

# **Same Same but Different: Parties, Politics and Ideology in Uganda**

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## 1. Introduction:

**a. Meaning:** The term “ideology” was coined in 1796 by the French philosopher Desutt de Tracy in reference to a new “science (ology) of ideas (idea). The purpose of this “new” science was to uncover the origins of conscious thought and ideas. Since that time, the concept has acquired different meanings to different people. It has been dubbed “the most illusive concept in the whole of social science”<sup>1</sup>Gerring accuses its practitioners with more than a little justice of “semantic promiscuity”.<sup>2</sup>Nevertheless several definitions have been suggested. Erickson and Tedin define it as a set of belief about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved.<sup>3</sup>From a social-scientific viewpoint, an ideology can be defined as a more or less coherent set of ideas that provide a basis for organized political action, whether this is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power relations.<sup>4</sup> All ideologies, therefore, offer an account of the existing order, usually in the form of a ‘world view’. They provide a model for the desired future, a vision of a “good society”. They outline how political change can be brought about.<sup>5</sup>

**b. Political Parties and Ideology:** A political party can be defined as a group of people organized to gain to gain formal representation or to win government power in most cases by electoral means.<sup>6</sup> There is a symbiotic relationship between a political party and an ideology. First, political parties usually display some measure of ideological cohesion. Secondly, an ideology normally determinesthe nature of policies adopted by the party. Thirdly it determines the social groups from

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<sup>1</sup> McLellan D, (1986) Ideology (Minneapolis: University of Min Press), p1

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Jost John T and Christopher M. Federico (2009) “Political Ideology: Its Structure, Functions, and Elective Affinities” Annual Review of Psychology, vol. 60, pp. 307-337

<sup>3</sup> Erickson R.S and Tedin K.L (2003) American Public Opinion (New York: Longman)

<sup>4</sup> Heywood Andrew (2007) Politics (Macmillan: Palgrave), p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, pp.272

which the party draws its support. Fourthly, the nature of political party organization. Fifth it the strategy to be adopted by the party in order to acquire power. Six, it provides a framework for political action when the party is in power. And lastly, it determines the framework for the identification of allies and enemies.

c. **Types of Political Party Ideologies: An African Ideology?**

It is often argued that an ideology should be cultural specific based on the history and the cultural condition of a specific people. For this reason political parties in Africa should adopt ideologies, which respect both the history and the culture of the African people. Nevertheless, in spite of this argument, there are some ideologies, which appear to have assumed a universal character. Political parties, characterize themselves as social democratic parties, liberal parties, conservative parties, agrarian parties, ecological parties, feminist parties, etc. Even within the third world, there is a tendency for political party to align themselves to these ideologies, including being members of global ideological groupings, such as the Socialist International,<sup>7</sup> the International Democratic Union (IDU);<sup>8</sup> and the Liberal International (LI).<sup>9</sup>

- i. Social Democratic Parties: The economy should be capitalist, but well regulated to protect the weak and disenfranchised in a welfare state. The welfare state should be characterized by taxation and the redistribution of resources to create public social programs. The government should provide or subsidize certain programs such as education, healthcare, childcare, and infrastructure development. The interests of workers should be

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<sup>7</sup> Socialist International is a worldwide organization of social democratic, socialist, and labor political parties.

<sup>8</sup> The International Democratic Union (IDU), is an association of center and center right political parties.

<sup>9</sup> Liberal International is a global federation of over 70 political parties with member parties in more than 60 countries.

protected through unions or worker cooperatives, and enterprises should be regulated to prevent exploitation.<sup>10</sup>

- ii. Liberals political parties believe that individuals are the basis of law and society; institutions, including the state, exist in order to assist them. They stress John Locke's notion of the "social contract," in which citizens give up some of their freedom to the law so that they can live in a safe society. In the economic sphere, they denote ideas of individual rights of property and freedom of contract. They believe that without these freedoms, other liberties cannot be exercised. They believe in laissez-faire capitalism, or no market regulation, which calls for the removal of legal barriers to trade and the blockage of government subsidies and monopolies.<sup>11</sup>
- iii. Apart from the above two broader categories, political parties can also be classified as conservative, agrarian, ecological or feminist. Conservative political parties aim at conserving perceived virtues of tradition, respect for established customs and institutions which have endured through time. Agrarian parties of small farmers and peasants emerged as strains of industrialization and economic depression created rural discontents in Europe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. They also emerged in the United States and Australia as a result of financial interests that tended to undermine agriculture. They seek to attract votes from those dependent on agriculture. Though Sub-Saharan Africa is largely constituted by small farmers, such parties are rare on the continent.

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<sup>10</sup> Pp.13

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, pp.38

- iv. Identity based political parties. These are political parties, constructed with the objective of promoting or protecting the interests of particular ethnic, religious or regional groups.
- v. Ecology/environmental Movements and Feminist Parties: Ecological movements/parties are constructed on the belief in the essential linkage between human kind and the natural world/environment. Destruction of the nature environment is assumed to have a significant negative impact on humankind. They are concerned about the damage on the natural world by the increasing pace of economic development/industrialization. Feminist political parties on the other hand are an aspect of the Women Liberation Movement (WLM) or second wave of feminism, which began in the 1960's and continues to date. They are concerned with the global oppression of women. They are dedicated to the goal of gender equality. They are largely routed in the radical feminist belief that all men are potentially oppressive to women, and that the best way to liberate them is to have "women only" political organizations or emancipatory movements.
- vi. It is important to note that a number of political parties, particularly those in power, are increasingly adopting a pragmatic approach. They have more flexible goals/no fixed positions. Are orientated towards moderate or incremental policy. To achieve electoral success, they shift their positions or expand their range of view point.

- d. **“The end of ideology debate.”**In 1960, Daniel Bell declared that the stock of political ideas had been exhausted.<sup>12</sup> In his view, ethical and ideological questions had become irrelevant because in most western societies parties competed for power simply promising higher levels of economic growth and material affluence.<sup>13</sup> A more recent contribution to this debate was made by Francis Fukuyama in his essay, “The end of History?”(1989). His argument was that a single ideology, liberal democracy, had triumphed over all its rival, and that this triumph was final.<sup>14</sup> Anthony Giddens on the hand argues that conventional ideologies of both the left and the right have become increasingly redundant in a society characterized by globalization, the decline of tradition and the expansion of social reflexivity.<sup>15</sup> To sum up the debate about the decline of ideology, the postmodernists argue that the major ideologies or “grand narratives” were essentially products of modernization that has now passed.<sup>16</sup>

In the African setting, the “end of ideology” debate has focused on the determinants of electoral politics. It is argued that post-Third wave African politics seems to be substantively different from the immediate post-independence. That there is a significant decreased emphasis on ideology among the elite. While many political parties have not abandoned ideological rhetoric outright, electoral choices are most commonly made on individual personal characteristics (Schatzberg 2001), ethnic and other affective identities (Ottaway, 1999; Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Posner, 2005), and patronage promises (Levin, 1980, Bayart, 1989; Berman 1998; Chabal and Daloz, 1999:

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<sup>12</sup> Bell, Daniel (1960) *The End of Ideology?: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the 1950* (New York: Free Press)

<sup>13</sup> Heywood, op.cit, pp 64

<sup>14</sup> Fukuyama, Francis (1989) “The End of History” *National Interest*, Summer

<sup>15</sup> Giddens Anthony (1994) *Beyond the Left and the Right: The Future of Radical Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press)

<sup>16</sup> Heywood, Andrew (2007) op cit, pp. 65

Linderberg 2003: van de Walle, 2007). Even though political parties have manifestos, and constitutions, which describe their programs in details, they prefer to emphasis non-controversial proposals or vague populism during campaigns

- e. Based on the above discussion this paper takes a normative approach. Irrespective of whether ideology is on a decline, it is important that any political party worth its name, should be anchored within a particular ideological framework. Political party manifestos and programs should offer an account of the existing social, economic and political order, usually in the form of a ‘world view’. They provide a model for the desired future, a vision of a “good society” or the type of society they want to put in place when they acquire political power. If possible they should indicate how political change or the desired society can be brought about. A closer examination of political parties in Uganda reveals than a good number of them embrace the universalistic ideologies mentioned above, at least in theory. When it comes to the contestation for power, most of them go for “quick gains”, focusing on things that came easily get them votes other than explaining their ideologies to the voters.

## **2. An examination of the ideologies of political parties in Uganda.**

Uganda got independence in 1962, with a fairly functioning multiparty system. Three political parties were fairly strong, with an established social base. In the late 1960s, as part of the nation-building strategy them, there was a movement towards the establishment of a one party state. This process was interrupted with the overthrow the Obote by Idd Amin in 1971. When Amin was overthrown in 1979, Uganda made a second attempt towards a multiparty system. The second multiparty election in Uganda’s history was conducted in 1980. Four political parties participated, namely the Uganda Peoples’ Congress, the Democratic Party, the Uganda Patriotic Movement and the

Conservative Party. The first two were old political parties formed in the struggle for independence. The Conservative Party was formed in 1966/1979 while the Uganda Patriotic Movement was formed in 1980. UPC won with 72 seats, DP got 50 seats, while UPM got 1 seat. The second experiment towards multiparty experiment in Uganda was, however, interrupted by three factors. First was the relatively oppressive UPC regime, which intimidated most members of the opposition to cross the floor. Secondly the decision by the Uganda Patriotic Movement to use extra-constitutional means of acquiring power. That is, it launched a guerrilla war soon after the elections. The third factor was the 1985 military coup, which took place just at the eve the next general elections. Ultimately the National Resistance Army/Movement NRA/M took over power in 1986. The capture of state power by the NRA/M took place at an interesting time. Much as the NRA/M guerrilla warfare was guided by a Maoist ideology, they took over power when socialist ideological and its associated one party system were loosing appeal the world over. For this reason, NRA/M was “shy” to declare Uganda a one party state. In fact, Article 75 of the Uganda Constitution of 1995 prohibits the formation of a one party state in Uganda.

Between 1986 and 2005, the NRA/M regime instituted a one-party system disguised as a “Movement” or “No-Party” system of governance. People were expected to participate in politics as individuals not as members of organized political groups. The international community, was using political conditions and economic sanctions to enforce multiparty systems in other African states, Uganda was treated as an “exception” largely because Museveni had succeeded in positioning himself as the pillar against the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. Uganda was seen as a frontline state in the battle against the spread of radical Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In 2004, Uganda ultimately succumbed to pressure to adopt a multiparty system. Several factors contributed to this swift. First was the resilience of the



old political parties, namely UPC, DP, CP and latter the Justice Forum, in spite of the numerous efforts to destroy them. Secondly, the Movement system of government started developing internal contradictions. Much as it had promised to be “broad based and inclusive” in was never to be. By 2004, it was clear two groups were emerging within the NRM, a group of people who claimed to be “insiders” and another group of “outsider”. These internal divisions undermined the philosophy of the Movement system of government as being “broad based” and “inclusive”. The third factor was external. With the 2002 successful transfer of power in Kenya from KANU to Narc, Museveni could no longer argue that multiparty politics was unworkable in Africa. There was also a fear that this successful transfer would make Kenya regain its original status as the key ally of the West in the Eastern Sub-region at the expense of Uganda.<sup>17</sup>

In 2004, a state managed referendum was conducted in Uganda to determine whether Uganda should return to the multiparty system or not. As expected, the results favored to the return to multiparty politics. Multiparty based elections were subsequently conducted in 2006, followed by another election in February 2011. Since the return to multiparty democracy, 39 political parties have been registered. 10 political parties have since been de-registered by the Uganda Electoral Commission leaving the number of registered parties to 29.<sup>18</sup> The next section examines the ideologies of some of the registered

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<sup>17</sup> Sallie K. Simba (2007) “Electoral Processes in Uganda: From Individual Merit to Multi-party Democracy” in Oloka-Onyango, J and Nansozi K. Muwanga eds., *Africa's New Governance Models: Debating Form and Substance* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers), pp-122-148

<sup>18</sup> The Registered Political Parties are: Activist Party (AP), Congress Service Volunteers Organisation (COSEVO), Conservative Party (CP), Conservative Party (CP), Ecological Party of Uganda (EPU), Ecological Party of Uganda (EPU), Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), Forum for Integrity in Leadership (FIL), Forum for Integrity in Leadership (FIL), Justice Forum (JEEMA), Liberal Democratic Transparency (LDT), Liberal Democratic Transparency (LDT), National Peasants' Party (NPP), National Peasants' Party (NPP), National Peasants' Party (NPP), National Youth Revolutionary Organisation (NYRO), Party for National Unit (PNU) (formerly SDP), People's Development Party (PDP), People's Development Party (PDP), People's United Movement (PUM), Popular People's Democracy (PPD), Popular People's Democracy (PPD), Revolutionary People's Party (RPP), Revolutionary People's Party (RPP), Uganda Economic Party (UEP), Uganda Federal Alliance (UFA), Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM), Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM), Uganda People's Party (UPP).

political parties by looking at their constitution, manifestos and international alliances.

**a. Pragmatism or Opportunism: The National Resistance**

**Movement:** Pragmatic parties generally are not organized around a particular ideology. Most of them are non- ideological and pragmatic in nature. They have more flexible goals/no fixed positions. They are orientated towards moderate or incremental policy. To achieve electoral success, they shift their positions or expand their range of view point. One would say they are opportunist in character. In Africa most political parties in power, tend to belong to this category.

- i.** The National Resistance Movement (NRM): The NRM captured power in 1986. Its original ideology could be taken to be socialism. Two factors were responsible for this ideological position. First it emerged out of FRONASA, and organization with historical linkages with socialist liberation movements, such as FRELIMO. NRM also had linkages with the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM). As mentioned earlier UPM was formed by people, most of whom belonged to the leftist section of the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) in the 1960's.<sup>19</sup>
- ii.** The second factor, which shaped the ideological outlook of the NRM was the nature of the guerrilla warfare fought between 1981 and 1986. When the NRA launched its guerrilla war, to a large extent utilized the Marxist rhetoric, particularly as developed by Mao Tse Tung and Franz Fanon, for political and social mobilization. This ideological platform was boosted by

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<sup>19</sup> Yoga Adhola (2011) The NRM and the Uganda People's Congress

leftist students, who left Makerere Department of Political Science in 1981 and Faculty of Law, to join the bush.<sup>20</sup>

When NRM captured power in 1986, it somehow maintained a socialist ideological outlook for at least one year. In 1987, there was an ideological shift from Marxism to Neo- Liberalism. This ideological shift was conditioned by three factors. First, while in the bush, the NRM/A recruited and got support from people with different social backgrounds. Some were peasants. Others were land lords, while others were merchants and various sections of the intelligentsia whose ideological background was rather diverse. Secondly, the NRM/A captured power at a critical moment in World history. This was a period when the socialist bloc was crumbling in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Socialism as an ideology was becoming less appealing. The third factor was donor pressure. NRM/A inherited a very poor economy, which needed donor support. Nevertheless, donor support was conditioned to the adoption of neo-liberal micro and macro-economic policies.

With the return to multiparty democracy in 2006, whereas the party at one time set up an ad hoc “ideology committee”, its constitution describe the party as being national, broad based, inclusive, democratic, non-sectarian, **multi-ideological, multi-interest** and progressive mass organization.<sup>21</sup> Among its objectives, however, the party seeks to implement a strategy of **private sector led growth** and export oriented production.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Yoga Adhola

<sup>21</sup> The Constitution of the National Resistance Movement, as adopted on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2003 Chapter 2 (6)

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., Chapter 3 (L)

**b. Social Democratic Parties:** As mentioned above Social Democratic Parties believe that the economy should be capitalist, but well regulated to protect the weak and disenfranchised in a welfare state. The welfare state should be characterized by taxation and the redistribution of resources to create public social programs. The government should provide or subsidize certain programs such as education, healthcare, childcare, and infrastructure development. The interests of workers should be protected through unions or worker cooperatives, and enterprise should be regulated to prevent exploitation. In Uganda, the party, which claims to be based on this ideology is the Uganda People's Congress.

**i. Uganda's People's Congress (UPC):** In a number of its documents Uganda People's Congress (UPC) has indicated that it is a Social Democratic Party. In order appreciate this position it is important to give a brief background of the history of Uganda People's Congress. The roots of Uganda People's Congress (UPC) can be found in the Uganda National Congress (UNC), which was formed in 1952 by Ignatius Musazi. Right from the times of its formation UNC organized around a non-racist ideology, though in practice it tended to be anti-European and anti-Asian in outlook. Initially, its leadership was predominantly from Buganda Protestants and from Budo Kings College. Nevertheless, over time the ethnic and religious character of its leadership changed, and the party took on a national outlook. Its support base was strong nationwide, but in particular, in Buganda, the North and Eastern Uganda. It was the first Ugandan party to have branches countrywide and outside Uganda.

In terms of ideological outlook, UNC was generally socialist in orientation. There are four reasons why UNC adopted a

socialist outlook. First, UNC emerged out of the Uganda African Farmers Union (UAFU). This was a movement of small African farmers/peasants agitating for better prices for Cotton and Coffee. Secondly, the formation of UNC was significantly influenced by Fenner Brockway, a Fabian Socialist and Labor Party Member of Britain. Soon after its formation Fenner Brockway sent one of his lieutenants from the socialist movements in Britain, John Stonehouse, to help in organizing both the farmers' cooperative movement associated with UNC but also the UNC itself. Thirdly, the former Soviet Union had some limited influence on the UNC. Through its Cairo offices headed by Kalekezi, the party was not only linked to Nasser's Egypt but also the Soviet Union. Lastly, the Pan-African Movement. A large number of UNC leaders were included to progressive wing of the Pan- African movement. The speech J.J. Kiwanuka gave at the All African People's Conference in Tunisia was by and large a replica of the Communist Manifesto.

In March 1960, a section of the UNC merged with Uganda People's Union (UPU) to form UPC. The new party stood for among other things: immediate and complete Independence for Uganda; upholding the prestige of hereditary rulers; promoting and maintaining national unity; creating a welfare state, where citizens regardless of their class, tribe, color or creed would have equal rights and the basic needs of modern life.<sup>23</sup>

In the elections that were held in Uganda, UPC got the majority of the seats. Through an alliance with the KabakaYekka, it became the ruling party at independence. The merging of UNC

and UPU in 1960 to form UPC, and the alliance of UPC with KY to form the first Independence government significantly affected the ideology of UPC. UPU leaders were capitalist/liberal by ideological orientation. KY was by and large conservative. Whereas, Milton Obote and a section of UPC leadership were socialist, members of the other party with whom UPC had allied did not support this. At one moment in the history of the party the liberals became so dominant to the extent that they a number of people with socialist leanings, such as Kakonge, BidandiSsali, Kivenjinja and KintuMusoke, Changa Macho, were thrown out of the party.

The 1966 crisis was a blessing in disguise for the UPC. A significant number of the right wing members of UPC sided with the Kabaka either overtly or covertly. The defeat of the Kabaka also meant the defeat of the right wing within UPC. This development gave Dr. Milton Obote an opportunity to give a new ideological direction to the UPC.

At the Delegates' Conference of the Party held in December 1969, the UPC promulgated the Common Man's Charter. Much as the party as mentioned earlier was based on a socialist foundation, this was the first ideological statement marking the attempt by the party to set out a socialist agenda for Uganda. In the "First Step to Move to the Left", the party: marked the beginning of a new political culture and a new of life, where by the people of Uganda as a whole - their welfare and their voice in National Government and in their local authorities - are paramount; the party declared itself to be anti-capitalism and anti-feudalism. It denounced tribalism, colonialism, capitalism and privilege.

In the Nakivubo pronouncement, UPC as part of its move to the left announced the nationalization of some private properties. The move to the left, however, came a little too late. Partly as a result of the move to the left the UPC was overthrown on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 1971. Between 1971 and 1979, though most of the UPC members had taken refuge in countries, which had socialist inclinations, namely Tanzania and Zambia, the party was more pre-occupied with the struggle to overthrow Amin. Issues of ideology took a back stage.

When UPC regained power in December 1980, several factors shaped its ideological stance. It was conscious of the fact that its move to the left had partly contributed to the overthrow of its government in 1971. Secondly, the economic decline during Amin's regime necessitated a new strategy for economic reconstruction. Thirdly, the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM), a new party formed in 1980, attracted several of its members with a radical and socialist ideological orientation. Lastly, on the global scene, socialism as an ideology was losing appeal. On the African continent, much as socialism had been successful as an ideology for liberation against colonial rule, where it had been adopted as an ideology for economic transformation, such as Tanzania and Guinea, it had not achieved much.

As a result of the above factors, UPC abandoned socialism. It accepted World Bank and IMF advisors in the bid to halt the disastrous economic decline in the country. With the World Bank and IMF, UPC ushered in a new era of neo-liberalism where the private sector and market forces other than the state

were to be the engine of economic recovery. Whereas the party also encouraged the development and the strengthening of cooperative societies, by and large, the second UPC regime, from 1980 to 1985 was characterized by the ushering in of a free market economy.

Interestingly with the return to multiparty politics in 2006, the party decided to maintain a socialist outlook. It I stated in its constitution that UPC was founded on social democratic principles and that it will continue to operate as a social democratic party.<sup>24</sup>It is also stated in the preamble that the party's strength is rooted in the youth, women and workers and that it is important to recognize their roles and provide for them.<sup>25</sup>

Probably the Uganda People's Congress is the only political party in Uganda, with a focus on ideology in its strategic plan. Strategic objective number one, is the development of a dynamic ideology, which is responsive to the changing environment and the aspirations of the people of Uganda.<sup>26</sup> To this effect, the party set out to conduct field research to identify the needs and aspirations of the people of Uganda; review, redefine and re-package the party ideology within the context of the changing environment; train and sensitive party leaders and members on the party ideology; establish international linkages with like-minded parties; organize debates and seminars in secondary and tertiary institutions to market and popularize the party ideology; and to produce materials relating

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<sup>24</sup> Uganda People's Congress Constitution, as Amended and Adopted by Annual Delegates Conference on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of November 2008 (preamble).

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

<sup>26</sup> Uganda People's Congress (UPC), Strategic Plan 2006-2011 (UPC Secretariat)



to the party ideology.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, none of the above activities was achieved. Quite significant is the fact that unlike in the 1960s when the party was a member of the Socialist International, this membership has not been renewed. Even its closer collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung is not as strong as it used to be in the 1960s. The Mulungushi club, which brought together UPC (Uganda), CCM (Tanzania) and UNIP (Zambia), is dead.

In spite of the fact that UPC considers the youth, workers and women as its major social base, it is increasingly becoming a regional party. All its representatives in both the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Parliaments were from the Lango sub-region.

**c. Centre Right Parties (Conservative Parties): Democratic Party and the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC):**

Centre right political ideology is often characterized by a belief in individualism and minimal government intervention in the economy and society. They also believe in the virtues of the status quo and general acceptance of traditional morality<sup>28</sup> Center-right political parties support capitalism as and a market economy but provide public services as a safety net. Several political parties in Uganda fall within this ideological cohort, but the most significant are the Democratic Party, Forum for Democratic Change, Conservative Party and the Uganda Federal Alliance.

- i. Democratic Party (DP).** DP was formed in 1954. It was formed largely as a result of the marginalization of Catholics by the Mengo establishment. Whereas Mugwanya had been elected by the Lukiiko to be the Katikiro of Buganda, his

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, pp.12

<sup>28</sup> Dickerson Mark and Flanagan Tom ( 2---) An Introduction to Government and Politics 5<sup>th</sup> Edition

election was nullified for no other reasons but because he was a Catholic. At the time of its formation, DP has strong Christian Democratic foundations. It was openly hostile to the Mengo establishment and it stood for a unitary system of government for the entire Uganda as opposed to the demand for a special status for Buganda by the Mengo establishment. It was also openly hostile to communism or any ideology with socialist underpinnings.

From an ideological perspective, the Democratic Party was founded on the principles that “democratic societies should provide individuals with the best conditions for political liberty, personal freedom, equality of opportunity and economic development under the rule of law; and therefore be committed to advancing the social and political values which, include the basic personal freedoms and human rights, the right of free speech, organization, assembly and non-violent dissent; the right to free elections; the right to a free and independent media; the right to religious belief; equality before the law; and individual opportunity and prosperity”. DP beliefs in protecting a strong family unit and family values and fighting vices like abortion and homosexuality.<sup>29</sup>

In spite of the above history, DP has been undergoing several changes. It is increasingly becoming a regional party. The 1980 elections in Uganda the party got most of its seats from Buganda. With the return to multiparty politics in Uganda 2006, the Parliamentary seats the party has won are all from Buganda. In Buganda, the support for DP cuts across religious

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<sup>29</sup> The ideological positioning of the political spectrum that subscribe to those principles, is to day referred to as the Centre Right

divide. Hostility with the Mengo government has declined. It has under taken policy changes to embrace the demands of Mengo. These include the demand for a federal system of government and respect for traditional institutions.

In spite of the above changes, DP continues to embrace Christian Democratic ideals. Through the Foundation for African Development (FAD), the party still receives financial support from the Christian Democratic Party of German. The money is channeled through the Germany political foundation, Konrad AdenauerStiftung. A number of its activities are conducted in Pope Paul Memorial Centre and the leadership is still largely Catholic

- ii. **Forum for Democratic Change (FDC).** FDC is the largest opposition party in Uganda. It was formed in 2004 as a result of a union between political pressure groups, that is, the Reform Agenda, the Parliamentary Advocacy Forum and the National Democratic Forum. Several of its members were originally members of the National Resistance Movement, which initially had a leftist/socialistic ideological underpinning. Overtime it has become a “catch-all” political party, accommodating any person irrespective, of his or her ideological orientation, as long as he/she is opposed to the NRM government. This means that the party may find it difficult to have an ideological focus, apart from a common desire to create regime change.

In spite of the challenge mentioned above in its party manifesto, FDC seeks to promote a free market enterprise and create a conducive atmosphere environment for investment in

order to create jobs.<sup>30</sup> The party, among other things also seeks to encourage and support the continued existence of cultural and traditional institutions in the country.<sup>31</sup>

- iii. **The Conservative Party (CP).** CP aims at conserving perceived virtues of tradition, respect for established customs and institutions which have endured through time. The party has maintained a consistent ideology since its formation in 1966. It was formed with the objective of fighting for a federal system of governance and maintenance of traditional rulers within Uganda's governance realm. In support of the federal system, it is argued that Uganda is a conglomeration of nations and administrative regions, which "voluntarily" came together to form one country. Being formed on the principle of unity in diversity makes the federal system the ideal form of government.<sup>32</sup>

Unfortunately, CP has not benefited from the advantages of ideological consistence for two reasons. First, other institutions claiming to be fighting for the same cause for which CP was formed have emerged. The Buganda Lukiiko has emerged as the "legitimate" spokesperson on the above two issues. To makes matters worse for CP, there is organizational linkage between the party and these other institutions, which are advocating for federalism and monarchism. In fact the majority of members of these other institutions, belong to other political parties, other than CP. Secondly, because of the strategic importance of Buganda, basically, all other political parties

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<sup>30</sup> Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) Manifesto, 2011-2016, pp.9

<sup>31</sup> Constitution of the Forum for Democratic Change, Chapter 3(x)

<sup>32</sup> Lukyamuzi, John Ken (2013) *Nature's Talk to Man, 20 Years of Kabaka Mutebi II: Poems and Essays on Federalism and the Environment* (Kampala: MPK Graphics), pp. 92

have opportunistically taken up the issue of federalism and monarchism. Even UPC appears to be abandoning its republican stance as far as this issue is concerned. In a modified version of its position on monarchism, the party seeks to fight for social justice, eliminate inequalities and ensure that no citizen of Uganda will enjoy special privileges, status or title by virtue of birth, descent or heredity “unless such privileges, status or title are entrenched in the Constitution of Uganda”.<sup>33</sup>

**iv. Uganda Federal Alliance:** Uganda Federal Alliance is not a conservative party per se but its support for federalism brings it closer to the Conservative Party. Like the Conservative Party, UFA thinks the solution to Uganda’s problems is the institution of a federal system of government. Unlike the Conservation Party, whose support for federalism is based on the principle of “unity in diversity”, UFA support for federalism is based on the belief that there is too much power at the center, hence the need to devolve power in a federal arrangement. The party believes that federalism is the only system that give back to the people their power and wealth.<sup>34</sup> Like CP, however, UFA aspiration for federalism is hampered by the existence of other institutions spearheading the same cause and the party lacks an organic linkage with such institutions.

Another interesting aspect UFA contributes the ideology debate, is a new perspective on the sources of Uganda’s

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<sup>33</sup> Uganda People’s Congress Constitution (Article 2.7)

<sup>34</sup> Uganda Federal Alliance (UFA) Manifesto for 2011 National Elections: Spearheading a new approach to the “Problem of Uganda”, pp.9

problem. Whereas other political actors are quick at arguing that the problem of Uganda is the President and in this case, President Yoweri Museveni and the solution, therefore, is regime change, UFA argues that there is more to Uganda's problem than just the president and more to the solution than merely changing the president.<sup>35</sup> The solution to Uganda's problem therefore is a total restructuring of the state.

On the issue of ideology, UFA seek to set the decolonization process in motion, first by establishing the Ministry of Ideology Development and Decolonization Process, charged with the task of taking the country back to the drawing board , where the struggle for independence began, revisiting the aspirations of the people who struggled for independence. One of the purposes of this ministry would be to review the post-independence education system, health, judicial system as well as cultural and religious systems in order to establish their relevance and suitability for independent Uganda.<sup>36</sup>

- d. Liberal Political Parties:** Liberals political parties believe that individuals are the basis of law and society; institutions, including the state, exist in order to assist them. They stress John Locke's notion of the "social contract," in which citizens give up some of their freedom to the law so that they can live in a safe society. In the economic sphere, they denote ideas of individual rights of property and freedom of contract. They belief that without these freedoms, other liberties cannot be exercised. They believe in laissez-faire capitalism, or no market regulation, which calls for the removal of legal barriers to trade and the blockage of government subsidies and monopolies. In African,

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<sup>35</sup> Uganda Federal Alliance (UFA) Manifesto for 2011 National Elections: Spearheading a new approach to the "Problem of Uganda", pp.5

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, pp. 22

political parties perceiving themselves to be liberal have an association, the **Africa Liberal Network** (ALN). ALN is composed of 27 political parties from 21 African countries. It is associated with Liberal International, the political family to which liberal Democratic parties all over the world. The ALN serves to promote liberal objectives and principles throughout the African continent. Parties involved in the ALN agree to a policy stating that they: exist to ensure the freedom and dignity of all people through; establishing political and civil rights, ensuring basic freedoms, the rule of law, democratic government based on free and fair elections with peaceful transition, ensuring religious, gender, and minority rights, fighting corruption, and establishing free market economies. The Africa African Liberal Network's objectives are: facilitate the development and growth of Liberal Democratic parties; encourage solidarity among member parties with the aim of assisting them to achieve power through democratic means; establish an alliance of like-minded Liberal Democratic parties in Africa for sharing information and experiences.

In Uganda the political party associated with the African Liberal Network, which therefore, would qualify it to be considered as liberal party is Liberal Democratic Transparency, Uganda.<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately it is by and large inactive.

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<sup>37</sup> Other members of the African Liberal Network include: Alliance for Democracy and Federation-African Democratic Rally ADF-RDA (Burkina Faso), Rally of the Republicans RDR (Côte d'Ivoire), National Alliance of Democrats for Reconstruction ANADER, Alliance pour le Renouveau du Congo ARC, Union pour la Réconstruction du Congo UREC (Democratic Republic of the Congo); Ethiopian Democratic Party EDP (Ethiopia); Parti de l'Unité et du Libéralisme Social PULS (Guinea), Movement for the Progress of Madagascar MFM (Madagascar); Forum for Democratic Devolution FDD, United Democratic Front UDF (Malawi); Parti citoyen pour le renouveau PCR (Mali); Popular Movement MP, Constitutional Union UC (Morocco), Party for Peace, Democracy, and Development PDD (Mozambique), Senegalese emocratic Party PDS, Parti pour la Liberté et la Citoyenneté / Défar Jikoyi PLC/DJ (Senegal), Seychelles National Party SNP (Seychelles); People's Movement for Democratic Change PMDC (Sierra Leone), Democratic Alliance DA (South Africa), South Sudan Liberal Party SSLP (South Sudan), Liberal Democratic Party LDP (Sudan) and Social Liberal Party PSL (Tunisia), and United Party for National Development UPND (Zambia)

**e. Identity based political parties.**Identity based political parties.

These are political parties, constructed with the objective of promoting or protecting the interests of particular ethnic, religious or regional groups. In Uganda the existing legal framework prevents the formation of political parties based on a particular identity. According to Article 5(1) of Political Parties and Organizations Act, 2005, a person shall not form a political party or organization the membership of which is based on sex, race color or ethnic origin, tribe, creed or religion or other similar divisions. It also prevents the formation of political parties which uses words, slogans or symbols which could arouse divisions on any basis. The law prevents the formation of political parties, the objects and membership of which are not of a national character.<sup>38</sup> In spite of this provision, partly because of the decline of ideology, partly because it is much easier to mobilize identities compared to well worked ideologies, and partly because of state practices, which discriminate particular identities, identity politics is on the rise, particularly in Africa. Identity politics partly manifests itself in the formation of identity based political parties in spite of the existing legal framework.

- i.** In as it mentioned earlier the Democratic Party, even though formed around center-right ideology and is a member of International Democratic Union, was formed as a result of the marginalization of the Catholics in a colonial state that could be characterized as a protestant state at the time. In spite of the fact that there are so many changes taking place with the Democratic Party, its Catholic outlook is still strong. What is interesting as well is the fact that it has become a regional party, with a strong presence in the central region. Like the

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<sup>38</sup> Political Parties and other Organizations Act



Democratic Party, UPC which claims to be based on the principles of social democracy is increasingly becoming regional, its major support being confined in the Lango sub-region.

- ii. Justice Forum (JEEMA):** Even though JEEMA, Uganda attempts to put on a nationalist outlook, it has a strong foundation within the Muslim Community in Uganda. It was founded in June 1996 by mainly Muslim elites. Its leaders describe it as “socially conservative”.<sup>39</sup> Out of the out the 20 Executive Members, elected at the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Delegates Conference held on May 31st- June 01, 2010, 11 or 55% are Muslims.<sup>40</sup>

**f. Ecological parties** Ecology /environmental Movements and Feminist Parties: Ecological movements/parties are constructed on the belief in the essential linkage between human kind and the natural world/environment. Destruction of the nature environment is assumed to have a significant negative impact on humankind. They are concerned about the damage on the natural world by the increasing pace of economic development/industrialization. Ecological parties, therefore, are concerned with the protection of human nature for human benefit. In Uganda parties that can be considered to be based on this ideology are the Ecological Party of Uganda (EPU) founded in 2004 and the Green Partisan Party (GPP) registered in 2010.

Much as the Conservative Party was formed with the objective of conserving perceived virtues of tradition and respect for established customs and institutions which have endured through time, of recent

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<sup>39</sup> Leni Wild and Fred Golooba-Mutebi (2010) Review of International Assistance to Political Party and Party System Development- Case Study Report: Uganda (Oversees Development Institute)

<sup>40</sup> The Executive Members of JEEMA Include the following: National Chairman (Muhammad M. Kibirige, Vice National Chairman, Gwal, Diana,

the party has shifted focus on the conservation of the environment. The party, but particularly its president have been championing the need for environmental protection; fought the use of DDT as an option to fight Malaria; raised environmental concerns relating to Petroleum refining and gas processing; raised the environmental implications of fighting the water hyacinth, among other issues.<sup>41</sup>

**g. Feminist Political Parties:** Feminist political parties on the other hand are an aspect of the Women Liberation Movement (WLM) or second wave of feminism, which began in the 1960's and continues to date. They are concerned with the global oppression of women. They are dedicated to the goal of gender equality. They are largely routed in the radical feminist belief that all men are potentially oppressive to women, and that the best way to liberate them is to have "women only" political organizations or emancipatory movements. There is only one party in Uganda leaning towards the ideology of feminism, that is, the Republican Women and Youth Party [RWYP] is founded on a feminist ideology but it is largely ineffective.

**h. Agrarian Political parties:** As parties of small farmers and peasants, agrarian parties emerged as strains of industrialization and economic depression created rural discontents in Europe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. They also emerged in the United States as Australia as a result of financial interests that tended to undermine agriculture. They seek to attract votes from those dependent on agriculture. Though Sub-Saharan Africa is largely constituted by small farmers, such parties are rare on the continent. In Uganda two political parties can be grouped as agrarian parties because they claim to represent the interests of the small peasant farmers. They are the Farmers' Party of Uganda [FPU] and the National Peasants' Party

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<sup>41</sup> Lukyamuzi, op. cit.

[NPP]. Though registered, these parties just exist in name with little organic linkages with the people they claim to represent, that is, the peasant. Though their social base is wide, they have never subjected themselves to electoral politics.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion even though ideology appears to be on a decline, most political parties in Uganda, at least by looking at their manifestos and constitutions are embedded within certain ideological frameworks. Several factors, however, explain why political parties in Uganda have been unable to leave by their ideological expectations. First they recruit people from different social backgrounds and ideological outlook. This undermines their ability to focus on one particular ideology that is acceptable to all its membership. Secondly, political parties in Uganda lack of organic linkage between political parties and intellectuals. In the 1960's there was a strong linkage between UPC and the Leftist intellectuals at Makerere University.<sup>42</sup> The party was also a member of Socialists International. Overtime this intellectual linkage has broken down. Thirdly, apart from the failure to create a linkage with the intellectuals, political parties have also failed to create an organizational linkage with the social groups, whose views they claim they represent. The Conservative Party, for example, has no linkage with the traditional institutions in Uganda, and yet it advocates for a Uganda where their role is recognized. Fourthly, the triumph of liberalism after the collapse of the Soviet has made the socialist ideology less appealing. All political parties are struggling to fit in an ideological framework acceptable by the West. Just because Uganda is dependant on foreign aid, political parties fear to loose this assistance from the “development partners” should they get an opportunity of capturing state power. Fifth, as Anthony Giddens argues, due to globalizations ,which is resulting into the standardization of economic and social policies. The distinction between the policies of parties on a number of issues is increasingly becoming burred. Sixth, the rise of ethnic consciousness and communal tendencies the world over and in Uganda in particular is a threat to political parties with a nationalist

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<sup>42</sup> The Common Man's Charter, for example, was formulated by Prof. GingyeraPincywa, Prof. YashTandon and Prof. Mohiddin

appeal. Besides, there is a high propensity to recruit on communal grounds since the costs of doing so are lower than if one attempted to recruit membership based on a particular formalized ideology. Eighth, the high level of unemployment undermines the ability of the working class to organize and to develop linkages with any political movement. The willingness for workers to work under any condition is very high. Nevertheless it is important to note that in the 1960s, both UPC and DP had workers affiliated to them. Lastly, in a number of cases support for political parties in Uganda can be understood from the perspectives of the "Party identification" and "sociological" models. It is not based on rationality. The family is the principle means through which political royalties are forged. Party support is passed over from generation to generation. Because of this, irrespective of how good UPC policies are, they may not attract the support of individuals who belong to other parties "by birth".

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