-party democracy still operating in Uganda.

1.4 Aim of the study
“Understanding power relations in society involves more than an understanding of the formal institutions of the state”, notes Gledhill.\(^{20}\) If and how people choose democratic paths depends upon how the surrounding power structures are experienced and perceived. In analysing the words of my informants, in particular the women, I will show that power structures are recognised in every part of society, as being present in all social relationships. This understanding of power relations is mirrored in Foucault's claim to power as being something that permeates society in a capillary manner, as opposed to emerging from a single centre of control such as the state.\(^{21}\) Therefore, in accordance with Foucault and strengthened by my informants' perceptions of power, this paper emphasises the multifaceted nature of power structures.

The support from the international community concerning Uganda’s political development has been criticised as mainly indicating a need to present Uganda as a success story in terms of economic liberalisation.\(^{22}\) Regardless the real intentions behind international donors’ investments in Uganda, whether the Western demand for democratisation is genuine or mere rhetoric, the focus needs to be kept on the kind of democracy that would suit Uganda best, and thereafter ways of favourable implementation can be sought. It is my claim that the ground for these judgements emanates from Uganda, and perceptions of

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power are a relevant aspect in the process of determining democracy. Thus, one’s perception of democracy is intertwined with one’s perception of power.

In Uganda, however, it seems that one has started with an external understanding of power when proposing and designing its democratisation process. As democracy in essence means the rule of the people, the need for a democratic ruling system has to derive from the people. Likewise, I hold that a sustainable democratisation can only be achieved if the demand for it exists amongst a country's citizens. When seeking ways of implementing democracy, this study argues the need for establishing the perception of what power is, where it is perceived to derive from and who is entitled to exercise power.

1.5 Method
The aim with my interviews was to investigate carefully the perception of power among my informants, in order to bring the notion of power to a more concrete level of understanding. The study focuses upon young people with some kind of further education living in the central part of Uganda.

In order to protect minors, given the somewhat controversial topic of the study, I decided to only interview people of lawful age above 18 years old. Using the Ugandan definition of young, i.e. up to 30 years old,23 my informants were between 18-30. All my informants have some kind of higher education, e.g. two years diploma courses from colleges, university degrees and Master degrees from Makerere university. From a practical point of view, the advantage of choosing educated informants is that their English levels are high since English is the working language in schools. I am aware of how language barriers caused by not speaking in one’s mother tongue can result in not only misunderstandings but also how one relates to and uses a language. Conscious of this I made certain that my informants were free to properly explain and develop their thoughts when interviewed, given the rather complex topic.

In addition, the university setting is an excellent ground for meeting and establishing contact with informants. For three weeks, I stayed in a student room at the post-graduate Dag Hammarsköld Hall at the Makerere University. This

23 See Finnström, Living with Bad Surroundings, 2003, p. 36.
way I got to meet many fellow master students and the environment enabled and enhanced my network of informants. Pursuing work among friends and their acquaintances greatly attributed to the positive atmosphere that greeted my study everywhere.

The study has been conducted through an interdisciplinary approach, combining foremost politics and anthropology. I believe that the interdisciplinary perspective has contributed invaluably to a greater understanding of the question at issue as a whole, as it has forced me to view matters in more than one way.

With only two months in the field, I decided to leave out participant observation as a method and concentrated upon interviews and conversations with informants. Partially to broaden the quantitative aspect of the gathering of material, and principally to challenge/strengthen the results from the interviews, I also composed a survey based on the outcome of the interviews. I am aware of the anthropological scepticism towards questionnaires and how the anthropologist "tends to query the quality of the original data which is fed into the statistical apparatus … and how far the initial figures genuinely relate to social facts".24 Relying solely on statistics from a survey when discussing and analysing a case evidently entails the risk of great misrepresentation of the actual case in question. However, I believe that questionnaires can serve a valuable purpose, anthropologically and otherwise, if they are construed from the results of the qualitative work. This way the combination of the qualitative and quantitative methods can provide a more secure understanding of the basic material, e.g. how common it appears to be to perceive power as exclusively held by wealthy people.

1.6 The field
In the field one is continually forced to adapt and adjust to the circumstances given. After completing my interviews, I noticed how my female informants experienced power and influence differently compared to my male informants. The discovery gave my study a distinctive feministic approach; an intention that did not exist in the beginning but which the material itself made impossible to leave out. The fact that I am a woman most likely enhanced and encouraged

24 Leach, An anthropologist’s reflections on a social survey, p. 82.
discussions on power and gender where my female informants freely could
express their view, than had I been a man.

Another example of adjustments made in the field had to do with the
composition of informants. The original idea was to interview young people in
Kampala and in the smaller town Masaka, in order to contrast and compare city
life to the rural environment within the central region of Uganda. However,
having spent a couple of weeks in Masaka I came to realise that people there
often originated from Kampala or moved back and forward between the cities,
and the similar phenomenon was applicable to my informants in the capital.
Thus, my ambition to project the differences and similarities between the rural
and the urban settings had to make room for a more general discussion on how
young people living in the more affluent central region perceived power, as
there were no apparent differences to compare.

1.7 The informants
Although set in central Uganda, the people interviewed came from different
parts of the country. The common feature is that they all live in the more
affluent central region, with the argument that they are near to the centre and
have been exposed to being close to the capital Kampala and the country's
political core.

The reason for concentrating upon young, educated people is two-fold. Firstly,
their views on power, how it is achieved and maintained, are interesting as
potentially they are the future ruling elite in Uganda. Secondly, they were
brought up during a time when dictatorial leaderships in Uganda had come to an
end and with the introduction of a democratisation process. Thus, it can be said
that they have been brought up along with Uganda's democratic development. In
parallel, it is important not to neglect the 18 years long ongoing war in the
northern parts of the country. This paper does not intend to discuss the war
further, but bears in mind its effects on how power and democratisation are
perceived.

In total I interviewed forty people following the set criteria of age, education and
gender balance. The majority was students at the University of Makerere and
their friends, but I also interviewed people in Masaka; I stayed with an
agroforestry project for two weeks and the main part of my informants there were part of their staff. 25 All information gathered are made on a fifty/fifty-gender basis, i.e. half women and half men.

Discussing sensitive issues such as personal views on power, influence, democracy and a country’s leadership, could in extreme cases lead to inconveniences for the informant. In respect for promised confidentiality, I have decided to leave out information on education, as combined with place of origin the identification of the informant in many cases would be a matter of fact. Therefore, when quoting or referring to my informants, I have chosen to keep their identities secret.

1.8 The interviews
Arriving in Uganda I already had ideas for the contents and the structure of the interviews. Together with my field supervisor, Dr. Edward Kirumira, Dean of Sociology at the University of Makerere, we discussed how to phrase certain questions and a set of areas of interest was finalised. In order to establish a somewhat firm ground from which a general way of reasoning could be detected, a total of forty interviews was considered necessary.

Each interview was recorded and took approximately thirty-forty minutes using a semi-structured interview approach. The interviews started with how the informants related to power on an abstract level, leading to who is perceived to become powerful and how one maintains power. Then the notion of influence was discussed, followed by the informants’ understanding of democracy, on its own and linked to power and influence.

In time I became more skilled in tuning into my informants’ way of reasoning, and the choice to use a semi-structured interview approach was justified. The, at times, level of abstractedness was rarely perceived as a hindrance to my informants. The only obstacle that occasionally occurred was their willingness to please me in my research, with some of them trying to adjust their answers in accordance to what they assumed I wanted to hear. Obviously, as always with

25 The Swedish VI Agroforestry Programme runs aiding projects in the countries around Lake Victoria, counselling systems of agriculture.
social research I presume, this incident happened both ways and at times I probably, unknowingly, tried to please them when phrasing my questions. However, I was soon aware of this and made sure to point out before the interview started that it was their thoughts and spontaneous reactions that interested me. Moreover, I was careful in explaining in advance how the interviews were to be used; I was the only one who would have access to my informants’ details together with their words. This seemed to calm people and, in most cases, I believed it enabled them to talk freely about how they felt. Since most of my informants were, or had been, students of higher education they were familiar with the research situation in itself, which obviously helped in creating a relaxed atmosphere.26

Throughout the interviews I took notes whilst recording; this way I could listen through the interviews afterwards and cross check the recorded information with what I had perceived as vital and interesting during the interview. During the process of interviewing, the greatest part of my fieldwork, I purposefully refrained from analysing my material, in order to minimise the risk of affecting or steering my remaining informants' answers in any particular direction.

1.9 The surveys
Having accomplished, compiled and typed up the interviews, I went through them to identify whether any specific areas of interest could be detected, e.g. if there was something that people tended to have very strong opinions on, or if one particular opinion could be regarded as common. This resulted in a questionnaire of 21 statements with the choice of five options ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, that 130 people filled in. See appendix II.

Surveys can be criticised as a compilation of leading questions, however that lies in the nature of a statement. In cases where people were ’indifferent’ to a statement, they were asked to explain why on the back of the questionnaire.

26 One can only speculate on to which degree me being a white European woman affected my informants’ way of reasoning; at the end of the day field studies rely on meetings between people and on the exchange of experiences.
1.10 Outline of study
Arguing that peoples’ perception of power is vital when designing a democratisation process this study seeks to establish how young Ugandans understand and relate to power.

In chapter two, power will be discussed from a theoretical ground establishing a working definition, this will be followed by my informants’ views on what constitutes power and where it comes from, ending with attempts to distinguish power from influence.

Chapter three focuses on different ways of attaining and maintaining power as portrayed by my informants. Highlighting the two main perceived determinants of power, the chapter is divided into two sections, coercion and money.

Power and gender-related issues are discussed in chapter four, looking at how patriarchal power structures are perpetuated in today’s Uganda.

The final chapter concludes by bringing together the previous aspects of perceptions of power, stressing their importance as being a component of democracy and Uganda’s democratisation process.
2. POWER AND INFLUENCE

2.1 Defining power
Dealing with a concept like power, one comes across many definitions and interpretations, but despite the vast number of attempts to capture the essence of power there is no overall definition. Part of the reason for this I believe, is how power structures and relations permeate every part of society, creating plentiful apprehensions of what constructs power and what it means. Arens and Karp argue that power "must be viewed in part as an artefact of the imagination and a facet of human creativity" and how the actual meaning of power should be sought in patterns of use. Whether to be understood semantically or expressed through actions, the point Arens and Karp seek to establish is the insignificance of superfluous searching for clear-cut definitions. However, the need for a conceptual ground remains when analysing material, and I have chosen to approach the concept of power from a self-designed combination of scholars' thoughts (e.g. Bourdieu, Lukes, and Foucault) together with how my informants view power. Thus, the intention is not to present a new, all-encompassing concept of power, but to seek a suitable springboard from which to discuss and analyse power and its relation to democratisation. As mentioned in the introduction, I have decided on a definition for working purposes, that identifies power in patterns of use whilst addressing underlying reasons to self-perpetuating power structures.

Regardless of the definition itself, in Lukes' words any concept of power is always "ineradicably value-dependent" predetermining the range of the concept's empirical application. Arens and Karp encapsulate this when saying that "power may always involve the exercise of an individual's will over another's, but the rationale and basis for domination, acquiescence, and resistance may vary considerably from one cultural setting to another". In order to reach an improved understanding of power, this signifies a need to

carefully investigate the perception of power among the people living in the area of interest.

Analysing power structures, Bourdieu's theories on symbolic power, habitus and doxa, are important in their encouragement to identify what lies beneath a given situation or statement. Symbolic power, the power to 'define the world', consists of "making people accept an existing or transformed vision of the world … by failing to see it as an arbitrary construction serving dominant class interests". Thus symbolic power preserves the status quo in power relations and secures the interests of those in power.

Bourdieu's concept of habitus is that systems of domination will be reproduced over time because the way people understand their world has been shaped by the workings of relations of domination, which produce the systems, or 'structured structures', in the first place. In addition, Bourdieu talks of a field of taken-for-granted knowledge, doxa, where certain issues are never discussed or raised (or where already defined issues are to be found).

Bourdieu's theories are interesting in that they address the underlying reasons for self-perpetuating power structures and relations, and draw attention to the invisible mechanisms operating in hidden and therefore easily forgotten spheres. Lukes also stresses this aspect, stating that "just because it is difficult or impossible to show that power has been exercised in a given situation, does not mean we can conclude it has not". On the other side of the coin Foucault points out that the success of power is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms; "power is tolerable only on condition it masks a substantial part of itself". Moreover, Weber talks of power as rational and "authority is accepted without reflection; that is, it is legitimate". In other words Weber regards

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31 Bourdieu in Gledhill, 2000, 2nd ed., p. 139.
authority as something unquestionable, in contrast to power that is seen to emanate from a rational ground, somehow having to be justified.

2.2 Informants on what constitutes power
Male informants talked about power in the context of the ability to decide, to influence and to cause consequences. For female informants, power was put in relation to authority, but interestingly also seen in the light of having, or taking responsibility over something. The aggressive side of power is explicitly present among male informants, e.g. the authority to punish or how power equals the military.

The general impression I have is that when men talked they often referred to themselves and their own situation. They assessed the situation and put themselves, consciously or unconsciously, in future powerful positions. Women did this to a certain extent too, sometimes with a hint of hesitation or followed by laughter. Yet to me it seems that among women, in contrast to men, power was talked about and seen as something quite distant, more talked about as a phenomenon. The references to how power exists on various levels, from family to governmental are there, but generally kept on an analytical non-personal level.

Power is developed over time, it depends upon how authority is given to you. The level of authority you have, the freedom you have to express that authority, and how serious your actions are taken, can determine how much power you can possess. You know you have power when you feel responsible for the actions taken. (29, female, Nkungulutale)

2.3 Informants on where power comes from
Any striking differences about the actual sources of power cannot be found between the sexes. Describing where power comes from my informants had a similar, although wide, perception of the sources; god, inheritance, democracy and aggressiveness are prevalent but also money and education. Again women looked at power as something that exists in all levels of society, which is shown by them explaining how power thus derives from various sources.

Power comes from around us, from people, from God, from the positions we fill, and from the responsibilities we take. (26, female, Kabale)
Moreover, the women stressed the inherited or God-given aspect determining where power comes from, often continuing with several other factors thus creating an order.

Power first of all comes from God. Without God, someone cannot have power. … Then power can come from aggressiveness in personality. Another thing power can come from is money. (19, female, Kampala)

First of all power comes from Kampala; it is God-given. (23, female, Kampala)

It can be inherited; whether they have the ability or not, they still have the power. (23, female, Iganga)

Inheritance, some get it through votes, democracy. Others fight their way to get it. (23, female, Pallisa)

If women began their arrangement with unchangeable and/or inherited positions of power, men, as mentioned, often emphasised on the aggressive source.

Power can come from strength, then you have power and can manipulate. In terms of the government having power, then they have the gun of course. Then they have the law. For citizens, they have the votes. (26, male, Pader)

In a military state e.g. through aggressive means, in a democracy power comes from the people. (25, male, Luwero)

Analysing the perceptions among my informants the logic of listing different sources of power would be to start with what is felt to be most important, or most apparent, either ideologically or realistically. How the informant's voice changed in relation to how important a topic was perceived, is taken into consideration when analysing my material. Hence, even though the order is not listed in an “efficient straightforward manner” the way emphasis is put on certain views create an order.

If democracy is not the first thing that springs to people’s minds, it is not a question of absence of democratic practices or ideals. It is just that most of the time, as a result of historical and present experiences violence, as exemplified by
the informants above, was naturally mentioned before elections or democracy as a determinant of where power comes from.

That women expressed inherited and in-born power explicitly, especially when it comes to husband power and the father as the head of the family, can be seen in the wider picture of how women seek to explain or voice the inequalities present in the power structures in their daily lives. This can be interpreted as attempts, consciously or not, to force their perspectives into the doxa, which will be further developed in chapter four.

Laying the responsibility in the hands of God serves several purposes. Firstly, it is consoling knowing that since power comes from god, there is, or must be, a reason for the now prevailing power structures. Secondly, from a secular perspective, it eases the burden of not having been able to cause 'enough change' in the present power structures. Noteworthy, referring to God is not to be understood as designating oneself to be passive, on the contrary it shows an active recognition of the inevitability of certain lived realities.35

Money seen as a source for power will be discussed further in the chapter three.

2.4 Informants on influence

Power may have a limit, influence has no bounds. (26, female, Kabale)

Influence is the power of the tongue. (24, female, Ntungamo)

Interestingly one can distinguish a difference between how my informants view influence and power. As we have seen, power is partly thought of as something linked to authority in a Weberian sense. The sources of power have an in-built touch of authority indicating that power operates in a hierarchic, unquestionable way. In contrast, influence is perceived as being closer to the individual in the form of each and everyone's ability to cause changes or convince people.

Influence is the ability to have a bearing on something. (27, male, Masaka)

Influence is the ability to shape peoples opinions and desires. (24, male, Entebbe)

35 See Michael Jackson in Finnström, Living with Bad Surroundings, 2003, p.28.
Influence is the ability to convince others. (28, male, Ntungamo)

Influence is subtle, indirect. (26, female, Kabale)

Influence is the ability to cause change. (25, male, Rukungiri)

Influence is the ability to change a person. (25, male, Masaka)

When asked specifically about whether there is a distinction between power and influence, many informants saw influence as independent from power, arguing that anybody could be influential depending on personal qualities. Yet some were still hesitant to see influence as working on its own, without any interruption or contribution from sources such as money, force or a background of high social status. As advocated by Arens and Karp, power can thus be viewed in part as an “artefact of the imagination and a facet of human creativity”.

Influence is the capacity to convince, but it must be backed by other factors such as economic ones. (27, male, Mbarara)

With power you can dictate, influence you need to persuade. (25, male, Masaka)

Influence is peaceful, you convince. With power sometimes you have to use force to show your subordinates what it is all about. It involves suppression. (29, male, Kitgum)

Power goes more with authority. (24, male, Entebbe)

Power can be termed as authority to decide something to be, influence is just a factor that makes you make a decision. (30, male, Masaka)

At times influence might not change them. With power you can command. (30, female, Masaka)

You can be in power and be influential, or you can be a normal person and still be influential. (20, female, Mbarara)

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The result shows how power was commonly associated with authority and force, with an impersonal streak to it. Influence is connected to personal levels, operating peacefully among and between people. Analytically separating the two concepts reveals their practical interdependence, and the widely accepted view that one can be influential without having power has to be seen in the light of influence playing an important part backstage in supporting power.

You cannot have power without being influential, because you have to put confidence in people. Even if it is through the gun, you have to show the people you are coming with, the soldiers, that they have the ability to rule. (27, female, Kampala)
3. ATTAINING AND MAINTAINING POWER

The picture of Uganda as a war-torn ex-colony whose inheritance has been coloured by authoritarian regimes, a country where violence and corruption are prevalent in every-day life, is sadly strengthened when estimating the present and future importance of violence and wealth. Conversations with my informants portray a clear image of how power is acquired and maintained; you either use wealth or coercive means. The practice of achieving a goal with the help of wealth or violence only perpetuates the spread of corruption in a country. Democracy and corruption cannot operate side by side without one of them, usually the latter, exceeding the other. Corruption is highly prevalent in Uganda, among government officials adjusting constitutional laws as well as in forms of bribery throughout different levels of society.

This chapter is thematically divided into three sections, all looking at how power is attained and maintained in Uganda. The first section looks at coercion in relation to power and the ruling Movement's successful attempts to maintain power. The second part studies the importance of money, and corruption, and its impact on power. Analysing and giving weight to my informants’ perception on how power is acquired and maintained, it is vital to acknowledge the variety of levels on which different means are believed to operate. Violence and coercive means are mainly linked to how power is attained on a higher state level, especially with reference to the country’s political past. Wealth and corruption are perceived within all levels of society and are present in everybody’s immediate surroundings, thus more emphasised in the concluding discussion on who, and how, to gain and retain access to power.

3.1 Coercion

For as long as you get power just through fighting, there will always be someone who wants to fight you. … The ways of getting power surely affects the way the power then is implemented. Some maintain their power through being so mean…
(23, female, Pallisa)

Most of our leaders have self-imposed power. … We have leaders coming through the barrel of the gun. (24, male, Entebbe)

37 Tangi and Mwenda in Finnström, Living with Bad Surroundings, 2003, p. 171.
Listening to my informants I often found myself wondering why political violence seems so inevitable in Uganda's political life. And more importantly, how it can be accepted and looked upon as expected, unavoidable, and almost legitimate. Okuku argues that "the centralisation of power which is a characteristic of a one party state, … is one of the factors in explaining the incidence of political conflicts and violence of the kind that has characterised political life in post-colonial Uganda". Nevertheless, it is not necessary centralisation in itself that is bad but rather its harsh implementation containing no components geared towards the people, e.g. higher levels of transparency. Not surprisingly, higher levels of transparency would make it harder to disguise the mechanisms surrounding power, revealing its self-perpetuating nature and thus jeopardising the positions of those in power.

Discussing the prerequisites for democracy, as I mentioned in the introduction, one of the elements necessary for free elections putting the government at risk, is the electorate's access to information in order to make informed choices when electing a leader, together with the possibility to remove a leader. But if the notion of choosing a leader via elections is unfamiliar to start with and violent, or corrupt for that matter, measures have decided the few attempts at free and fair elections, the democratisation process becomes more troublesome.

If you get power, come to politics with a gun, the means of exercising that power has to be with force. (29, female, Nkungulutale)

Uganda carries a past where militarism has been employed as a means of capturing and maintaining power, where violence has been part and parcel of the political game. Sadly, the history is still accurate as mirrored by my informants’ perception of the close relationship between power and coercion.

In most cases people obtain power through military means, and that power is never checked. (25, male, Luwero)

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Politically you have to maintain the instruments of coercion, the elements of suppression to maintain power, so that you keep all people beneath you. You should control the means of production, and you have to censor the press. (28, male, Kitgum)

People fear their superior. Therefore there are only leaders who exercise the power. … Here the leaders dictate over the people. (25, male, Masaka)

In addition, 58 per cent of the consulted in the questionnaire believes that power is always coercive. (See appendix.)

There is no secret that president Museveni and the ruling Movement have altered or played down the importance of the constitution to serve their purposes, i.e. staying in power. "At times the constitution may not be the best tool to direct us politically for it allows wrong and doubtful people to contest for power", as asserted by Museveni in *The East African*, February 12, 2001. Or put by one informant on the president’s urge to remain in power, "he (Museveni) is changing the constitution every year because he wants to stay on and on and on. … When he says something nobody can say anything. … Every day he changes something in the constitution, because his time in office is coming up to an end" (23, female, Kampala).

Regan holds that the ruling Movement has accepted corruption and inefficiency in government, together with interfering in the implementation of some of its policies. "Some policies apparently directed towards democratisation incorporate contradictory elements involving considerable government control", he writes, "examples include policies on national and local women's and youth organisations as well as the potentially high degree of central control retained under the 1992 decentralisation policy". Furthermore, as discussed below, the 1994-95 constitutional debates ended to the NRM's advantage.

The president has to protect jealously the constitution that gives him power. Or whatever gave him power, if it was the gun then he has to detect his defence very well. (30, male, Sipi Falls)

You can become powerful through influence policies that favour you. You make people fear you. (25, male, Mbarara)

During the constitutional debates of 1994-95 the Movement managed to establish itself as a system, as opposed to its essence as a political party, in order to secure their acquiring and retaining of power. Boldly put the Movement attempted to "monopolise power through a state based organisation". Thus the lack of genuine competition for power is not merely due to lacking the resources such as money, education or forceful means, but the system is constructed around self-imposed laws aiming to disadvantage alternative political organisations in their legal contention for state power. As habitus is reproduced through the voice of no-party democracy, the belief that democracy exists prevails and the power around the president persists.

In like manner, attaining a powerful position within the government does not necessarily entail the expected partaking in decision-making in reality. My informants commented on the level of democracy in the government's decision-making, claiming that all decisions evolve from the president. In the words of a male informant, "even if you are elected MP [Member of Parliament] and you are high up in one of the committees, the real, important decisions are made by the president and his friends, that came to power through the bush with him. There is no democracy in Uganda" (30, male, Soroti). Another informant said, "there is a group that came to power through force in 1986, that group has more say in politics than the people who are just elected. You might be the minister of e.g. defence, but whatever is done comes from the other committee. That is where everything is being discussed and decided, and democracy goes away" (29, female, Nkungulutale). This circle around the president is known as the 'Movement Political High Command' and consists of a group of close army comrades and a few senior Movement stalwarts in the Cabinet. Real access to

political power and decision-making is still inherently linked to the military. The coercive element of power has continued to dominate the political scene.

3.2 Wealth

In Uganda the one who is wealthy is powerful. (24, female, Ntungamo)

In Uganda we mind much about money. Someone who has money can become powerful, can easily command using his money. … The reason why people begin with the poor is that they can easily be convinced with money. You can become powerful through bribery, through education and through marriage. (23, female, Masaka)

Money, or rather the lack of money, was an ongoing theme invariably brought up by informants throughout my fieldwork. The recurring phrase 'the problem in Uganda is money' with its diverse spectrum of interpretation, encircles just how important money and wealth are. Most of my informants used the word money, but often the context suggested the meaning wealth. Having money or wealth meant having the opportunity to get educated, to support a family; in short having the choice to cater for your own life.

One informant maintained that "in most African societies, if you have wealth everyone respects you and think you are powerful" (24, female, Kampala). Money openly infiltrates every part of the society and peoples' perceptions of power and influence are clearly coloured and directed by money. In my questionnaire 65 per cent strongly agreed or agreed that one cannot be powerful without money (see appendix), an alarmingly high number underlining the unequal opportunities for people to attain power. A female informant stated that "anyone can become powerful if you have the means, like if you have money, money can do anything. If you have money you can become powerful" (21, female, Ntungamo), exemplifying the significance of money in relation to power. Further, possessing wealth is not only a means to get power but also plays an important part when it comes to maintaining power. Informants argued that to maintain power "you first need to assess the economic factors that surround your power" (30, male, Sipi Falls), and "to maintain in power you have to give out money, so here it really is money that drives people" (30, male, Soroti). This shows how power becomes legitimate when wealth is redistributed.
and proves the necessity, in the Ugandan context, of continually doing so in order to uphold power.\textsuperscript{43}

You are going to have corruption, that is in most African countries, corruption is going to help someone maintain his power. To maintain your power, corruption is needed, you have to give people money. (19, female, Kampala)

The common feature of corruption tends to permeate several levels of the Ugandan society. The UN Global Corruption Report of 2002 concludes that corruption continues to dominate development strategies and political contests in East Africa, and that "the self-interest of those in power makes it remarkably difficult to mobilise public services in the fight against corruption".\textsuperscript{44} Uganda is dependent on foreign aid and external donors fund around fifty per cent of the country’s government expenditure,\textsuperscript{45} subjecting them to pressure from donors to install effective anti-corruption legislature. Indeed such measures have been introduced; the problem lies with weak enforcement mechanisms and with the political will to put them into effect. Another worrying side effect of anti-corruption measures is that it gives the government a pretext for persecuting political opponents and stamping out centres of dissent.\textsuperscript{46} Corruption legislature is a further example of rules and regulations that are not enforced but merely words on constitutional papers.

Transparency International, TI, is an international non-governmental organisation devoted to curbing corruption. TI Corruption Perceptions Index reflects perceived levels of corruption among public officials and politicians ranging between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt). In the 2003 TICP index\textsuperscript{47} Uganda scores 2.2, compared with Kenya on 1.9, Tanzania 2.5, South Africa 4.4 and Sweden 9.3, underlining the already stated beliefs of Uganda's widespread corruption.

\textsuperscript{43} Finnström, \textit{Living with Bad Surroundings}, 2003, p. 317.
\textsuperscript{45} Finnström, \textit{Living with Bad Surroundings}, 2003, p. 155.
\textsuperscript{47} See \url{http://www.transparency.org}
In addition to the apparent connection between financial means and power, money is also seen as an integral part of influence.

A person with financial powers can buy off others, corrupt others, so I would call that influence. (29, male, Masaka)

If you have money in elections you can win, you can bribe - you see that is influence. (23, female, Kampala)

In our country people tend to influence people by giving them petty things, like cash, especially in times of votes they give cash and pay school fees for children. (23, female, Kampala, italics added)

Here the distribution and redistribution of wealth is directly linked to 'collecting votes to get into power' hence the previously discussed distinction between power and influence is now brought together with wealth as the linking component.

Informants often expressed the importance of money, "money is a key in influencing in Uganda" (23, female, Masaka), and "if you have money, if you are rich, you can influence" (23, female, Kampala). Similarly, money is believed to continue to be the main determinant of influence, according to 79 per cent of the basic data from the questionnaires. This contradicts the previous more positive outlook on how influence can be seen as everyone's own ability and chance to cause change. If not going as far as calling it a contradiction, it certainly puts a distinctive limit to the impact of what 'influence without money' can achieve.

3.3 Concluding discussion
"Violence can always destroy power; out of the barrel of a gun grows the most effective command, resulting in the most instant and perfect obedience. What can never grow out of it is power", argues Arendt. 48 Violence should not be defined as a sort of power but rather as a tool to perpetuate one’s power. However, coercion has made its presence known in power structures and relations throughout Uganda's time as a democracy, and is perceived to continue

to do so which makes it hard to completely separate violence from power as exercised in Uganda.

On top of the homogenous view of the existing link between power and coercion among informants, 82 per cent in the questionnaire believe that the military is and will remain a part of the political system. This might not come as a surprise seen from a realist's point of view, but people's perception and outlook on society affect the way they behave. The most important component for democratisation to work is genuine belief in a democratic society among a country’s citizens; a non-democratic society is not likely to have a democratic government. Thus, the question is not about determining how close the relation between violence and power is perceived to be, but rather how one can find motivation to believe in a different order in society.

You should possess wealth, it is difficult for a poor person to influence sectors of the community. (28, male, Kitgum)

When someone has money, he can influence the rest to do what he wants.
(29, female, Kampala)

In a country where wealth is seen by my informants to be the single most important key to attain and maintain power and influence, it is not hard to understand how and why corruption is widespread. Nevertheless, Uganda needs to firmly address this issue for a number of reasons.

Firstly, wealth is unequally distributed among Ugandans; thus too large a proportion of the population will never come close to attaining power or exercising influence. Secondly, not approaching economic development as such, it is still evident that dimensions of handling justly by not accepting bribes e.g., is of minor importance when your top priority is to get food on the table and pay school fees for your children. As a female informant put it, "the worst thing in Uganda is that the biggest percentage is the poor. The rich can do anything they want to help the poor … But if the poor get the opportunity to get to the medium class, there is no one that can be lied to with money. Most people in Uganda are bribed because they want to maintain their children in school, that’s the thing they mostly want, especially the women" (23, female, Masaka).
Who can afford to risk not backing their words financially, in fear of being surpassed by somebody else’s money? And who can afford to risk not being able to pay their children's school fees? The answers to these questions are hard to find but will most definitely shorten the road to curb corruption. I hope that by then more people will experience being able to cater for their own lives.
4. POWER AND GENDER

As mentioned in the introduction, the gender aspect of power was not intended to be central to the study in the first place but the larger scope of a gender perspective became evident and was forced upon the study when analysing the fieldwork material. There were no direct gender questions during my interviews at the time and certain issues were not recognised until afterwards. Instead the great bulk of the gender-related material and impressions referred to originate from informal conversations I had with my Ugandan friends.

This chapter is based on the assumption that in order to bring democracy both men and women should have the opportunity to partake in society on equal terms. Ideas and argumentation by feminist theorists such as Pateman, 989, Tamale, 2001, Wendth Höjer and Åse, 1999, Moi, 1994, and Phillips, 1991, have greatly inspired me when establishing this chapter's analytical base.

Applying theories clearly developed in the Western part of the world could seem problematic when analysing the situation of women in Uganda, as perceived and portrayed by my informants. Nevertheless, I have chosen to make use of general feminist theories and thoughts because they form a considerable part in creating a democratic culture, and are thus relevant to women’s situation around the world.

First, the maintenance of the unequal power relations between men and women will be discussed through the eyes of my informants, followed by how the distinction between the private and public spheres generates the status quo in gender structures. Then affirmative action in Uganda is taken to exemplify how the male is kept as the norm. At last, the recruitment to the Parliament and its decision-making are analysed in the light of patriarchal structures determining the political scene in Uganda.

4.1 "Men are by nature more powerful than women are"

Facing the statement above in my questionnaire 67 per cent of the total answers agree or strongly agree. Among male answers the number is even higher, 76 per

49 See introduction p.6.
cent, while 57 per cent of the females answer in the affirmative (see appendix). This clearly indicates how the power structures between the sexes are perceived, and the result is quite alarming. The road towards equality between the sexes is far from straight if men are taken to be naturally more powerful than women are.

Power comes from someone who is naturally authoritarian, like husband power is in-born. (23, female, Mbale)

Comparing my informants from a gender perspective my female informants gave a more balanced picture on power than the males, reflecting on how the present power structures benefiting men are maintained. One female informant directly commented on how and why men in power stay in power, "mostly women are positively influencing fellow women, yet men influence others in a negative way, both women and other men. Because they want to stay powerful". (23, female, Masaka)

Male informants mainly talked about power on the political level and how money and coercion indirectly governs the distribution of power. "Power is always backed by coercion and oppression by the elite", said an informant (28, male, Kitgum). The family level is hardly mentioned at all, apart from this quick sentence said en passant by one male informant on where power comes from, "when you become a father then you automatically get power… nature may bring it, because if you become a father you will get authority over your family" (28, male, Mukono). Still, these statements are not primarily to be seen in a family, or gender conscious context, they more served the purpose of pointing out the obvious future reality for the young men in question.50

Female informants reflect on different facets of what power is and how it is attained, some with similar, declaring voices as the previously quoted male informant. Expressed views such as "at a family level, of course the father is the head of the family" (24, female, Kampala), and "power can be within oneself, e.g. imagine a boy - he feels he can beat any girl, of whatever age, so that power is felt within" (29, female, Nkungulutale), exemplify the unfavourable position

50 I am not saying that the family dimension does not play a part in determining a man’s power, on the contrary, a man without a wife is far from being regarded powerful. But not one of my male informants brought up the private, family sphere when talking about power.
women in Uganda are facing and bring the issue of gender in the limelight. If both men and women are to perceive and experience that they have equal opportunities to participate in society as democratic citizens, the question of gender has to be taken seriously. "Gender has to be seen as political, as gender continuously legitimise women's subordination to men and men's superiority". One of the main determinants sustaining the unequal power relations between the sexes, universally as well as in Uganda, is the distinction between the private and the public spheres.

4.2 The distinction between private and public spheres

To bring attention to the dichotomy between the private and the public is central to feminist theorists. Since the beginning of women's movement the divide has been attacked in the Western part of the world; more explicitly since the 1960s, when the famous slogan 'The Personal is the Political' established itself as a ceaseless uprising against the political order. As James puts it, "the cluster of activities, values, ways of thinking and ways of doing things which have long been associated with women are all conceived as outside the political world of citizenship and largely irrelevant to it". This is further apparent in the words of a female informant when she explained how women become powerful: "Women can get power from getting married to a rich man. … Through being hardworking; like can you maintain the home, can you go on the farm for many hours, can you really cater for your husband, are you obedient to your husband, aren’t you divorced even in hardships, that is the way you can be powerful" (23, female, Masaka). Power is inescapably connected to the domestic field and the woman’s subordinated position to the man. As a female informant said:

Due to our social setting, we are supposed to respect men more than women. (29, female, Nkungulutale)

Referring to nature’s involvement when explaining the divide between private and public, is a convenient way to maintain women within the domestic field. Bourdieu explains this phenomenon as being part of doxa. "The citing of

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52 Wendt Höjer and Åse, 1999, p. 37.
biological facts makes the constructed differences between the sexes appear 'natural', when its true function is to seclude the real and socially created power relations between the sexes, to present the social divide of the sexes as doxa, something that cannot be questioned".\(^{54}\) Habitus is reproduced as the expected differences between men and women and the hierarchy of the genders is naturalised through social practice.\(^{55}\) Thus, the divide not only serves the purpose of excluding women from public decision-making realms, but is also justified by the attempt to refer to nature as the provider of this dichotomy.

Having said this it has been argued that Ugandan women, like elsewhere in Africa, were "never confined to the private/domestic sector … their lives were also shaped by their participation in the economic and political-juridical spheres".\(^{56}\) Tamale claims that with colonialism clear policies and structures were brought into place that excluded women from decision-making and "entrenched their total subordination to men".\(^{57}\) Moreover, the colonial policy on education worked to draw the boundary between the public and private spheres, providing disproportionate opportunities to men and offering gender-based curricula; the education offered to women was in the first place centred on moulding good housewives. Men on the other hand were trained in politics, civil service, business and law.\(^{58}\) Although this divide is not practised today as such, the separation of public and private spheres clearly supports the ideology of patriarchy prevalent in Uganda.

Indicating that her situation was unusual compared to other women in Uganda, and that she was lucky to have her husband, one of my informants said she felt powerful at home. "When I sit down with my husband, we make decisions. And at times he gives me power to decide on what should be done at home" (28, female, Entebbe, italics added). Through socialisation and the power structures of the society, patriarchy has over time inculcated in the minds of Ugandan men

\(^{54}\) Bourdieu, in Moi's "Att erövra Bourdieu", Kvinnovetenskaplig Tidskrift. 15(1), 1994, p. 12, my translation.

\(^{55}\) Finnström, Living with Bad Surroundings, 2003, p. 251.


\(^{57}\) Tamale, 2001, p. 215.

\(^{58}\) Tamale, 2001, p. 216.
and women that the divide between the sexes is natural; men are perceived as naturally superior to women. As Pateman points out, "women have never been completely excluded, of course, from public life, but the way in which women are included is grounded, as firmly as their position in the domestic sphere, in patriarchal beliefs and practices".  

The fact that only female informants raised issues concerning the divide of power between the sexes, questioning what is taken-for-granted, indicates the difficulty in changing the doxa. Combined with the unwillingness of male informants to express any need for incorporating the discussion in order to change future habitus, the distinction between the private and the public continues to sustain the power relations between the sexes.

Another important notion brought along by colonialism is the concept of the individual. Contrasting the African notion of rights which is more communitarian, the traditional Western political theories emanate from a general, gender-neutral individual or citizen. The ambition to refer to theories and build them around the notion of an abstract individual might serve a purpose of equality at first glance. However, scrutinised further one realises that the neutral individual in fact is a man. "Despite its egalitarian aspirations, democratic liberal theory still nurtures a conception of politics which implicitly marginalises and disadvantages women". Feminism draws attention to the individual's false claim of neutrality, "the triumph of individualism emptied the public sphere of most of what politics should be about", and highlights the fact that the concept of the individual in reality makes and maintains the male as the norm. A norm "so evident it goes unnoticeable, yet at the same time so fundamental that the responsibility for every deviation from it lies with the deviant in question", i.e. the female. In Uganda this phenomenon is apparent

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60 See page 10 for discussion on doxa and habitus.
among the critics of preferential treatment for women and affirmative action, as will now be discussed in the following section.64

4.3 Affirmative action

Affirmative action is a policy aimed at giving a group a special advantage in compensation for a history of disadvantage. In the aftermath of colonialism affirmative action was used to include indigenous peoples in the civil service and other sectors of society from which they historically had been excluded.65 This 'africanisation' shares the fundamental objective to redress past inequalities with gender-based affirmative action emanating from the constitutional debates of 1994-95 in Uganda. Seeking to guarantee one third of local government seats for women, bringing more women to positions of decision-making, affirmative action was one of the most contentious issues defended by the Women's Caucus. However, the official line taken by the (male) members of the Constituent Assembly argued that affirmative action violated the principle of equal rights in the Constitution.66 Thus women were not to be seen as a group with rights to special treatment, or to be let into the chamber of power where patriarchal structures could be changed to enable equal participation in the decision-making. Nevertheless, the policy was accepted and so far the policy has been accomplished in the spheres of education and politics, while it remains to be implemented in the important economic sphere.67

In terms of education, signs of progress is apparent when looking at how often my informants referred to the importance of education, whether it concerns becoming influential or reaching a powerful position in society.

Through education you will be possessing invisible wealth. It is always rare to be powerful if you are not educated. (28, male, Kitgum)

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64 Lack of room unable further development here, but the concept of the individual is part and parcel of capitalism, which in turn strengthens the patriarchal system, hence supporting the inequality between the sexes two-fold.
...education can be powerful, especially in areas where not many people have been to school. (24, female, Kampala)

Very few people go to school, so when someone does everyone hears about you and you influence the whole village. (23, female, Kampala)

In addition, women defined education as the main determinant when talking about the future and possible changes in the power relations between the sexes. One of my informants declared with pride in her voice the advantages education has brought her. "I am a single woman, I cater for my own bills and I feel very powerful. I'm educated, so I feel powerful because I have my books so I can't fail to find a job. … I can speak out my mind anywhere. … I influence my friends, e.g. with my education, they see that I am educated, I have a job, so it influences them to get educated as well" (25, female, Entebbe). Other optimistic informants regarding the future declared that "I have always been yearning to fight for the girl child, at home, everywhere in society. We are capable women, I feel powerful as a woman" (23, female, Masaka), and "I feel powerful, big time! … I can cater for myself, food, pay the bills. Even without the man you can be powerful" (19, female, Kampala).

A male informant delivered, in a derogatory manner the only explicit comment linked to affirmative action and power. "Then we have sexual power, in Uganda we are so much taking up gender and gender balance, that if you are a lady you can get a position just because you are a lady!" (25, male, Kabale). In spite of this, affirmative action has contributed positively in that is has exposed more women to the political/public sphere. The presence of women in politics also helps to change Ugandan attitudes towards a more equal perception of the sexes. However, one crucial objection to the implementation and success of affirmative action cannot go unmentioned, here exemplified in Goetz's words: "The reservation for women-only competition means that women are treated as a social group whose disadvantage justifies protected access to the state. But this recognition is not accompanied by an acknowledgement that women as a group may have specific interests which need to be identified through a process of public debate involving women in civil society. Thus it is their gender, not their
politics, that is their admission ticket". It is vital that women, and men,
recognise this blind alley so that affirmative action is perceived as a right, not as
a favour towards women trying to ease the burden of being subordinated.

In *No-party democracy*, Kabwegyere claims that although women have not
achieved complete gender equality in practice the constitutional order has laid
the foundations for their total emancipation over time. He continues to conclude
that women now have a voice and that "this voice is bound to become louder as
the women become more experienced and confident to participate in public
affairs". Indicating that women's own willingness and ability to express
themselves solely determine their participation in the public sphere, Kabwegyere
unknowingly hits the problem on its head. As long as the government and civil
society put women in places of authority whilst refraining from removing
practical and structural obstacles that stand in the way for effective involvement,
the voice of women will remain faint. Even if the Constitution has laid the
foundations for change, as Kabwegyere claims, the responsibility for altering
gender relations and present power structures cannot be left with women alone.
It has to be shared by everyone.

Another area that needs examination is the recruitment to the Parliament and its
decision-making. In order to become a MP the education requirement is "a
minimum of formal education of advance level standard or its equivalent",
clearly benefiting the elite excluding 90 per cent of the female population from
acquiring the MP status. Moreover, among the existing women MPs few are
close to the real decision-making. Goetz refers to a research from 2000 by the
Forum for Women in Democracy, FOWODE, stating that although there were
six women ministers in the 1996-2001 Cabinet, the women controlled small
budgets in low-visibility ministries with few staff; kept far away from the real

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decision-making. Redistributing positions of leadership within the same patriarchal structures will not change the status quo. An anonymous feminist lawyer concludes: "If there was pluralism here, there would be space for women to influence political structures… Women are captive to the Movement now".

Furthermore, it has been proven unfruitful to criticise the indefensible lack of democracy in the Movement; occasionally there have been attempts to democratise the Movement from within, with the result of the person in question losing his/her position of power. For women MPs to successfully challenge the structures within the Movement counteracting women's real participation is close to impossible. However, women MPs have contributed noticeably raising issues of corruption, auspicious attempts that can be seen as an indirect critique of the lack of internal democracy in the Movement. Thereby, the Movement does not practise what it preaches; it promotes affirmative action externally whilst lacking the policy internally.

4.4 Concluding discussion

Socially and mentally you know that the man should be the powerful at home, but you find when a man loses his wealth, the man can go down and the woman can overtake and rule the family. So in that case anyone can become powerful. (19, female, Kampala)

This chapter has brought attention to the existing unequal power structures between men and women in Uganda and how they are perpetuated. The man’s superior power position in Uganda is a firmly established notion that has been strengthened by adherence to policies and practices favouring those in power, i.e. men.

Firstly, the divide between the private and the public spheres underlines the expected differences between men and women, and enables habitus to reproduce itself. Further, the attempt to break status quo in power relations in the government through introducing affirmative action policies, appear so far to

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74 Goetz, 2002, p. 566.
have brought about change merely on the surface. More women are represented with seats in the Parliament and are in positions of authority, yet, as the patriarchal structures stay intact, real access for women to influence and to partake in decision-making remains to be fully implemented.

Having said this, the successful achievement of introducing affirmative action policies in the educational sphere has created new possibilities for women to get educated and be secure financially, establishing an independent ground from where their voices can be heard properly.

Even if I get married to a mad man, by culture he is supposed to be more powerful than me, in decision-making and such likes. So culture has it that way, that a man is always more powerful than a what? Than a woman in a home. But now it is changing, people are developing financial power. Most times the woman is more financially stable than the man, which brings this other kind of power. (29, female, Nkungulutale)

Patriarchal structures may still determine personal as well as political spheres in Uganda, but with time, education and financial independence, these structures may be challenged and the attitudes among Ugandan men and women will start to change.
5. POWER AND DEMOCRACY: CONCLUDING REMARKS

Arguing that people's perceptions of power are vital when designing a democratisation process, this study has investigated the perception of power among young, educated Ugandans living in central Uganda through establishing how they understand and relate to power.

Power was commonly associated with force and authority and was perceived to operate in an hierarchic way, as opposed to influence that was connected to personal levels and seen as something working peacefully among and between people. However, analytically separating the concepts has revealed their practical interdependence. Power in its coercive sense can only achieve things to a certain degree; then it needs support by influence.

This was also shown in how power is attained and maintained. Violence has made its presence known in power structures since Uganda’s independence, and is believed to continue to do so, which makes it hard to separate violence from power. As phrased by one man who filled out a questionnaire after circling that he strongly agreed that 'the military is and will remain a part of the political system’, "in Uganda the president is a God: he does what he likes. He knows what is best, or he thinks. He will always amass military hardware".

Wealth was the other principal way to acquire and maintain power, and money was often seen as a tool of influence. The close connection between money and influence among my informants puts a distinctive limit to what influence without money can achieve. Thus violent means can get you into power, but you have to redistribute your wealth, i.e. handing out money/bribe, to secure your powerful position. As a male informant phrased it, "to maintain in power you have to give out money. Even the president handed out money during campaigns... Now Museveni did not do it openly, but most of it is done behind the curtains. So here it really is money that drives people". (30, male, Soroti)

74 per cent in the questionnaires disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement ’at the rate we are going we will have a fully developed democracy by 2006’. 2006 is when the next general election is to be held and is perceived as a landmark for Uganda. It remains to be seen whether the country will return to a
multiparty political system or not, as president Museveni recently has turned to constitutional means in maintaining his power. The constitution limits a president to two five-year terms. In time for the next general elections, Museveni has tried to open up for him to stand for a third term in office through changing the constitution. This has been heavily criticised not only by the opposition, and during my stay in Uganda the summer of 2003 it was first-page news every other day. Many of my informants commented negatively on this development and used it as an example of how Uganda is far from being a democracy. "The electoral law is supposed to protect us from this, but the ones in government are breaking it the most. It is damage, not democracy", claimed a disheartened male informant (29, male, Busia). Another remark from the questionnaires reads "fighting corruption is dependent on the prevailing laws and their implementation. If the laws exist but not in operation then anything can go wrong". However, the Movement has been rather successful in advocating their version of democracy and that Uganda is not ready for a multiparty system. It could also be argued that the Movement utilises symbolic power to remain in power, controlling its predominant position through securing its status within habitus.

Mugaju concludes No-Party Democracy in Uganda stating that "Ugandans have no sense of civic responsibility. … People who are not civil to each other in their homes, on the roads, at the place of work and other public places are not likely to be democratic in the corridors of power".\[75\] In relation to democracy the picture of power as portrayed by my informants is that the distribution of power in politics is unfair, and the main means of getting and maintaining power are far from democratic.

Moreover, in order to bring about a democratic culture, the perception of power has to be seen in the light of how unequal power relations constantly permeate women’s lives, from family to parliamentary level. Although affirmative action policies have been introduced, the real obstacles that stand in the way for men and women to partake in society on equal terms remain unchallenged. The most important task is to change the widely accepted perception of power as something principally for men. Admitting that women’s perceptions are

excluded from doxa is necessary for bringing about change in habitus. Finally this acknowledgement is vital when establishing a fair understanding of the perception of power among young Ugandans.

In concluding, one of my informants (28, female, Mbarara) talked about how democracy fails to take root in Uganda. According to her, "in Uganda the motto is 'For God and My Country', but people are corrupt, and are killing each other, so unfortunately it becomes 'For God and My Stomach'". I believe that perhaps her conclusion epitomises the perception of power among my informants. This is depressing, in that if the perceived power patterns prevent people in believing that a democratic ruling system could be possible, democracy is far from succeeding.
6. REFERENCES


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Lindskog, Niklas, Svenskt demokratibistånd och semiauktoritära regimer, D- uppsats, Developing Democracy. (Uppsala: spring 2003)


http://www.transparency.org

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## APPENDIX: Questionnaire

Results from 130 answers to the 21 statements below, filled out on a fifty/fifty gender basis. Options available: Strongly agree, Agree, Indifferent, Disagree, Strongly disagree.

1. "WITHOUT MONEY ONE CANNOT BE POWERFUL."
   - S.agree+agree: 84 (65%)
   - Indifferent: 6 (5%)
   - Disagree+s.disagree: 38 (30%)
   - Total answers: 128

2. "DEMOCRACY AND INFLUENCE GO HAND IN HAND."
   - S.agree+agree: 87 (69%)
   - Indifferent: 4 (3%)
   - Disagree+s.disagree: 35 (28%)
   - Total answers: 126

3. "CORRUPTION IS SYNONYMOUS WITH INFLUENCE."
   - S.agree+agree: 67 (53%)
   - Indifferent: 10 (8%)
   - Disagree+s.disagree: 49 (39%)
   - Total answers: 126

4. "AS A UGANDAN CITIZEN I FEEL I CAN INFLUENCE HOW OUR PRESIDENT USES HIS POWER."
   - S.agree+agree: 57 (45%)
   - Indifferent: 7 (6%)
   - Disagree+s.disagree: 62 (49%)
   - Total answers: 126

5. "THE MILITARY IS AND WILL REMAIN A PART OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM."
   - S.agree+agree: 105 (82%)
   - Indifferent: 8 (6%)
   - Disagree+s.disagree: 16 (12%)
   - Total answers: 129

6. "POWER AND DEMOCRACY DO NOT MATCH."
   - S.agree+agree: 52 (41%)
   - Indifferent: 8 (6%)
   - Disagree+s.disagree: 66 (53%)
   - Total answers: 126

7. "IT IS MORE BENEFICIAL TO SERVE THE PEOPLE THAN TO SECURE THE MILITARY APPARATUS."
   - S.agree+agree: 102 (81%)
   - Indifferent: 5 (4%)
   - Disagree+s.disagree: 19 (15%)
   - Total answers: 126

8. "AT THE RATE WE ARE GOING WE WILL HAVE A FULLY DEVELOPED DEMOCRACY BY 2006."
   - S.agree+agree: 27 (21%)
   - Indifferent: 6 (5%)
   - Disagree+s.disagree: 94 (74%)
   - Total answers: 127
9. "POWER IS ALWAYS COERCIVE."
S.agree+agree 70 58%
Indifferent 13 11%
Disagree+s.disagree 37 31%
Total answers 120

10. "HOW MUSEVENI GOT INTO POWER IS IRRELEVANT TODAY."
S.agree+agree 69 54%
Indifferent 6 5%
Disagree+s.disagree 52 41%
Total answers 127

11. "REAL DEMOCRACY IS A THREAT TO ONE'S POWER."
S.agree+agree 81 62%
Indifferent 2 2%
Disagree+s.disagree 46 36%
Total answers 129

12. "MEN ARE BY NATURE MORE POWERFUL THAN WOMEN."
S.agree+agree 84 67%
Indifferent 4 3%
Disagree+s.disagree 38 30%
Total answers 126

13. "TO MAINTAIN YOUR POWER YOU HAVE TO USE THE SAME MEANS THAT GOT YOU INTO POWER."
S.agree+agree 39 31%
Indifferent 8 6%
Disagree+s.disagree 79 63%
Total answers 126

14. "INFLUENCE OPERATES PEACEFULLY WHEREAS POWER OPERATES WITH FORCE."
S.agree+agree 66 52%
Indifferent 10 8%
Disagree+s.disagree 50 40%
Total answers 126

15. "TOO MUCH DEMOCRACY IS DANGEROUS."
S.agree+agree 80 62%
Indifferent 8 6%
Disagree+s.disagree 41 32%
Total answers 129

16. "MONEY WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE MAIN DETERMINANT OF INFLUENCE."
S.agree+agree 101 79%
Indifferent 3 2%
Disagree+s.disagree 24 19%
Total answers 128
17. "MUSEVENI IS ONLY POWERFUL BECAUSE OF THE GUN."

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<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
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<td>5%</td>
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<td>Disagree+s.disagree</td>
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<td>62%</td>
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18. "A LEADER NEEDS CONSENT FROM HIS SUBORDINATES IN ORDER TO EXERCISE POWER."

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19. "ANYBODY CAN BECOME POWERFUL THROUGH BEING DETERMINED AND WORKING HARD."

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<td>Disagree+s.disagree</td>
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<td>12%</td>
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20. "ONLY WEALTHY PEOPLE CAN EXERCISE INFLUENCE."

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<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree+s.disagree</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
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21. "THE PRESIDENT CAN USE HIS POWER HOWEVER HE WANTS TO."

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<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
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