Unregulated Campaign Spending and It’s Impact on Electoral Participants in Uganda

A Call for Legislative Action and Civic Engagement

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Authored by:
Eddie Kayinda and Henry Muguzi

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Alliance for Finance Monitoring (ACFIM - Uganda)
Interservice Tower 1st Floor
Plot 33 Lumumba Avenue
P.O. Box 372016 Kampala
Tel: +256 393 217168
Email: acfim@politicalfinanceafrica.org, acfimuganda@gmail.com
Website: www.politicalfinanceafrica.org

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Acknowledgements

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Special thanks go to ACFIM member organizations namely; Midwestern Region Anti-Corruption Coalition (MIRAC), Rwenzori Anti-Corruption Coalition (RAC), MAYANK Anti-Corruption Coalition (MACCO), Anti-Corruption Coalition of Busoga (ACCOB), and First African Bicycle Organisation (FABIO) for providing research assistants and organizing appointments for key informant interviews.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACCOB  Anti-Corruption Coalition of Busoga
ACFIM  Alliance for Finance Monitoring
ATM    Automatic Teller Machine
CA     Constituent Assembly
DP     Democratic Party
ECCP   Efforts to Curb Commercialised Electoral Practices
FABIO  First African Bicycle Organisation
FDC    Forum for Democratic Change
FGDs   Focus Group Discussions
IPOD   Inter Party Organisation for Dialogue
LCV    Local Council Five (District)
LGs    Local Governments
MACCO  MAYANK Anti-Corruption Coalition
MOJCA  Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
MP     Member of Parliament
MPC    Marginal Propensity to Save
NBA    National Basket Ball Association
NRM    National Resistance Movement
PLO    Patrick Loch Otieno Lumumba
RAC    Rwenzori Anti-Corruption Coalition
SACCO  Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisation
SPSS   Statistical Package for Social Scientists
U.S.   United States
UGX    Uganda Shillings
UMA    Uganda Manufacturers Association
UPC    Uganda Peoples Congress
Executive Summary

Background
Election campaign spending has been growing exponentially since 1996 when the country conducted the first election under the current constitution. The cost of contesting for a political seat has risen so high that this study estimates contestants for Member of Parliament in 2021 to spend upwards of UGX 500 million (USD 137,00).

Introduction
The study interrogates the impact of campaign spending on electoral participants over the previous electoral cycles (2006, 2011, and 2016). ACFIM documents cases of politicians that have been financially bruised as a result of campaign spending in a country where electoral processes have been commercialised.

Description of the Problem
There is a prevailing general perception in Uganda today that politics means wealth. The men and women who offer themselves for elections at different electoral levels believe that being elected as political leader is a guarantee that “things will” come. This informs the decision to invest as much money as they can into elections. The electorate inundate political leaders with phone calls, demand notes and other forms of financial requests.

Objectives of the Study
The cardinal object of this study is to analyse the extent of the impact of election spending on electoral participants as a consequence of commercialisation of politics and electoral processes, and to propose solutions for curbing the vice that has metamorphosed into a monster.

Justification for the Study
Since 1996, the cost of contesting for elections at Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government levels has been escalating. To date “the country is facing a monster of commercialized electoral politics and we must deal with it”¹.

Scope and Methodology
ACFIM took keen interest in interrogating and documenting how former electoral candidates – elected or failed – are coping with the effects of unregulated campaign spending. The study attempted to establish the impact of unregulated electoral

¹ Statement made by Kajara County Member of Parliament, Hon. Michael Timuzigiku Kamugishia at the validation meeting for this study, at Hotel Africana, August 2019.
Spending on electoral participants. The electoral participants covered under the context of this study include;

a) Political Parties  
b) Individual candidates  
c) Elected Leader  
d) Campaign agents  
e) The electorate / voters  
f) Private companies or businesses that make campaign donations

The study collected responses from 428 former political candidates in 15 lower local governments namely; sub-counties, municipalities and town councils.

Research Design  
A mixed methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques was used to collect data from both primary and secondary respondents. Qualitative data was supported by documentary review of available literature to give the study the necessary theoretic grounding.

The Mechanics of Campaign Financing in Uganda  
From 2015 pre-campaign period it became increasingly clear that the primary method for controlling the electoral process and determining electoral outcome especially in rural areas was through use of money. Campaign spending in Uganda begins immediately an election end.

Perceptions on Influence of Money on Election Outcomes  
There is common perception within political candidates, campaign agents and voters that money largely influenced the outcome of elections in 2016 at different electoral levels. Majority of respondents (79%) believe that money influenced voter decisions and subsequent outcome of the election. When it comes to constituency spending, the incumbent leader is always in a hot spot. During election campaigns, political parties and candidates spend money on legitimate and illegitimate electoral activities.

The Paradox of Commercialised Electoral Politics  
Commercialisation of politics and electoral processes is the cry of every politician as Uganda heads into general elections 2021 where campaign spending is projected to reach unprecedented level. If the 2015-2016 election campaigns were described in a word as, Money, they all hell will likely break loose in 2021. Most political leaders consider politics as employment, exposure and opportunities rather than leadership or service to the electorate (service).
Impact of Campaign Spending on Electoral Participants

Who are the Electoral Participants?
- a) Candidates
- b) Political Parties
- c) Campaign agents
- d) Electorate / voters
- e) Private companies / businesses

Impact on Political Candidates
The most commonly experienced consequences include but are not limited to the following:
- a) Collapse of personal businesses and loss of business networks,
- b) Depletion of all personal savings,
- c) Failure to finance living costs/standards
- d) Loss of personal property
- e) Family challenges such as domestic violence and marriage breakages
- f) Economic enhancement

Impact on Political Voters
Unresponsive Leadership:
Citizens have been observing and watching helplessly as their elected leaders at different levels make and pass policies that do not resonate with the needs and aspirations of voters.

Poor Service Delivery:
The direct impact of effect at the heart of the voters is poor service delivery! Unregulated electoral and campaign spending affects the quality of services delivery to the electorate.

Impact on Political Parties
Costly court petitions and compensations:
Political parties just like their members also suffer heavy costs of court petitions and compensations where agitated members or groups sue them. Most of the petition arise from irregularities members allege happen during political party primary elections.

Opportunity to Assert Political Party Influence:
Campaign spending has enabled the NRM Party to consolidate its grips at village level whereas the opposite is true with opposition political parties.
Impact on Campaign Agents

*Source of Income:*

Campaign managers view election campaigns as an occupation and source of enrichment. Their impact is always positive as they gain income. A campaign manager/agent has no business with a candidate whose “pockets are shallow”. They are known for flashy lifestyles and commonly changed cars, good houses, prime properties and prospering businesses in town where they operate. There were also suppliers of most logistical support services used in during campaign e.g. fuel (from their own fuel stations), car hire services, hotels, bars, public address systems, financial services, soda depots and printing companies among others.

Impact on Private Companies / Businesses

*Collapsing Businesses:*

Participation in political processes resulted in collapse of some businesses due loss of business networks and inadequate time to supervise businesses.

*Businesses Protected:*

A investor working in a particular district may face a harsh bye-law passed by a hostile district council. One way of keeping the district council on side is by ensuring that you have supported the campaigns of a few successful counselors. Bankrolling political candidates provides businesses with a say on the floors of Parliament and district councils.

*Growth in Business Profile:*

Whereas some companies were found to suffer from the effects of making generous campaign finance donations, there are other which support candidates and they profit significantly from it.

Conclusion

The cost of financing election campaigns has been rising exponentially since 2006 when Uganda returned to multiparty political dispensation. Money has become the major motivation for political socialization and electoral participation, turning the relationship between voters and political leaders into a transactional one. Unregulated campaign spending opens doors for disproportionate expenditure by and on behalf political parties or candidates who are very well resourced, which in effect distorts the fairness of election campaigns at all levels of elections in Uganda not least village council elections.
Recommendations

What the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, and Lawmakers can do?

a) Enact standalone election campaign finance legislation in accordance with good practices for mandatory public disclosure requirements, contribution limits, spending limits and reporting on pre-campaign and campaign spending by or on behalf of political parties and candidates.

b) Tighten provision on vote buying to bar from contesting for at least 5 years political leaders whose elections are nullified in courts of law even if the nullification is as a result of a civil suit. Also prohibit the giving of donations by all candidates including a President who is also a candidate, in order to create a level playing field for all.

What Political Parties can do?

a) Develop campaign finance guidelines to curb the vice of commercialization of political party primary elections.

b) Support the debate and advocacy on enactment of stringent campaign finance laws in Uganda.

What Civil Society can do?

a) Carry out rigorous and sustained civic education aimed at changing the commercialized attitudes of the electorate in Uganda.

b) Conduct research, monitor electoral process and engage with relevant government institutions on feasible reforms
c) Advocate for transparency in corporate political financing.

What Religious Leaders can do?

a) Banish all forms of fundraisings from worship centers for a period of 12 months preceding a general elections.

b) Carry out civic awareness aimed at discouraging the electorate from engaging in acts the commercialise electoral politics
Chapter One

Overview of the Study

“ACFIM has concerns about the undesirable situation that sees Members of Parliament trapped in debt throughout their tenure of office because unregulated campaign spending wounds that take at least four years to recuperate”. And when voted out, they remain economically battered, shattered, tattered and tattooed! The situation of those who fail in the election, the situation is even much worse than you can imagine. ACFIM Executive Director, Henry Muguzi

Background
Uganda has held ten general elections ever since the country’s pre-independence and post-independence namely; 1958, 1961, 1962, 1980, 1993, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, and 2015, with another one imminent in 2021. Regular elections have been institutionalised in the politics of Uganda since promulgation of the national constitution in 1995 and eventual return to multi-party political dispensation in 2005. The regularity of elections in the past 30 years gives an impression that Ugandans have unequivocally accepted the legitimacy of elections democratic processes for determining who shall govern the country. The question of whether these elections comply with internationally acceptable democratic principles, is outside the context of this study.

Election campaign spending has been growing exponentially since 1996 when the country conducted the first general election under the current constitution. When it comes to election campaigns, political candidates parade and project themselves as a people that have monetary capacity to provide instant solutions to service delivery problems and financial needs of the electorate. When voted into office they drive such expensive vehicles

2 Henry Muguzi was speaking during a Consultative Meeting with Members of the 10th Parliament at Protea Hotel in Kampala. The meeting purposed at dialoguing with MPs on proposed private member’s bill on election campaign finance.
that creates a citizen perception that “money is not a problem” because every time they are asked, the response they give is a positive one.

Consequently, the cost of contesting for a political seat has risen so high that this study estimates contestants for Member of Parliament in 2021 to spend upwards of UGX 500 million (USD 137,00). And as this study reveals, being elected into political office marks the start of another form of political spending on constituency demands that are personal to the electorate namely; contribution to fundraisings in places of worship, contribution to funerals and weddings, payment of schools fees and medical bills among others. This constituency spending is unwarranted because it is made on things that would have otherwise been provided for by government. Politics in Uganda is so commercialised that in the minds of the ordinary voter, the political leader is also “a mobile Automatic Teller Machine (ATM)” In other words, the political leader in Uganda enters political office spending, lives the entire tenure spending and comes off office spending. In fact many former political leaders and candidates are living in a sorry economic state.

**Introduction**

The study interrogates the Impact of unregulated campaign spending on electoral participants over the previous electoral cycles (2006, 2011, and 2016). It covers three electoral levels namely; Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government. In this study, ACFIM documents cases of politicians that have been financially bruised as a result of campaign spending in a country where electoral processes have been commercialised. If further documents how other electoral participants such as political parties, campaign managers, voters and businesses/business persons that bankroll political candidates, cope with the impact of their participation. The study also documents case studies of former political candidates at national and local government levels - and by extension their families – how they have been impacted by unregulated spending on election campaigns. ACFIM takes full cognizance of the fact that the subject of election campaign finance in Africa is as under-researched as it is under legislated. As such the study is part of a long-term initiative of building a solid information base on political finance in Africa to inform policy makers at African Union but also in respective African states including Uganda, to in the process of developing context appropriate legal and institutional interventions to curb the vice of commercialisation of politics and electoral processes. This study establishes the undesired impact of the vice on
electoral integrity and the pursuit of sustainable democracy. It further aims at informing advocacy on election campaign finance legislation in Uganda. It is the hope of ACFIM that this study will trigger further research into the subject of political finance in different African countries.

A study by Alliance for Finance Monitoring on campaign spending for 2016 elections estimates that at least UGX 2.4 trillion was spend by Political Parties and candidates on Presidential and Parliamentary election campaigns countrywide. Money has been the main campaigning methodology over the previous two electoral cycles. As Uganda heads into electioneering period for Presidential and Parliamentary 2021, incumbents and their challengers appear to favour money as the more effective method for campaigning. ACFIM predicts that because money will likely be the mainstream electoral issue, the combined figure of campaign spend could more than double that which was spent in 2016. This is because candidates are expressing strong willingness to pay for votes while campaign agents and voters are expressing insatiable desire to take in as much gifts and cast as possible from candidates. As campaign sending increases, so does the impact on electoral participants and the national economy.

**Description of the Problem**

There is a prevailing general perception in Uganda today that politics means wealth. The men and women who offer themselves for elections at different electoral levels believe that being elected as political leader is a guarantee that “things will come”. This informs the decision to invest as much money as they can into elections. Uganda’s past two electoral cycles (2011 and 2016) have been characterised by “spending wars” between political parties and electoral candidates. The country continues to witness financially bruised former political candidates having staked everything and anything to access election campaign money. ACFIM is cognizant of the fact that spending during election campaigns is inevitable, the problem is when it get to be done in excess.

The electorate perceive of politicians as men and women that have inexhaustible sources of money, that once elected they must instantly start to solve their monetary problems. The electorate inundate political leaders with phone calls, demand notes and other forms of financial requests. Even when the electorate have been living with a person under the same economic conditions, the moment he/she declares intentions to stand for election, they suddenly turn on him/her with all forms of monetary demands.
What explains this behaviour? Could the relentless monetary demands from the electorate have the potential to lead elected leaders into temptation? What is the rationality of the voters in Uganda today?

Political leaders and candidates particularly those that subscribe to the party in power look to party chairperson President Yoweri Museveni to provide not only campaign finance but also bail them out from all sorts of financial obligations arising from campaign spending bruises. In one of his tweets on November 11 President Museveni after hosting representatives of the Inter Party Organisation for Dialogue (IPOD) wrote:

“I urged leaders of the opposition political parties, together with their supporters to work with the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Government to eradicate electoral violence and the monetisation of politics to give Democracy and Stability a chance to flourish in Uganda”

Despite ranking among the highest paid public officers in the country, the economic situation of Members of Parliament leaves a lot to be desired. Many MPs are internally displaced from his/her constituency, running away from the very people that gave them votes. At Local Government level, district councillors migrate from their villages to major urban centres in the district.

With the exception of the President, other elected leaders regardless of political level remain indebted the entire tenure of five years. Some of them keep running away from money lenders after defaulting on payment of the funds borrowed during campaigns. In the 9th Parliament for example there were some MPs who would spend a week inside Parliament buildings to benefit from parliamentary immunity from debt collectors camped in the vicinities of Parliament. The 10th Parliament has seen an escalation where some MPs have been shamefully arrested on streets of Kampala over failure to pay loans taken from money lenders to finance their election campaigns.

This situation begs a number of questions. Why and how do these high ranking political leaders get themselves in such a deplorable situation? Could this be one of the effects of excessive campaign spending? If MP’s who are in office and earning as much as UGX 30m ($8,000) monthly are living in such a situation, what is the situation of those who contested and failed? When the electorate votes for the political party and/or candidates on
the basis of money, how are they impacted? How does excessive campaign spending affect the family as the smallest unit in the community?

In the immediate aftermath of 2016 elections, there were a number of private companies and business individuals that were allegedly bankrupt and were seeking bailout from government. How was this bankruptcy achieved? Could the timing of the request for bailout have a correlation with campaign contributions for Presidential and Parliamentary elections? What about the timing? Could the financial woes of business companies trace their genealogy (source and origin) from campaign contributions made to political parties and candidates? If so how do private companies cope with the effects of investing significant proportion of their business revenue on campaign contributions to their preferred political parties and/or candidates?.

There are middlemen on the ground who have mastered the art of swaying voters. These are the so called campaign managers who use this sway power to make money from political parties and candidates. Some of them have created a perception that they are “king makers”. Desperate candidates give in to these campaign sharks who keep advising them to revise their campaign budgets upwards and give them more money to ostensibly consolidate they vote whereas they are known to pocked most of it. Political candidates channel money through these middlemen/campaign managers, who in turn swindle some of it to buy assets. The study interrogates how this category of electoral participants is impacted by campaign spending?

The summation of these factors has served to feed and groom a monster of commercialised politics in Uganda where the major motivation for political socialisation is money, not service, nor national interests. Increasingly, the key issue in Uganda’s electoral politics is the surging election campaign expenses. As a consequence, financing election campaigns has become so costly that only moneyed individuals or candidates with big contributors can contest. This in effect isolates competent yet resource-poor candidates or those without financial backers. In other words, whereas elections have gained increasing prominence and importance as mechanisms for managing political change at Parliamentary and Local Government levels, power is destined to remain the preserve of the few who have access for campaign finance sources. Women and youth are particularly disadvantaged in this aspect.
The downside is that Uganda has political leaders in Parliament, District and Sub-County councils who do not represent the interests of citizens. They have stood on the side-lines to watch legislators behave in a way and manner that shows their ultimate interest is in recouping what they invested than going the full length of improving policies to improve service delivery on the ground. The electorate have cultivated a perception that most elected leaders are “money makers”. It is this perception that informs the conspiracy of the electorate to extract a portion of the money from elected leaders through relentless monetary demands to solve personal problems. This undermines the functionality of government and progression of electoral democracy in Uganda.

Objectives of the Study

The cardinal object of this study is to analyse the extent of the impact of election campaign spending on electoral participants as a consequence of commercialisation of politics and electoral processes, and to propose solutions for curbing the vice that has metamorphosed into a monster. The study was motivated by the need to legislate on campaign financing in Uganda by demonstrating the negative effects of unregulated campaign spending on electoral participants.

Whereas the Electoral Commission appreciates the problem and has documented it in its reports since 2016, policy makers in the ministries of: Justice and Constitutional Affairs (MOJCA); Finance Planning and Economic Development (MOFPED) have remained adamant about the challenge posed by excessive election campaign spending and its concomitant toxic effect on electoral democracy and service delivery. This study therefore makes an attempt at providing answers to the question “What is wrong with political candidates willingly spending themselves dry?”

Specifically the Study is seeks to achieve the following objectives, namely:

1) To analyse and document how former electoral participants cope with the impact of campaign spending.

2) To propose feasible solutions for curbing commercialisation of politics and electoral processes as the major driver of election campaign spending

Hypothesis

The study was premised on the hypothesis that: excessive campaign spending negatively impacts the socio, economic and political behaviour of electoral participants.
Justification for the Study

The subject of commercialised electoral politics and electoral processes in Uganda and Africa in general, is one that is grossly under researched. The copying mechanisms employed by political parties and candidates as a result of being financially bruised from the ever increasing costs of election campaigns in Uganda has hitherto not attracted research interest. The study is the first of its kind in the country and aims at making a contribution towards building a body of knowledge on political finance in the typical African context. ACFIM hopes that the study will stimulate further research into the subject.

Findings will inform a wider range of political players on participation options and political investment decisions. It is understood that most political candidates enter the electoral race without the necessary information of what it really costs to run an election campaign and how much it costs. This explains why midway through the campaigns they resort to disenfranchise their families by selling off their homes or staking them as collateral to money lenders. At worst some men have been reported to have staked their own wives in exchange for campaign finance.

In 2015, the only female candidate out of the eight nominated for Presidential Election in Uganda, Ms Maurine Kyalya abandoned the campaign trail after less than a month and returned back to the United Kingdom, understandably to raise funds for her campaigns\(^3\). It remains unknown whether raising campaign funds involved selling off some of her properties in the UK. But Ms Kyalya’s situation is shared by many other candidates whose only bail out is to sell off their hard earned and long kept properties. Many of such formers candidates would never ever recover their lost wealth.

Against such a backdrop, the study profiles case studies, former political candidates that have in different ways been impacted by excessive spending during election campaigns and the copying mechanisms they have used to recuperate from the economic wounds.

Uganda’s Commercialized Electoral Environment

The Rising Cost of Election Campaigns
As soon as new political office bearers are sworn into office for a fresh five year term, their challengers in the next election swing into action. They start referring to themselves as either “MP to be” or “Mayor to be” or “Councillor to be” depending on the position they aspire for. These so called “to be’s” start socialising with the electorate donating generously towards funerals, weddings or to fundraisings in places of worship. They take full advantage of the absence of the incumbent on the ground. By the time the elected leader recuperates from the bruises of campaign spending to go back to the electorate for the first time say after six months, they find that the challenger is gaining ground to early in the tenure to challenge the incumbent. There is a general perception among politicians that one cannot interact with the electorate without money.

The weapon incumbents use to undo the growing effect of the challenger, is money. So in effect campaign spending begins immediately so early in the political leader’s term of office, and the rise of a challenger so early in the term of office makes spending inevitable. By the time the next campaign period comes, the incumbent will have spent in excess of UGX 800 million ($200,000) already. This is before campaigns for the next election even start.

There is a growing perception within the electorate that a Member of Parliament must keep spending, and at times when he/she resists, the electorate may blackmail the MP by pretending to be paying more allegiance to the challenger – so called “MP to be”. But why must campaign spending begin so early? The answers to this question are to be found in the vice of commercialisation of politics and electoral process with money standing out as the major motivating factor for participation in the electoral processes. This largely explains why election campaign expenses have been growing exponentially since Uganda returned to multiparty politics in 2006. Former political candidates reveal that mobilising election campaign finance in Uganda has never been easy.

The Downside Commercialised Electoral Politics
Commercialisation of electoral processes continues to rear its ugly head on Uganda’s democracy, national economy and social fabric. At the root of commercialised electoral processes is political corruption and its inevitable concomitants of weak political accountability and poor service delivery. As a
consequence there is total breakdown of trust in the democratic process of the election, which has in part bred voter apathy to the extent that many respondents in this study expressed their willingness to trade their vote for anything of monetary value the candidate or political party will give.

**High Electorate Expectations**

In constituencies where the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party is dominant – and these are many across the country – the electorate expect an increase from the UGX 250,000 ($68) each village received from the party in 2016 elections to double that amount in 2021. The growing monetary expectations of the electorate have contributed immensely to the rising cost of election campaigns in Uganda.

Interviews with former electoral candidates reveal that many of them find it easier to use money in electioneering. Besides, the electorate always tell candidates that they cannot eat words, so why waste time speaking when money is all they want? To put it differently, money is used to soothe the hungry and desperate minds of the electorate particularly the youth who are poor and economically vulnerable.

As a consequence, politicians and political parties have to spend limitlessly in election campaigns to get elected into positions of leadership or to form governments. At times they engage in “spending war” where it is assumed that the electorate will vote for he/she who has exhibited having more money. And there is evidence that more money can actually give a candidate an edge over his/her challengers and ultimately get him/her elected.

**Estimated Cost of Campaigning in 2021**

This study estimates that the cost of campaigning for Parliamentary elections in 2021 will be in the ranges of UGX 500million ($137,000) – UGX1billion ($274,000). At Local Government level, candidates for District LCV Chairperson are estimated to spend UGX300 million ($82,000) – UGX 500 million ($137,000). The figure are exclusive of what candidates will spend on party primaries which in constituencies where the ruling NRM party is dominant, are equally or even more costly. The downside is that at the end of the election, the country will have political leaders who are economically bruised, trapped in debt and vulnerable to all forms of temptations to use all means possible to recoup their investment including payment of debt. And this turns them away from serving voter interest to serving selfish interests.
The Rationality Voters in Uganda

The rising cost of election campaigns in Uganda cannot be fully interrogated without analysing the rationality of voters. These are the unsung heroes who make elections work by bothering to show up stand for hours in the long queues on Election Day. Their commitment to voting begs the question: What do they benefit if their preferred candidate won the election? What is the rationality behind this commitment?

Voter Rationality Theory

Voter rationality theorist Tsebelis (1990)\(^4\), defines human rationality as the ability to realize one's presumed goals. Scott Ashworth (2017) and I-Ching Lee (2017) move a step further to define voter rationality as a condition where voters select the most capable candidates to achieve one's vision of an ideal society\(^5\). In the same vein, Kenya’s renowned anti-corruption crusader Prof P.L.O. Lumumba, remarked in a public forum that; “when it comes to political fanaticism, a university professor may reason irrationally just like his uneducated *shamba boy*”.

Whereas there is little argument over that fact that a well-functioning democracy relies upon its citizens to make rational decisions, especially when voting in elections, the criteria one should use to evaluate rationality, remains debatable Shapiro (1969)\(^6\). Voter rationality may vary from one political context to another. What is rational in one context may be irrational in another context and vice versa.

Politicians and political party leaders in Uganda attribute the rapidly increasing costs of campaigning in Uganda to high levels of poverty. They argue that because of poverty, the voters will not respond to manifesto promises but to money. This argument seems to suggest that because the electorate are poor, their rational thinking is to solve their most immediate needs such as cash, food, sugar, soap, or salt among others. As the country heads to Presidential and Parliamentary elections 2021, money is the chosen method for campaigning by aspiring candidates – incumbents and challengers alike. One can go on to argue that commercialisation of electoral processes may have the most impact on campaigns and electoral outcomes.

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\(^5\) I-Ching Lee (2017). Are We Rational or Not? The Exploration of Voter Choices during the 2016 Presidential and Legislative Elections in Taiwan.

One can argue that the rationality of Uganda’s electorate is informed by the discovery that electoral outcomes over the past three electoral cycles have not translated into improvement in their livelihoods or quality of service delivery. They know that the ultimate decision to improve the quality of health care, primary education, roads or expanding markets for agricultural produce lies outside the control of an elected Member of Parliament, District LCV Chairperson or Councilor. But they also know that these elected leaders have access to all manner of economic opportunities which they tap into – and sometime illicitly – to enrich themselves. The lifestyle of the political leader in Uganda gives an impression that “money is not a problem”.

The youth are observing keenly and rationalizing as well. They are increasingly perceiving political parties and politicians as office seekers driven primarily by their material self-interests, who will not address the plight of young people. This partly explains why for example the youth must be paid (bribed) before they can embrace the programmes of the ruling NRM Party. They rationalize that must be paid to participate in meetings and seminars even when they are the consumers and beneficiaries of the content delivered. This rationalization from the biggest population demographic in the country, is a key factor escalating the cost of election campaigns.

These are some of the facts that inform the rationality of the Ugandan voter and motivation to inundate the political leaders with all forms of monetary demands. This could be signposted as voter rationality or irrationality depending on which lenses on is using.

The Rationality of Political Leaders

While appearing as panellist at the First National Symposium on Political Financing organised by ACFIM at Hotel Africana in July 2017, NRM Party Deputy Secretary General Hon. Richard Todwong reasoned that “voters in Uganda do not respond to political ideology, they respond to economic situations and precisely, money”7. It is further argued that existence of the independent candidate scenario in Uganda’s electoral politics has served to escalate the cost of election campaigns because independent candidates do not sell ideology but use money to outshine their opponents for votes.

From the perspective of political leaders, even when one has been elected into political office, the electorate do not assess his/her performance based on number of policies developed, legislation enacted or effective oversight over technocrats. Rather the performance of a political leaders is assessed

based on contributions made towards funerals, weddings, fundraisings and number of voters in the constituency that have received cash donations to solver personal problems such as payment of school fees and medical bills among others.

Political leaders rationalise that if constituency spending is the principle yardstick the electorate use to assess performance, then one should not waste time on policy issues but rather go and look for the money so that they get re-elected into office. It is believed that when a member of the constituency makes a demand money from a political leader, they do not take no for answer. The political leader is expected to always have money to the extent that when a leader gives a response such as “I do not have money to help out today”, such a response is interpreted by the electorate as a refusal and sign on non-performance.

This rationality has turned politics into a contest of money with disastrous effects on candidates themselves, political parties, the economy and politics of our country.

**History of Commercialisation of Electoral processes in Uganda**

Prominent California State Treasurer, Jesse Unruh (U.S. politician and State Treasurer of California, 1922-1987) is quoted to have remarked that: “Money is the mother's milk of politics”8. While the nature of politics varies significantly between different countries in Africa, there is no part of the world where money does not matter in a political decision making process. This argument is further supported by former United States Senator and retired National Basket Ball Association (NBA) player Bill Bradley who suggested that: “Trying to take money out of politics, is like trying to take jumping out of basketball.”

When it comes to election campaigns money is a necessity because without it none of the electoral campaign activities can be carried out. Political parties and candidates need money to carry out election campaigns. But there must be strong election campaign finance regulations to mitigate the negative influence of excess money in election campaigns. Unfortunately Uganda has been lacking strong regulatory framework for election campaign financing since 1958 when the first elections were conducted. This study makes an attempt to also trace the genealogy of commercialization of politics and electoral processes in Uganda.

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8 Magnus, Ohman (2013); Controlling Money in Politics: An Introduction; International Foundation for Electoral Systems.
When Did Campaign Costs begin Rising?

Since 1996, the cost of contesting for elections at Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government levels has been escalating. To date “the country is facing a monster of commercialized electoral politics and we must deal with it”9. This monster is rearing its ugly head not only on electoral democracy but on the national economy and the social fabric of the Ugandan society that is characterized by a very young population. ACFIM has observed this vice manifesting in a number of ways including; donations to sections of society and individuals in cash and/or kind, purchase of voter’s cards, vote buying on Election Day, turnout buying, and buying media to cover only one candidate. The vice has been so ingrained in Uganda’s political culture that money is the main motivator of political participation by either candidates or voters.

The first general elections in Uganda were conducted in 1958 under multiparty political dispensation. The parties that participated were young and often referred to as “weekend parties” based in either Katwe or Mengo Kisenyi. Their funding based on member contributions and was insignificant. Election campaigns for the next two general elections in 1961 and 1962 were not commercialised as campaign spending was meagre. Election campaigns for 1980 were issue based, whereas participating political parties invested in campaign paraphernalia, the issue of using cash or in-kind donations to induce voters was unheard of. The 1993 constituent assembly saw some scattered spending on voter inducement by a few candidates but the following election would see the seeds of commercialization being sown.

A typical example was in Rujumbura County, Rukungiri District, in 1996 where a young Charles Rwomusha who had earlier defeated household names like Dr Alex Kamugisha and Sam Baingana in the Constituency Assembly (CA) elections (1993), challenged flamboyant minister Jim Muhwezi to the position of Member of Parliament – the 6th Parliament. This was the first election under the country’s new constitution, promulgated in 1995.

Although Rwomushana lost the Parliamentary election, he is remembered to have popularized the campaign phrase “shaking the mango tree” and encouraging voters to enjoy the falling mangoes. Shaking the mango tree literary meant that by challenging Jim Muhwezi he forced him to donate as much as he could to the benefit of the electorate. One can argue that

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9 Statement made by Kajara County Member of Parliament, Hon. Michael Timuzigu Kamugisha at the validation meeting for this study, at Hotel Africana, August 2019.
probably the so called “mangoes” would never have fallen to the ground if the youthful Rwomushana had not put up a strong electoral challenge. There were similar cases of this nature scattered across the country where money had neutralized a stubborn electoral challengers.

**Money Becomes a Campaign Strategy**

This development provided an important discovery that would inform electoral strategies in the subsequent election campaigns. The discovery was that money is a tool so effective in elections that it not only neutralizes the threat posed by strong competition but that it can also whitewash any political ideas instilled into the electorate by one’s challenger. So the lessons of how effective money can be as an alternative electoral strategy would be shared within the 6th Parliament and were learned by political parties and individual candidates.

In 2001 the NRM faced a challenger from within at Presidential level – Dr. Kizza Besigye\(^\text{10}\), it thus became important for the government in power to have as many Members of Parliament in the 7th Parliament as possible that are aligned with the ideology of the movement. The political candidates and voters that participated in the 2001 election campaigns attested to the authors of this study that there was more campaign spending compared to the previous elections and that many of them or their friends “touched and ate” campaign money.

**Return to Multiparty Politics Deepens Commercialisation of Politics**

The return to multi-party democratic dispensation 2005 ushered the era monetization of political and electoral processes. With multiparty political dispensation came increased competition and pressure of the party in power to maintain its grip at all costs and with increased competition came increased electoral spending. Ugandans were rudely awakened to the ugly face of excessive campaign spending on election campaigns for 2011 when the post-election period saw an unprecedented spike in inflation. The situation was followed with massive public protests code-named “walk to work”. But campaign spending increased even more in 2016 Presidential and Parliamentary elections that some independent analysts have summed up the election in one word, *Money!*

\(^{10}\) Dr. Kizza Besigye is a former ally and personal physician of President Yoweri Museveni during the guerrilla war (1981-1985)
It is argued that commercialization of election campaigns was fueled by the principle of individual merit that came with the movement system. Even when the country finally returned to multi-party political dispensation, the thinking and mindset of the Ugandan electorate remains trapped in individual merit.
Chapter Two

Scope and Methodology

Scope of the Study
ACFIM took keen interest in interrogating and documenting how former electoral candidates – elected or failed – were coping with the effects of unregulated campaign spending. The study attempted to establish the impact of unregulated electoral spending on electoral participants. The electoral participants covered under the context of this study include;

- g) Political Parties
- h) Individual candidates
- i) Elected Leader
- j) Campaign agents
- k) The electorate / voters
- l) Private companies or businesses that invest in the electoral process through campaign contributions

The study was conducted in six districts namely Arua, Hoima, Kamwenge, Mbarara, Iganga and Kampala. The selection of the districts was informed by proximity to new districts that are supported by ECCP project. The fact that the study focus was on candidates that had participated in the electoral cycle between 2015 and 2018, new districts supported by the ECCP project did not present this opportunity.

The study collected responses from 428 former political candidates in 15 lower local governments namely; sub-counties, municipalities and town councils. It further included campaign managers, agents and political financiers/businessmen. Key informant interviews, case studies and focus groups discussions were conducted. Seventy nine (79) campaign managers and agents were successfully interviewed. In each of the sample districts (except for Kampala), six focus group discussions were conducted, amounting to a total of 30 FGDs in five districts.

Up to 247 electorates inclusive of different youth, women and men were reached in the FGDs. This assumed the groups had divergent political ideals and discussions that had to be conducted under distinct groupings. At national level, the study involved interviews and consultations from...
current and former Members of Parliament. The respondents considered under survey one were those that had participated in electoral processes between 2015 and 2018.

Research Design
A mixed methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques was used to collect data from both primary and secondary respondents. Qualitative data was supported by documentary review of available literature to give the study a necessary theoretic grounding. Documentary review posed some challenges to the research team because the subject of Political Finance is one of the most under researched in Africa and Uganda in particular. There is virtually no previous study on commercialization of politics and electoral processes in the country save for some scattered articles which are largely opinionated. This notwithstanding, the research team reviewed the literature published by western writers on how the subject manifests in the west, and this was blended by reports by Electoral Commission, election observers and civil society. Review included published, unpublished and on-line resources. This was important in informing the flow of research processes.

The study design comprised five categories of respondents namely;
   a) Former political candidates including winners and losers
   b) Political party leaders
   c) Election campaign managers and agents
   d) Businessmen and companies as possible political financiers,
   e) Influential stakeholders, electorate and civil society activists.

The study design considered purposively a sample size of women and youth to determine how unregulated money in electoral processes curtails their political participation yet they constitute majority of Uganda’s demographic structure.

Sampling of Respondents
For the qualitative aspects of the study, a stratified random sample using a sampling interview of five (5) was used to determine the respondents. A list of former political candidates for Member of Parliament, District Chairperson, District and Sub-County Councils, and special interest group elections constituted a stratum. A simple random sample was used to select the number of respondents needed in a particular Local Government or constituency. At district and sub-county level, lists of councillors that seat on the district or sub-county councils, private sector leaders and opinion
leaders, formed the primary strata. Lists of former candidates that stood as councillors were also used primary documents for sampling purpose.

Other respondents were purposively a sample for the positions they held e.g. District chairpersons, Mayors, Local Council V (LCV) Chairpersons and representatives of special interest groups like people with disabilities (PWDs), workers and youth. At national level key informants were purposively sampled and these mainly included Members of Parliament (MPs), former MPs, Kampala Capital City Division Mayors and Councillors, leaders of Political Parties, former political candidates and campaign managers/agents, private sector organisations. The electorate were reached through focus group discussions targeting men, youths and women separately.

**Table 1: Targeted Study Respondents**

| 1 | All former candidates Constituency MPs                          |
| 2 | All Former candidates Woman MPs                                |
| 3 | All former candidates LC V Chairperson                         |
| 4 | Current Chairpersons                                           |
| 5 | Former Candidates Councillors LC V                             |
| 6 | Former Mayoral candidates of Municipalities, Divisions and Town Council |
| 7 | LC III Chairpersons of Sub-counties (Urban)                    |
| 8 | Former Candidates LC III                                      |
| 9 | Former Candidates Youths                                       |
| 10| Political Parties                                              |
| 11| Opinion Leaders                                                |
| 12| Special interest groups                                        |
| 13| Campaign Managers /agents                                       |

**Table 2: Targeted National Key Informants**

| Current Constituency MP |
| Current Woman MP |
| Head of Political Parties |
| Civil Society Organisation |
| Electoral Commission |
| Media |
Pre-study compliance Procedures
Primary, secondary data was collected through ACFIM five regional partners namely;

1) MAYANK Anti-Corruption Coalition (MACCO),
2) Rwenzori Anti-Corruption Coalition (RAC),
3) Anti-Corruption Coalition of Busoga (ACCOB),
4) First African Bicycle Organization (FABIO)
5) Midwestern Region Anti-Corruption Coalition (MIRAC)

A Research team was constituted comprising of two experts from ACFIM Secretariat supported by 25 Research Assistants. Because of the language disparities, each district had its own set of five Research Assistants who collected quantitative data. These were identified by respective ACFIM member organizations to work in sample districts, and underwent two day training on analytical and logical field based data collections methods. The training enhanced skills of Research Assistants in interpretation of the survey questionnaire and using it to collect quality data. The training also focused on probe and analytical interface sessions aimed at studying the behavior of respondents in a process of administering the questionnaire. To reduce the probability of errors, study tools were pre-tested in Wakiso district. This was in line with ACFIM quality assurance procedures. The two experts from ACFIM Secretariat supervised data collection on the ground, and also took lead on qualitative data collection.

Data Collection Methods
The methods used to collect data included the following;

Literature Review
The research team collated reports of Uganda elections as produced by domestic and international election observers over the past three election cycles. Other reports included Election Commission reports to Parliament (2011, 2016), the Electoral Roadmap, and academic reports on Uganda elections among others. Information from these reports was analysed and used to inform the collection of primary data particularly for key informant interview.

Interviews
Interviews were conducted with political actors using an interview guide. Respondents for these interviews included former political candidates (winners and losers) at parliamentary, district and sub-county levels. Others
included campaign managers and agents. Data was collected using structured questions that guided the flow of responses for organized capture and entry. Some of the interviews were discreet particularly when it came to respondents considered to have expert knowledge and experience on political and electoral campaign financing. These included MPs in the 10th Parliament and previous Parliaments, unsuccessful political candidates at all electoral levels including village councils. Other key informants were selected from the academia, media and civil society. Key informants guide was used to conduct the interviews.

**Case studies**

Case studies of former political candidates were used to give indication and deepen analysis about how excessive campaign spending impacts on the life of an individual (post-election). This research method was motivated by the fact that after elections, the unsuccessful candidates are almost forgotten and left to face the consequences alone. The case studies indicated trajectory of how long it takes a former political candidate to recuperate from the bruises of unlimited campaign spending affected their socio-economic and political lifestyles. The cases also indicated the volume of debt burden and how they are coping to re-engineer themselves. The cases were triangulated for validity, reliability and authenticity with the electorate in particular constituencies, their political competitors or information present in the public domain.

**Focus Group Discussions**

A total of 30 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted in 5 districts drawing participation of 250 people including men, women and youth. These FGDs had average participation of 8-10 people who were either men only, women only or youth (male and female) only. The separation of men, women and youth during FGDs was intended to create an atmosphere of free expression of views on commercialization of electoral processes and its effect on the electorate who are on the receiving end of donations in cash or kind. It was also presumed that participants of the FGDs would be more effective if they discussed issues within their socio-demographic classes as men, women and youths. The FGDs were facilitated by one of the Research Assistants while another Research Assistant acted as note taker. The language of discussion was local and whereas the lead researchers were multi-lingual, in some cases they had to rely on the interpretations provided by the Research Assistants.
Analysis and Validation of Data
Reliability and validity of study findings rests on quality of data analysis. Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPPS) was used to analyze quantitative questionnaires to derive percentages, frequencies and cross tabulations, correlations. Questions were coded and given identifiers to allow entry into the analytical application. A statistical level of confidence was determined at 95 percent with a margin of error of +5 or -5. Deductive and content analysis was used to derive meaning from the qualitative data collected with regard to the study objectives and intended study outcomes. Collected data was;
   a) organized, interpreted
   b) identical patterns in relation with study objectives were derived
   c) informed and verifiable conclusions were drawn in line with the study objectives
Triangulation was used to enhance the quality, validity and reliability of the data. This was applied to the sources of information (secondary data and primary data) and in the combination of different methodological techniques used in this study. Qualitative data analyzed was used to triangulate and provide evidence and credibility of the quantitative findings. A multi-level review approach was used to ensure that the research problem has been satisfactory interrogated and research questions answered. This was intended to minimize contestation of any finding if any. A validation meeting was organized drawing participation of electoral participants including the private sector, to scrutinize and verify the findings. The insightful views from the validation meeting have been incorporated into the report.

Ethical Considerations
The research team sought to seek informed consent from respondents and also bound confidentiality clauses of the study and protection of respondents from any physical or psychological distress.
Chapter Three

The Demographics and Political Affiliation of Respondents

The demographic structure of the population has a bearing on voter behavior and patterns. Managers of electoral processes and political strategists consider demographics in the organization of political and electoral processes, and also in determining the best political strategy to adopt during campaigns. The study was conducted in 5 districts of Uganda. Kampala metropolitan was considered for national level consultations. A total of 428 political candidates were interviewed, selected through a random or purposively sampled under survey I. The minimum sample for district was 70 former candidates at the following levels; Member of Parliament, LC V chairpersons, Mayors, Councilors and LC III Chairpersons. A lesser number was targeted for Kampala because it was a pilot district but was highly considered for national level key informant consultations.

Table 3: Showing Number of Former Candidates Interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arua</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoima</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbarara</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamwenge</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iganga</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampala</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hoima district had largest percentage contribution to the total sample at 22.0% followed by Mbarara (19.4%) and Kamwenge (17.5%). Iganga and Arua districts contributed 17.3% and 16.6% respectively.
Table 4: Analysis of Demographic Character of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Secondary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation of the Respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture/Farming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Party Affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (Independents)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender Participation**

Majority of the respondents were male comprising of 80.8 percent of the total sample in survey one (1) compared to 19.1 percent female. This is because it is the male gender that dominates civic issues at the grass root level so much so that women believe civic issues are men’s issues. The reality is that political processes are largely a “male game” in the districts studied which also manifests at national level politics despite the affirmative policy option.

Women interviewed indicated that the inhibiting factors for political participation rotate around the cost of contesting with 79.3 percent of the female respondents alluding to the assertion. Related to cost of contesting, 81.3 percent think that nomination fees are too high to allow for fair and equal participation. Analysis also indicated that 97.5 percent of the women suggest that low levels of economic empowerment is a critical factor in inhibiting female participation. Women in the districts of Arua and Iganga were found to suffer most from this attribution.
The study further established that socio-cultural and economic stereotypes among the electorate disfavor women. In a country where men are perceived as chief providers for women and their families, with more access to and control over resources, the high cost of financing election campaigns pushes women and youth out of politics. It was established that even when a woman nurses ambitions to contest for an elective seat, even when it is an affirmative seat, chances are that, she will wait until she is told to do so, and the tellers are men. As a consequence women and youth are relegated to the role of cheering male candidates whether it be party primaries, national or local government elections.

Results from the FGDs targeting women pointed to low economic empowerment among other factors as a key variable for making women fall prey to political manipulation. This largely, is as a consequence of women’s lack of access to and control over resources. Whereas politically viable women were not able to raise funds for basic items like nomination fees, later on main campaign expenses, women voters are easy targets for turnout buying and are more likely to be manipulated by political candidates. The study found that this is a strategy used by a number of candidates and their campaign managers on voting day, which inevitably increases the candidate’s Election Day expenditure.

Analysis further suggests that 85.7 percent of the women think that cultural attributions are still awake, denying women leadership and political roles. “Women cannot lead” was a common phrase during the FGDs. Inhibitions due to cultural attribution were more a common occurrence in Arua and Iganga followed by Hoima. In communities that heavily stereotyped women, requisite girl-child education was lacking; a critical requirement for participation in electoral politics. Educational qualifications come second to money as an influencer of political participation and voter disposition. Irrespective of the socio-economic status, majority of men (87.9 percent) who participated in the study, indicated that, if given an option, they would vote for a man during a political contest. The dismal participation of

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12 Turnout Buying refers to the act of paying a voter money to go and vote in the direction shown by the giver of the money.
women as candidates in national politics is more evident in the results of the 2016 general elections.

A Glance at Women Participation in 2016 Elections

In 2016, at presidential elections level only one (1) contested, while at parliamentary level only 84 (0.06%) contested out of 1,337 nominated candidates. With only 6 female MPs emerging winners in non-affirmative action constituencies.

There are only 16 (1.0%) LCIII chairpersons in Uganda out of the 1,568 filled positions at that level. Out of the 112 duly elected district chairpersons only one (1) is female (Kamu) and at mayoral level there are only 2 Municipal Mayors in (Nansana Municipality and Rubaga) division.

Youth Participation in Electoral Processes

Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world with statistics indicating that over 70% are aged 30 and below\(^\text{13}\). The country’s youth are largely unemployed and restless. At the root of youth restlessness and agitation is the feeling of economic injustice with the majority of them wallowing in poverty? Youth aged 18-35 years constituted 22.9 percent of the respondents under this study. These youth revealed that they find it challenging to participate in politics due to high cost of contesting. The first barrier is the nomination fees of UGX 2,000,000 ($ 550) for party primaries when it comes to the dominant National Resistance Movement (NRM) party and UGX 3,000,000 ($822) to be nominated to contest for Member of Parliament. Majority of the youth interviewed 89.1 percent share their view that nomination fees lock them out of meaningful electoral participation. As a consequence, participation of youth in electoral processes is limited to campaigning/cheering for political candidates and voting.

Is Poverty a Motivator of Commercialisation of Electoral Politics?

Poverty and desperation make youth agents of commercialized electoral politics because they easily engage in “buyouts” for as low as UGX1,000 ($0.3) to change voter disposition and/or participate in voter rigging. Youth mainly participate in elections for political positions designated for them in the affirmative action policy at all levels of local and national governance structures at Local Council (LC) 1, LC III, Municipality, District LC V and Parliament. The 10th Parliament posts the largest number of youthful legislators, which in one way or the other is inspiring more young people to vie for Member of Parliament in 2021. Analysis of views from focus group discussions revealed that whereas many young men and women would wish to contest in 2021 general elections for positions like MP, Mayor and District/ Sub County council, this may not happen because of the debilitating cost of being nominated and financing an election campaign.

The study reinforces the fact that the higher the political position the higher the cost of campaigning. Males were more likely to spend significantly much more funds compared to female counterparts at almost all political positions. This further indicates the possibility that money is likely to be a higher influencing factor in determining the ability to compete for a political position at different electoral levels.

Political Party Affiliation of Respondents

Majority of respondent under this study (81.7 percent) were affiliated to a political party compared to 18.2 percent who were either independents or belonging to political movements, or both. The main parties affiliated to during elections 2016 and 2011 include NRM, FDC and DP. The dominant party at the grassroots is NRM followed by FDC in the study districts. The study established that most independent candidates are leaning to NRM. They alluded to being unfairly treated in the process of identifying flag bearers at party primaries. Unfair treatment related to; preferential financing of candidates in party primary elections, rigging and “God Fathering” were the main causes of agitation of party members as reported by those who declared themselves as independents. Irregular use of money was suggested as a major cause, most of the party candidates that were not nominated as flag bearers pointed to what they referred to as excessive monetization of election campaigns, direct and indirect excess funding of opponents as a source of non-conformity to acceptance of party election outcomes.
Chapter Four

The Mechanics of Campaign Financing in Uganda

Influence of Money

From 2015 pre-campaign period, it became increasingly clear that the primary method for controlling the electoral process and determining electoral outcome especially in rural areas was through use of money. Voters expect political candidates to spend money on them at every encounter. Whereas there is no shortage of exceptions, ACFIM experiences from monitoring campaign spending for general elections 2016 show that the political party or candidates that spent more, whether it was on party primaries or the general election of February 18th 2016, were also the ones that pulled the highest number of votes.

Campaign spending in Uganda begins immediately an election ends. For example as soon as the new Parliament or District Council is sworn in, their challengers for the next election emerge and take full advantage of the absence of the elected leader on the ground to politically entrench themselves. The electorate in Uganda today is one that directs monetary demands to elected leaders and any one that expresses interest to contest in the next election. As such, campaign spending starts early because for one to be considered for a vote, he/she must have a reasonable profile with reference to social projects. This drives early campaign spending and it comes in many forms including but not limited to funeral contributions to every family that loses their loved one, contribution to weddings, medical bills, school fees, seed finance for youth groups, women groups, and elders' groups among others. Other forms of spending include contributions to fundraisings in places of worship to which they are invited as chief guests.

Perceptions on Influence of Money on Election Outcomes

There is common perception within political candidates, campaign agents and voters that, money largely influenced the outcome of elections in 2016 at different electoral levels. Majority of respondents (79%) believe that money influenced voter decisions and subsequent outcome of the election. The losing candidates believe that if only they had more money to reach out to more voters and give a personal touch – and personal touch means donating money – they would have pulled better results. The lack of money
was understood as a limit to their ability to deploy polling agents at every polling station to protect their ballot.

However there were smaller percentage (21%) who believe the contrary. Those who believe in the role money played in swaying the vote alluded to use of money to endear and induce voters through cash donations, gifts, social projects, hospitality and buying of alcohol. Money was reported to be more influential in Presidential and Parliamentary election campaigns.

**Figure 1: Perceptions on whether Money Influences Electoral Outcomes**

![Pie Chart showing 79% Yes and 21% No]

Respondents were asked to rank the influence of money on electoral outcomes on a continuum of 1-8 where 1 is the lowest and 8 is the highest. Majority of them representing 374 responses (87.9%) gave a rank ranging 5-8 with 117 giving money as the highest influencer of electoral outcomes with a rank of 8. The use of money to influence electoral outcomes was reported to undermine electoral integrity and also a motivator for other electoral malpractices such as vote rigging. It partly contributed to a situation where elections in Uganda are never won or lost but either rigged or stolen. As a consequence losing candidates engage in a costly electoral petition in the courts of law; a major factor contributing to indebtedness of the former political candidates.

The ability of money to skew election outcomes casted doubt on the capacity of Uganda’s political processes to deliver the right political leaders. Respondents argued that money posed as a barrier to people that have the right skills, knowledge, attitudes and experience to enter the electoral arena.
In most cases, they do not have the finances elsewhere to finance an election campaign. It was established that money may also be used to influence Electoral Commission officials through “direct buying” of returning officers and also to finance electoral malpractices.

Further analysis established that, those who share the perception that money influences electoral outcomes also think that politicians engage in self-representation if they ascend to power with a positive affirmative of 81.7 percent. Self-representation in the context of the study implies that the views presented by the leaders at all levels of political structures did not represent to voices of the electorates but those who financed their candidature.

Elected leaders who were bankrolled by private businesses/companies are perceived to be more predisposed serving the very interests of their campaign financiers at the detriment of their constituents. This assertion was alluded to by 76.9 percent of the respondents. The behavior and actions of members of the 10th Parliament during deliberations on amendment of Article 102 (b) of the constitution, were still fresh in the minds of the respondents. This was observed throughout the Focus Group Discussions with voters saying they cannot wait to “meet the incumbent MPs in the basin”.

Analysis indicated that politicians engaged business brokering to serve the interest of the powers. For example at parliamentary level, MPs solicited money from business enterprises, corporations and organizations with particular interest in certain bills and laws in parliament. The same approach was used by organizations that were invited to appear on particular committees. At local government level, politicians lined up public contracts to businessmen and contractors who offered them financing during elections. Most works and services served under such circumstances would later be queried on grounds of quality.

**Constituency Spending as a Pre-Campaign Cost**

When it comes to constituency spending, the incumbent leader is always in a hot spot. This is because an elected leader can receive on average of 10 phone calls every day from different members of his/her constituency requesting for monetary support to solve personal problems. And the

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14 Meeting an incumbent in the basin means Election Day where according to Uganda’s voting practice, ballot papers are ticked from a black basin.
elected leader must answer in the affirmative or risk of being voted out. Voters assess the performance of a political leader not on the basis of policies developed, or appearances in Parliament/district council but in terms of the following:

a) Number of people given money when they approached with personal problems;

b) Number of funerals he/she has contributed money to,
c) Number of relatives/children of voters that approach the leader for financial help in the capital city or other major towns and they receive it.
d) Amount of contributions made during fundraisings in church or mosque
e) Number of voters’ children for whom he/she is paying for school fees

Faced with a strong challenger the tool that is understood to be effective for the incumbent to assert him/herself is by spending. At presidential level, the incumbent president has to keep spending everywhere he visits because away from government policies and plans that are long-term, voters expected to receive something in the intervening period, and that something is money.

In other words pre-campaign spending starts so early that often elected leaders get to be displaced from their constituents running away from the very voters they courted in the previous elections. If it is Members of Parliament, they will stay for long in Kampala without returning to the constituency. At Local Government levels, councilors are forced to relocate from their villages to re-settle in the urban centers to stay away from the relentless monetary demands from the electorate.

By the time the next election campaign begins, the incumbent Member of Parliament would have spent in excess of UGX 1 billion ($274,000). Pre-campaign spending for an aspiring candidate can have an average of UGX 600 million ($164,000). By the time the official campaign period for the next period comes, the political candidates will have already gotten themselves financially bruised that the only avenue left to raise campaign money is through sale of personal property or borrowing.

**Spending to Soften the Ground**

Winners and losers interviewed in this study revealed that they spent money before and after elections to “soften” political ground prior to a general election. Softening political ground happens during the political cycle where candidates donate to socio-economic ventures and persons as means of winning the support of the electorate. Candidates contribute to weddings,
funerals, birthdays, fees for children at all levels of education, fundraising (schools and churches), start-ups for micro investments and home support among others. The study established that MPs and District LCV Chairpersons spent between UGX 2m to UGX 4m per month in a politically competitive constituency towards social contributions.

It took almost a double cost of campaigning for an MP candidate to contest at party level but also finance campaign processes during the national election or by-election. It was estimated in the study that contesting for MP position at parties and general election costs between UGX 500 million to UGX 1bn combined. Sometimes it is much more than that depending on how deep a candidates pocket is. In constituencies where NRM primaries do not necessarily determine the winner of an election, the cost was likely to be higher.

The study established that the net investment in political/electoral processes is inspired by speculative motives of the political returns that accrue to a candidate who wins an election. The electorate expressed a line of thinking that in view of the corruption and self-centeredness of political leaders to date, effective representation, oversight and service to the electorate are of secondary importance. What is of primary importance is the money or gifts the candidate is able to part with in the intervening period. Voters said they are less likely to elect a candidate with developmental ideas and excellent manifesto when his/her pockets are shallow. This desperation may stem from electorate being poor and economically vulnerable – a situation political candidates manipulate to their advantage.

**Legitimate and Illegitimate Campaign Spending**

During election campaigns, political parties and candidates spend money on legitimate and illegitimate electoral activities. There is less argument about the fact that voter inducement or to be explicit, voter bribery, has become part of Uganda’s electoral culture, but there is other legitimate spending. Electoral campaigns are often characterized by campaign spending wars and in these wars there is utter profligacy of campaigns funds.
According to a Report by Women’s Democracy Group on general elections 2016\textsuperscript{15}, there is need for food, soda, booze, music, and the “individual touch” where voters need to see and touch the candidate. The “individual touch” necessitates candidates on some occasions to move door-to-door and in a very household they visit, the occupants narrate all manners of problems they are facing, hence necessitating the candidate to leave some money behind in every home visited. In some households the candidate may find a big group of over 15 people leaving him/her no option but to donate cash and other gifts. These make election campaigns very expensive and unaffordable to women and youth.

For example it is a basic requirement for a candidate to have a big truck on which a powerful sound system is mounted, with an entertaining DJ and traditional dancers preferably Kadodi\textsuperscript{16}, moving around the different villages in the constituency on an almost daily basis. To pull crowds, the sound system must escort the candidate to a designated campaign venue and when they reach there, they engage in some sort of dancing competition with their campaign agents on stage. At this stage the candidate may not say much but donate cash to different groups of people such as women groups, youth groups, elders’ groups and bodaboda riders’ group to mention but a few on a particular village or parish, will get votes. Usually the cash donations per group range between UGX 40,000 ($10) to UGX 60,000 ($16), and that is all they need to get the votes.

To achieve this, the candidate must buy or hire of a dedicated truck, service men, public address/sound system, a power generator, facilitation for campaign agents and dancers, food, and water among others. These are legitimate activities but to sustain them throughout the campaign period is very costly. Experience tells that there are voters who will only give their ballot to the candidate they believe is powerful and this is one way of telling the powerfulness of the candidate. This according to a report by Women’s Democracy Group in Uganda on general elections 2016, is one of the negative sides of individual merit system that continues to subvert issue based politics.

Other Factors Determining Election Outcomes
Aside from campaign spending, respondents highlighted other factors that give an edge to a particular candidate to win an election. These include level

\textsuperscript{15} Women’s Democracy Group (2016); WOMEN IN UGANDA’S ELECTORAL PROCESSES: Mapping Positive Trends and Persistent Deficits in 2016 General Elections; May 2016.

\textsuperscript{16} Kadodi Dance is a Gisu traditional freestyle dance from Uganda, typically an accompaniment of the Gisu male circumcision initiation ceremony, the Imbalu. Its beat sends pulsating waves through all that encounter its rhythm leaving none the same.
of education, party affiliation, relevance of the manifesto to the social needs of voters, and social behavior of the candidate. Incumbency is the least factor to determine an electoral outcome. The study team learned that whereas Uganda is operating multiparty political system of governance, when it comes to making decision on whom to vote, individual merit still reigns supreme in the minds of voters.

Table 5: Other factors determining electoral outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incumbency</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Behavior</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manifesto</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Strategy</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Affiliation</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels of Education</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>73.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Analyzed Data (June, 2019)

Level of education and party affiliation were regarded strongest determining factors after money at 73.6 percent and 67.5 percent respectively. The study team observed that in the districts covered under the study namely; Arua, Hoima, Kamwenge, Mbarara, and Iganga, was predominant party especially in rural area. This means that a candidate in the rural constituency is more likely to win by coming into the race as a flag bearer of the ruling NRM party. However this perception begins to change as one tends towards urban areas. Having a good campaign manifesto and excellent campaign team also played a key role in determining winner of an electoral race though a candidate must have had the finances somewhere to weed through to win a contest.

Figure 2: Ranking in order of Importance of other Factors that are Perceived Determine Electoral Outcomes
Analysis further reveals that a candidate would most likely to win if he or she had a good campaign strategy at 66.6 percent compared to 63.3 percent, who through a good manifesto is also good enough. Incumbency gave a candidate unlimited power to influence voters because they time to cultivate their ideology and influence the masses than their competitors. The social standing of a candidate is determined by the number of social projects running on the ground that could determine whether or not one gets elected. This was affirmed to by 61.7 percent of the respondents. Social behavior is interpreted as how well the candidates contributed to socio-economic causes like fees, health, funerals, and donations of women and youths groups among others. The electorate contorted the definition of effective political representation to mean provision of social services and economic development to the people. The leaders have generously accepted the new definition because it is the only way they be endeared by the electorate!

**Perceptions on Electoral Expenditure**

The study attempted to establish an estimate of the amount of money candidates had spent in the last two electoral cycles up to 2019. The study established a positive relationship between the hierarchy of a political position and the cost of contesting for the position. The higher the political position, the higher the cost of contest but also the lower the number of candidates attracted to that position. Incumbents were also more likely to incur unlimited electoral expenses that political novices were trying politics for the first time. Voter rationality in most cases played in favor of the novices than incumbents especially if the later were non-performing.

Analysis indicated that 6 out of 11 MPs more than 50 percent of the sample in this stratum had spent a range of UGX 400m – UGX 800 million of election campaigns. The funds applied to the period pre-campaign spending, and spending after nomination through Election Day. In 78.9 percent of the respondents, it is believed that voter inducement accounts for the biggest percentage of candidates’ spending. In 67.9 percent of successful candidates interviewed under this study, it was observed that money is a major cause of disharmony at party primaries elections. In 84.7 percent of the total sample, the shared thinking is that money propagates electoral malpractices including bribing of electoral processes managers.
Regional Variations in Voter Behaviors

The study established variations in voter behavior based on regional differences. The variations were also determined by regional economic trends and the characteristics of youth, women and men. Regional economic trends suggest variation in voter behavior and this manifested in the study.

Analysis indicates that candidates in the district of Mbarara, Kamwenge and Hoima spent much more on election campaigns compared to their counterparts in Eastern and Northern Uganda districts. This reinforces ACFIM’s 2016 village based study on vote buying covering 1,426 villages in 52 districts.

In the no vote-buying study, villages took three collective resolutions on vote buying. Of these 60% took the collective decision of “total denouncement of vote buying”, and majority of these villages (84%) coming from Eastern and Northern Uganda. The second popular collective resolution was “take the money but vote person of choice” was adopted by 31.9% of the villages.

What do candidates spend on?

- Nomination fees
- Campaign pledges
- Voter inducements
- Settling legal and petition costs
- Transport, travel and fuel
- Paying off loans including interest
- Media and publicity
- Hotel costs and refreshments
- Contributions to social welfare (health bills, school fees, funeral, weddings among others)
- Direct service provision (classroom blocks, hospital equipment)
Majority of the villages that adopted the “eat widely but vote wisely” resolution (73.7%) were in western Uganda (41.7%) and Central Uganda (32%).

Case study of Mayor of KCCA Kawempe

He competed 5 times, lost twice and won three (3) times. In 2001, spent UGX 21 million and lost. In 2006, spent UGX 16m and won. In 2011, spent UGX 100m and lost. In 2016, spent UGX 400 million and won. Motivation for continuous spending is spurred by what has already been spend with speculation that continued spending will deliver a win. The fear to lose what has already been spent drives candidates to more spending.

The “asking price” of voters on Election Day was reported in districts where candidates spent more was reportedly higher than in districts where candidates spent less. In Mbarara, Kamwenge and Hoima expenditure reportedly ranged between UGX 2,000 – 5,000. In was in addition to more institutionalized where candidates made contributions to groups of women and youths than individual inducements. Institutional contributions were naturally much more expensive to candidates. Candidates at presidential level, MP, LC V and Mayoral candidates were more likely to make institutional contributions than individual voter inducements.

Analysis of regional dynamics further reveals/showed that in Mbarara, Kamweng and Hoima, whoever went through as winner in party primaries, went on to win the national elections. This raised the stakes in the party primaries and consequently the cost of campaigning. Therefore, most of the spending for NRM political candidates was incurred at party primaries than national elections. Indeed 53.1 percent of the political candidates had participated in party primaries with the majority of these being NRM. The study also established that if a candidate spent significantly in a competitive party primary election but also faced a stiff political challenger, the total amount spent of election campaigns ranged between UGX 700m to UGX 1bn. The estimated amount that is likely to be spent in a completive LC V election is between UGX 300 and UGX 500m. The actual amount spent though depended on the political candidate’s electoral/political management team (including campaign managers, agents/assistants and financiers).

17 Alliance for Finance Monitoring (ACFIM); Curbing Vote Buying in Uganda: A Village Based Study Covering 52 Districts, 2016.
**Timing Matters in Campaign Spending**

Knowledge of when to spend, where to spent and in what amounts is critical for the success of any candidate. Whereas it is advisable to spend during the gazzetted campaign period, it is even more advisable that a candidate comes into the nomination period with a “reasonable profile”. This profile is achieved through pre-campaign spending and having personal touch with voters sustained over a period of time. After winning, the elected leaders is expected to continue spending. And if one was elected as a new comer to punish the incumbent, the new comer must spend on the electorate while in office. The purpose is to ensure that the political leader does not lose electoral ground in the next electoral cycle. This happened at all levels of political structure.

**Sources of Campaign Money**

The cost of running an electoral campaign in Uganda has grown exponentially since the country returned to multi-party political dispensation in 2005. Political parties and candidates stake huge sums of money to get elected. The situation begs the questions – where does the money come from? How is that money recouped?

The study set out to interrogate former political candidates on the sources of campaign money. Respondents were asked to share their most common sources of money as indicated in the bar graph below;

*Figure 4: Showing the Sources of Political/Campaign Financing*

![Bar graph showing sources of political/campaign financing]

- Personal Savings and Financing

The study established that candidates contesting for the first time enter the race without prior research on how much it would take for them to finance...
their election campaign, only to find themselves mid-way through and broke. Generally political candidates finance election campaigns through personal sources and fundraising from well-wishers as revealed by 57.5 per cent of the respondents. Those who have been there before reported that they would prepare themselves for electoral participation and had to identify within their means, how they were likely to finance election costs. Personal savings financing included; personal equity, sale of personal properties and family support and contributions.

In earlier ACFIM Survey of Members of the 10th Parliament on Campaign Finance Reforms (2016)\(^{18}\), 89 per cent of the responses said that their “personal resources” were the most important source for financing their election campaign. Donations from friends were mentioned as the second most important source for financing their election campaign with 34 per cent of the responses.

New entrants in the electoral arena often spend comparatively less than incumbents. This is because voters have a presumption that an incumbent has “been in things” and therefore has deeper pockets. The demand for gifts, cash donations and social contributions is relatively higher than a new comer. In circumstances where the electorate feels “tired” of the incumbent and wants change, the new comer will easily sail through with or without money. But money does not always guarantee electoral outcomes because the study found cases where a candidate spent significantly and lost.

**Financing from Political Parties**

Political parties make campaign contributions to their flag bearers at different electoral levels. The campaign finance contribution from a political party makes is contingent on the party’s financial capability. Political parties in opposition have in the past two electoral cycles only managed to pay nomination fees for their flag bearers. The party in power (NRM) is the only one that makes significant campaign contribution to its flag bearers. For example, in 2016 general elections, a minimum of UGX 20 million was given to party flag bearers that were nominated for Member of Parliament elections. This was confirmed by 47.2 per cent of the respondents. However a Member of Parliament candidate would need much more to finance the election campaign.

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\(^{18}\) ACFIM Survey of MPs in the 10th Parliament was conducted in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in 2016. A total of 185 Members of Parliament were successfully interviewed in the survey.
Key informant interviews with some MPs in the 10th Parliament indicated that, they spend between UGX 500 million to UGX 1 billion to effectively compete for MP positions. This excludes the official nomination fees candidates pay to engage in party electoral processes and the fees for the electoral commission.

**Sources of Political Party Income**

The Political Parties and Organisations Act (2005) permits political parties to fundraise but there is a cap of UGX 500 million from a particular source. Parties are further prohibited from obtaining funds from external governments or entities that are hostile to Uganda and/or pose a threat to national sovereignty. Party members including serving MPs make financial contributions to their respective parties. In addition some political parties such as the NRM charge nomination fees in party primary elections. In 2015, the NRM earned at least UGX 4.5 billion in nomination fees. Political parties represented in parliament further benefit from public financing. In 2015 government released UGX 10 billion that was shared among parties represented in Parliament namely; NRM, FDC, DP and UPC.

**Borrowing from Banks and Money Lenders**

The study established that when push comes to shove and a candidate finds him/herself broke in the middle of an election campaign, they often run to banks and/or money lenders to borrow. On many occasions when the candidate runs out of money in the middle of an election campaign, dropping out of the contest is never considered as an option. The only feasible option is to borrow and push through to the end. Analysis of responses from key informant interviews indicates that 53.5 per cent of the respondents had at some point borrowed money from the bank to finance political and electoral related expenditure. The study interviewed 11 Members of Parliament that have served for more than one term and 08 of these revealed that they had borrowed money to finance their election campaign. But they did not stop at borrowing, they went ahead and even sold their property to raise campaign money and this applied to 06 out of 11 MPs interviewed.

In the end, regardless of whether the candidate has won or lost the election, they must face the reality of paying off-loans and this may necessitate borrowing from another source to pay debt, settling legal costs (including

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19 [https://www.independent.co.ug/ugandas-political-parties-share-shs3-billion/](https://www.independent.co.ug/ugandas-political-parties-share-shs3-billion/)
petitions), investing in business to re-engineer themselves after an expensive campaign processes and payment of campaign logistical costs.

**Sale of Personal Property**
Respondents indicated that selling properties was a major source of electoral financing. Analysis indicated that 60.5 per cent mentioned that they had at anyone point in time disposed-off an asset to finance electoral processes, finance a campaign debt, acquire houses in Kampala (for MPs), finance political related legal processes or court fines, to stabilize their socio-economic lives after excess campaign spending spree. The assets included; prime plots, houses and cars among others. Candidates who run out of money in the middle of an election were more likely to sell off personal property to keep alive their election campaign. Some candidates reported that they had been conned by their campaign managers to engage in wasteful and profligate campaign spending.

**Parliamentary Pension Scheme and SACCO**
The study established that incumbent Members of Parliament benefit from their pension saving scheme at the end of their tenure of 5 years. The pension scheme makes a mandatory deduction of 15 per cent from the MP’s monthly salary while the government contributes to the scheme 30 per cent of the MP’s earnings. It was established that an MP can earn up to approximately UGX 500m from this scheme. The funds are directly re-invested in political and electoral processes.

**Contributions from Companies and businessmen**
Private companies and businesses or business persons are key actors in the electoral processes because they make campaign finance contribution. Political parties and candidates target businesses as a source of campaign income. Businessmen finance the political party in power and one in opposition who has potential. They further bankroll candidates regardless of whether they are flag bearers for the incumbent NRM party or political parties in opposition. When businessmen make campaign finance contribution to candidates in opposition, their wish is to remain anonymous for fear of retribution from the party in government. The study established that overtime there are some private businessmen who have established
themselves as political kingmakers. The question is how are businesses or business persons impacted when they support a winning candidate or political party? Political kingmakers and philanthropists fall in this category and reportedly financed MPs, District Local Council (LCV) Chairpersons and Mayors. The major justification companies give bankrolling candidates and political parties is “protecting business interests”.
Chapter Five

The Paradox of Commercialised Electoral Politics

Commercialisation of politics and electoral processes is the cry of every politician as Uganda heads into general elections 2021 where campaign spending is projected to reach unprecedented levels. If the 2015-2016 election campaigns were described in a word as, Money, all hell will likely break loose in 2021. The president of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni has variously decried it during his public speeches, in his op-ed in the newspapers and tweets. In one of his tweets on November 11, 2018, the President wrote after meeting representatives of the Inter Party Organisation for Dialogue (IPOD),

“l urged leaders of the opposition political parties, together with their supporters to work with the national resistance movement (NRM) government to eradicate electoral violence and the monetisation of politics to give democracy a chance to flourish in Uganda.”

Other political leaders at national and Local Government levels have also added their voice on the vice of commercialised electoral processes with the loudest coming from the Leader of Opposition in Parliament, Hon Betty Acan Aol. The Electoral Commission has flagged commercialisation of politics as one of the main challenges faced over the past five years. In his statement to the legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee that was scrutinising the five electoral reform bills tabled in Parliament in August 2019, Attorney General William Byaruhanga emphasized that the provisions on restricting sources of election campaign funding are intended to cure commercialisation of electoral politics.

ACFIM has spoken and written ad nauseam about the monster of commercialised electoral politics that has been fed so well over the past 15 years that it is now rearing its ugly head on democracy, the national

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20 Leader of Opposition, Hon. Betty Acan Aol speaking during a consultative meeting for MPs organises by ACFIM in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) at Protea Hotel Kampala in 2018.

economy and the very social fabric that safeguards national values. The study establishes that whereas electoral actors are blaming each other for this predicament, all of them are complicity in feeding the monster of commercialised electoral politics.

Political candidates blame voters and religious leaders for being greedy in demanding for money relentlessly from elected leaders. But voters point the finger back to politicians for having been the ones who started the practice of using money and gifts to induce voters. The political parties, the authors of this study feel, have not done enough to address the problem from their internal party electoral processes. The report by ACFIM on campaign spending for Sheema North Country by-elections condemned the act of NRM party distributing UGX 200,000 to villages through the LC1 structures. This strategy was used in 2016 general elections and was repeated in other by-elections such as Nebbi District Chairperson by-election. By continuing with such a strategy, the party in power is feeding the monster. It is not sustainable, not for the NRM party or any other party, not for voters and certainly not for candidates.

Role of the Electorate in Commercialising Politics
The electorate perceived politics as a necessary means of getting rich. Voters think that political candidates pursue politics to chase wealth not to serve. Analysis of the FGDs that engaged directly with electorate suggest that the prime motivation of seeking leadership is to “eat” as opposed to service. As such the electorate is not interested in campaign promises or manifestos. Instead they rationalise that the best thing that can happen for them is to “take their share” while they still can when the candidates have desperation for the vote. The study confirmed that the electorate no longer responds to political ideas and manifesto promises, but to money.

The major excuse for this kind of rationalisation is poverty and a situation where politicians serve their personal interests not interests of the electorate. The electorate has insatiable demand as a means of plugging their daily livelihood gaps. This assertion was continuously flagged during the focus group discussions especially for the youths and women.

Candidates indicated that the behaviour of politicians not returning to their respective constituencies to consult with the electorate was caused by the
unquenchable demands of the electorate. The electorate have redefined the role of politicians to something that makes more meaning to them. The new definition is meant to serve the social needs of the electorate. For example, the role of MPs has been redefined to mean “to provide social services and contribute to social needs” than the constitutional roles of “representation, legislation and oversight”. Politicians have fallen prey to the new definition of their roles, majorly due to limitations of government to adequately plan and deliver its service delivery mandate. The electorate mirror politicians as adversaries of government and continuously “demand their portion” at their earliest contact with political candidates. The behaviour of voters is partly to blame in fuelling voter bribery and the increasing scale of unregulated money in electoral processes.

**Youth at the Centre of the Problem**

The youths interviewed vividly indicated that they conspire to form adhoc groups to “catch the eye” of giving politicians. These groups disintegrate at the end of elections because they are formed for the sole objective of extracting money from candidates. It will be noted that this approach has been used by the youths all over the country and the President of Uganda has at times fallen prey to such manoeuvres.

**Businessmen in Politics**

Over 78.5 percent of the respondents in the study unequivocally agreed that most political leaders considered politics as employment, exposure and opportunities rather than leadership or service to the electorate (service). This is not to say that all political leaders are like this because there are a few good men and women who are there to serve. Analysis also indicated 64.4 per cent of respondents allude that the high cost of contesting for elections is pushing seasoned politicians out of the electoral arena and replacing them with businessmen whose sole objective is personal enrichment and self-aggrandizement.

There is a growing perception that money splashed in election campaigns in not only used to induce and bribe voters but that electoral officials could also be “bought” if a candidate met their price. Unlimited and unregulated campaign spending and its attendant vice of commercialised electoral politics are combining to erode electoral integrity and set democracy on a backward spin.

ACFIM extended study on electoral campaign financing pointed to continuous increases in the general price levels in consumer goods and
services in periods during and immediately after campaign processes. In 2011, the economy was strained largely due to excess money that was pumped into the economy during electoral campaigns which made the cost of living to increase consequently affecting the general standards of living, hence the inflationary pressures observed. The study established that effective demand for social services e.g. education, health and food among others is still low which fuels the insatiable demand of the electorate for money or other goods and services from political candidates during electorate races.
Chapter Six

Impact of Campaign Spending on Electoral Participants

Who are the Electoral Participants?
Election campaigns are complex processes that have many actors playing different but mutually reinforcing roles in order for an election to happen. In an electoral process, there are voters that make choices of which political party or candidate should occupy political office thus granting the elected party/person power to manage government and govern the voters for a specific period of time. Because the power to make decision on who gets what, when and how is obtainable through election, the electoral processes tend to also attract the interest of other actors including business persons that often choose to finance preferred political parties and/or candidates to ensure that their business interests are protected.

In the context of this study, the main electoral participants are as follows:
  
f) Candidates
  
g) Political Parties
  
h) Campaign agents
  
i) Electorate / voters
  
j) Private companies / businesses

The illustration below shows the electoral participants such as political candidates, political parties and voters feed directly into the democratic electoral process. The other participants namely business companies and campaign agents/managers indirect contribute to the electoral process. Business companies provide campaign money while campaign agents look for votes. Voter participation produces votes while participation of political parties and candidates produce elected leaders. The voters elect candidates and political parties, and give power to elected leaders to govern them and business companies among others.
Candidates
These are the men and women who offer themselves for election. They invest among other things their time, emotions and money in electioneering to access public office. Whereas political parties may make a contribution to a candidate’s campaign expenses, the individual candidate shoulders most of the costs of his/her campaigns.

Political Parties
The significance of political parties for modern democracy is generally accepted both by contemporary scholars and by policy-makers charged with fostering the development of newly emerging democracies or with improving the quality of democracy in established democratic politics.22 It should be recalled that whereas Uganda had been conducting regular elections under the movement system of governance (1993, 1996, 2001), those elections were always discounted by international observers as undemocratic because they were held on the basis of individual merit not political parties. The country eventually returned to multiparty democratic dispensation in 2006 and since then political parties have been key actors in Uganda’s electoral process including financing of election campaigns.

22 Ingrid van Biezen (2005); Working Paper on Democracy and Political Parties’, ECPR Joint Sessions, Granada, 14-19 April, University of Birmingham
**Campaign agents**
These are men and women who have mastered the act of swaying voters and project themselves as the link between the candidate and the electorate. Some are perceived as kingmakers and use this position to reinforce their centrality in the electoral process and make money from candidates. Political leaders know they cannot win an election without these campaign agents. They are partly responsible for the rising costs of election campaigns because they determine how much a candidate should spend. After elections some

**The electorate / voters**
These are the men and women who endure the scotching sun and stand in queues at polling station to cast their ballot. They are the ones that produce the numbers that make an election because elections are about numbers. Their participation in elections is central to the electoral process because if they boycott, the election cannot be considered to have taken place. It is because of this centrality that voters are targeted for all forms of inducements.

**Private companies or businesses**
The private sector plays an active role in contributing campaign funds for political parties and/or candidates at different electoral levels. Many of the companies wish to remain anonymous especially when they support opposition political candidates for fear of retribution.

**Impact of Campaign Spending on Political Candidates**
The study established varying levels of socio-economic and political impact of unregulated spending to political candidates. Winners and losers of electoral races spend time nursing the economic wounds sustained as a result of costly campaign spending. The difference is only in scale and magnitude of impact. Whereas winners had a chance to recoup back some of the money invested, losers always find themselves in a worse-off situation.

The most commonly experienced consequences include but are not limited to the following:

- g) Collapse of personal businesses and loss of business networks,
- h) Depletion of all personal savings,
- i) Failure to finance living costs/standards
- j) Loss of personal property
- k) Loss of marriage or failed relationships
Former political candidates interviewed in this study had all experienced at least four or all the above with loss of property being the most common occurrence. The table below illustrates this in further detail:

**Figure 6: Responses on after-effects of Campaign Spending**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common characteristics of Former Political Candidates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Servicing debts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Sold or lost property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Collapsed businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Injured political careers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Served civil sentences or bailed out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Failed to pay legal/courts costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Unable to finance living costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Experienced family challenges (including divorce and family breakdown)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sale or Loss of Property**

Majority of former political candidates interviewed (72.6%) indicated that they had lost property either through direct selling and/or, attachment by debtors. This situation is lived by both winners and losers of electoral races. Some alluded to have sold prime land/plots, buildings and vehicles to mention but a few, in order to finance electoral and campaign related costs to the end. The costs included principal and interest on loans acquired, paying election petition costs and financing living costs for families. A parliamentary seat is the most coveted political position because the high attrition rates on MPs create an impression to aspiring candidates that it is
achievable. The second most coveted position is District LC V chairperson. The benefits enjoyed by a Member of Parliament are the allure of many to aspire and spend whatever it takes to win it. It was understood that some of the properties lost were forcefully attached with some of the defaulting former candidates getting committed to civil prisons over default. Documented case scenarios are indicated in this report.

A Newspaper headline of an MP loosing property over debts

**Socio-Economic Misfits**

When an incumbent political candidate loses an election, it becomes very difficult for the individual to reintegrate into the same society in which he/she has been campaigning and spending to get elected. Political positions are perceived as elevated positions in society that one attains a different social class when he/she becomes a political leader. The feeling within the electorate is that “they are not like us”. The study established that the day it transpires that a candidate has lost an election, the colleagues he/she used to interact and connect with suddenly decline to answer the phone calls he/she makes. The interpretation is simple – you are no longer important. This reality is not easy to take. The losing candidate must on his/her own nurse the bruises of campaign spending. Losing candidates interviewed under this study expressed the feeling that are poorer than they were before going to parliament and failing to win a re-election.
The situation is worse for those former political leaders whom the electorate feel did not represent them well, or look after them well in terms of meeting constituency monetary demands. Political representation comes with an enormous social task to appease the electorate by caring for their personal needs. Leaders and those with intentions are expected to make social contributions towards weddings, funerals, fundraisings, donations, school fees, health bills and other forms of community contributions. It is now a social norm that at a social gathering, the politician must make himself or herself visible through contributions. It makes more meaning if the politician is available. Those who are able to meet these demands establish themselves a solid social base that guarantees votes.

**Figure 7: Showing the Social Impact of Unregulated Electoral Spending**

The financial bruises and the battering endured in the course of sustaining an election campaign, pushed losing candidates away from the electorate. It is called recuperation period. The fact that some will have lost houses, land (property) attached and vehicles sold makes them social misfits already. Analysis indicated that 58.4 percent of the former candidates reached felt lost from their communities and perceived to be suffering from low social status syndrome because they could not provide for their families and relatives like they used to before gambling everything away in electioneering. Many losing candidates were found agonizing in silence while continuously sinking in debt.
Coping Mechanisms

The study established that the impact of unregulated and limitless campaign spending is comparatively more fatal and corrosive on losing candidates. Successful candidates have a chance to recoup their investment through salary and allowances as well as other opportunities that come with the office. But those who were elected in offices of district local government, youth councils and women councils were confronted with rude awakening at the meagre allowances. These have to survive through other means including the temptation to engage in unethical activities such as peddling influence into the procurement processes to recoup their investment and also meet the sustained constituency demands. On the contrary the losing candidates were found to be in a very sorry economic state.

The economic situation was found to be worse for those candidates that lost and went the extra mile of contesting the results by filing unsuccessful petitions in courts of law. This is because in addition to being costly, a failed petition also attracts costs which further compound the economic misery of the losing candidate. There are cases of former candidates that have been incarcerated in civil prisons for failing to pay the costs of the failed court petition. By the time of the study, some losing candidates were still pursuing an extended court battle four years into the tenure of office. This applied to those who had the financial wherewithal to put up a spirited legal fight for the position lost.

Coping Mechanisms employed by Losing Incumbents

Candidates that had served in political positions and lost found it very difficult to cope with the reality of adapting back to ordinary citizenship. Parliament for example provides MPs with luxury allowances, diplomatic travel, some immunity and prestige. MPs in the 10th Parliament that came back from the 9th Parliament revealed that their former colleagues who lost the election in 2016 are living in tatters. This is because most of them live in psychological denial with hopes that they can re-invest and win back their lost positions. The practice of acquiring more debt only serves to immerse them into an even deeper debt trap.

Reality of a Member of Parliament

“The problem with being a Member of Parliament in Uganda is that you enter it spending, live in it spending, and come out of it spending. This condemns a former MP to economic misery”


Possible Psychological Disorders

This situation can be also be articulated from the perspective of classical conditioning theory as propagated by Frederic Skinner (1938). The theory presupposes that psychological behavior is shaped by causes and consequences and this is called Psychological behavioral conditioning. Some losing candidates stubbornly refuse to adjust their lives to match the changes in economic fortunes. They live in denial which many makes them vulnerable to behavioral and psychological disorders such as:

a. Not answering the phone calls when you suspect a collection agency or a voter is calling.
b. Leaving utility bills unpaid or just stuffing them in a drawer to avoid piling up the stress
c. Open up new accounts and abandoning those that are in debts. It was noted earlier in findings that several MPs begged parliamentary accounts to deposit their salary and allowances on other accounts than those originally provided
d. Telling oneself that everyone is in the same situation (denial)
e. They develop a debt-anger syndrome resorting to hiding and using abusive language with creditors than negotiation
f. They develop low level of self-esteem and avoid the public because of the degraded social status

23 Financial melancholia refers to the psychological syndrome of being trapped by past debt obligations.
A former MP in Arua who has lost almost all her previous economic power finds solace in keeping hope alive that if she stands in the next election, chances are that she might win. This former legislator has through the vicissitudes of electoral cycles lost land, houses, and economic projects worth over UGX 1billion. She has also served time in a civil prison over non-payment of debt contracted to finance the failed election bid. Some former political leaders will continue borrowing from banks and money lenders to maintain their desired and expected social-economic status. In doing so the end up suffering from financial melancholia23.

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Classical Conditioning Theory

by Frederic Skinner (1938)

The theory presupposes that psychological behavior is shaped by causes and consequences and this is called Psychological behavioral conditioning. A behavioral reaction (response) to an event or experience is determined by learning or conditioning. The theory in the context of this study is used to explain the behavior of politicians and their response to debt and financial troubles. The actions of lenders (financial institutions and individuals) shape negative responses and experiences among the debtors (politicians). Whereas politicians skip their loan repayment schedules, lenders will use all actions such as endless calls, intimidation, enforcements, correspondences to trigger a payment response from the politicians. The theory supposes a conditioning agent (lender or financial institution) and condition agent (politician). Behavior of the two agents is conditioned by actions of the other.

For example, whenever, the lenders call (stimulus) the politicians, the call triggers a negative emotional response and the politicians refuse to pick, hide, and switch off their phones among others which is a new conditioned behavior. Such reactions are a deviation from the norm and turn out to be psychological behavior disorders. Other characteristics exhibited include; anger displacement, inadequate cognitive disposition, being rude, cruel and depressive anxiety among others. Such behavior requires re-enforcement mechanisms to promote positive behavior. The probability of a behavior to re-occur is determined by the extent of re-enforcement. They will be given “bail-outs’, government appoints, family support etc.
**Inability to Finance Living Costs**

Majority of the former political candidates that interacted with the study (68.4%) testified to be experiencing challenges in managing and financing living costs for themselves and their families. Some of the difficulties included; failure to raise money to pay personal and family living costs, paying school fees for their children, defaulting on rent and failing to fuel their automobiles. There are also cases of former candidates who used to travel in own vehicles before campaigns but can no longer afford that means of transport. Some of these are former legislators in the 8th and 9th Parliaments who after losing the elections, they can only afford Bodaboda as a means of transport. In such a situation they can hardly stay in the constituency for fear of becoming a laughing stock, they live in Kampala.

It is recalled that in May 2018 a team of what was referred to in the media as poverty-stricken former ministers and legislators visited the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Rebecca Kadaga and requested her to use the influence of her office to convince the President to heal their financial infirmities. The group was led by Hon. Joseph Ekemu former MP representing Kaberamaido County. These former legislators further wanted the speaker to lobby for them jobs from President Yoweri Museveni. The former MP for West Budama South, Hon. Emmanuel Othieno Akika (2006-2011) was quoted to have said, “Having been a Member of Parliament, you are used to
being in certain circles, certain positions and offices, and you do things differently”.24 These are some of the manifestations of the monster of commercialized politics rearing its head on the very legislators and making it very hard for them to prepare for life outside Parliament. This is because the Member of Parliament enters Parliament spending, lives in parliament spending and leaves Parliament spending so when he/she fails to win an election, he/she is condemned to economic abyss despite the fact that MPs are among the best paid individuals in the country.

It was understood by the study team that when MPs are serving on different committees and carrying out their supervisory role, they often antagonise civil servants. When they are voted out of Parliament, it is payback time. The civil servants will not give jobs including consultancies, to former legislators even when they have the requisite competences and skills.

**Bad Relations with Community**

Slightly more than a half of former political candidates interviewed (50.7 %) especially at Local Government level had experienced some form negative social challenges including social exclusion due to inability to keep up with spending levels exhibited during campaigns, inability to support self and children among others. The bad relations therefore arise when the political candidate is no longer in an advantaged position to keep spending on the community. In other words, the glue (money) that kept the relationship between the candidate and the voter together is now no longer available.

**Divorces and Separations**

The family is the smallest unit in the community. Families make up the community. Happy families may make a happy community and the reverse may be true. It was established that often when male candidates – which is the gender dominating elections – make the decisions to mortgage or sell family property to raise campaign funds, they take such decisions unilaterally without consulting with their spouses. And when the families are being evicted, it is a level of betrayal that some spouses fail to take resulting in divorce. Six out of every ten former political candidates that interacted with the research team (60.7%) revealed that they experienced various forms of family challenges including divorces and separations.

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Elevation in Social and Economic Status

There is a sense in which engagement in political processes elevates the social and economic status of candidates. There is a behavioral trend that is emerging where men and women aspire to win the flag of a political party and establish themselves as strong contenders while their major objective is not winning the election to become leaders, but rather to make money. Such candidates use the election campaigns as a platform for their perceived growing popularity to bargain and be paid off by financiers of the other candidates they are competing with, to withdraw from the race. The proceeds from this maneuver would contribute significantly to lifting the social and economic status of the individual involved.

This may partly explain the “story behind the story” of Forum for Democratic Change’s (FDC) candidate in the Kaabong District Woman Member of Parliament, Ms Judith Adyaka Nalibe, pulling out of the race just two weeks to polling day – September 26th, 2019. She accused the FDC party of neglecting her during the campaigns and making empty promises to her. However, the party retorted by claiming that its flag bearer Ms Adyaka Nalibe was offered an inducement to withdraw from the race.

In the same vein, carrying the party flag in the race provides the basis for one to knock on the doors of as many potential campaign contributors as possible. Depending on the marketing skills of a particular candidate, he/she can raise enough campaign funds and only use half of it for elections as some form of accountability while keeping the rest of the money for economic empowerment, hence improved social status. The study established that maneuvers of this nature are beginning to take root in Uganda’s electoral politics.

Growth of Politics as Career

The intent of any political candidate is to stay at the helm of the political apex. Winners and losers labored to ensure that they stay relevant to the socio-economic and political cause of the electorate. This is the best way to sustain one’s political leadership positions or put a strong claim on future political contests. Because politics is now a career to most candidates, many times these political contests have turned into a do-or-die affair severing relationships among contestants. According to the study 62.4 percent of the former political candidates did not have smooth relations with their political competitors.
Case Studies of Former Candidates/Legislators Impacted by Unregulated Campaign Spending

The economic misery that befalls candidates who spend but lose political contests is one that nobody wishes to come his/her way. And because elections in Uganda have become a do-or-die matter, candidates spend massively hence increasing the scale and magnitude of post-election financial bruises. The study established that both successful and unsuccessful political candidates remain economically battered, shattered, tattered and tattooed. This affects their families, social and economic life. Political leaders are pointing a finger at debt pressures and constituency demands as the major causes of their economic breakdown and misery. Whereas it is true that campaign spending starts as soon as the new political office bearers are sworn in, it was established that political leaders live a luxurious life and spend profligately to “keep the up with the image of being Honourable”.

Political leaders further lose money in unsuccessful business ventures which they start up understandably as “low hanging fruits” that will help them to maintain a sustainable standard of living. In some cases, these business ventures are entrusted with not so competent managers who run them down. Others attempt to put up powerful buildings in Kampala and other major towns which they end up not completing. Political leaders by virtue of their official responsibilities barely have enough time to supervise their investments.

Several MPs have appeared in the public domain as highly indebted facing civil and criminal charges. Between 2014 and 2019, several cases have been in the public eye. Money lenders Kenloy investments and Nibya group in 2015 reportedly wrote to the Speaker of Parliament seeking her intervention to recover UGX 990.5m from 21 legislators who they referred to “bad debtors”25. This came towards the expiry of the term of 9th Parliament before the MPs would be pay up. It was indicated that the money kept accumulating in principal and interest because of failure of the MPs to honour payments on time. MPs were reported to engage in multiple borrowing aggregating their debt.

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25 [www.observer.co.ug](http://www.observer.co.ug) May 06, 2015
Case Study 1: A Political Journey Gone Wrong for Hon. Margaret Angufiru

In 2006, a promising medical professional woman cut short her medical career path, contested in Parliamentary elections and was successfully elected to represent Ayivu County, Arua District in the 8th Parliament (2006-2011). Her name is Hon. Margaret Angufiru. She stood as an independent candidate and defeated incumbent MP Zoe Bakoko Bakoru and a male challenger Mr. Nyakuta Vincent.

Her motivation to stand was informed by a belief that she would serve her people better and specifically support the girl child cause as a legislator. She had previously served as Principal Tutor, Arua School of Comprehensive Nursing, a District Nursing Officer (Moyo District), and a Tutor Lira School of Nursing”.

Hon. Angufiru tells the story of how she needed a platform to improve the quality of woman. Being a Member of Parliament would enable her to lobby and fundraise for the plight of a woman. Her fortunes would turn when she embarked on the quest for the second term in parliament (2011-2016), and lost.

In 2016 she came abandoned her independent tag and participated in NRM party primaries. She had saved UGX 100 million for the primaries but it was not enough. She ended up borrowing another UGX 28 million from a local financial institution to be paid with a period of 6 months. By the time of this study, she had not paid up the loan and the loan effects had accumulated to UGX 47 million. She has lost prime properties including land with a house in upscale Arua Municipality valued at UGX 150 million and a medical school (St. John’s College of Health Sciences) valued at UGX 300 million after failure to pay another bank loan in one of the top banks. The college of science and medicine had been mortgaged as security.

Hon. Angufiru has not only lost elections but has also lost wealth and property. She leaves a life of misery – economically battered, shattered, tattered and tattooed by engaging in a game of limitless campaign spending. She attributes her predicament on bad party politics.

However, she says politics is addictive and she is already mobilizing to make a political comeback and contest in 2021. To her, coming back to parliament is the only way she will redeem her economic status.
Case Study 2: Former Candidate Committed to Civil Prisons and Faints

On October 26th, 2015 the National Resistance Movement (NRM) party conducted primary elections. One of the contestants for party flagbearer, Ajuri County Member of Parliament was Mr. Isaac Apenyo. He lost the primary elections to incumbent candidate Hon. Hamson Denis Obua. He contested the results and ended up dragging both Hon. Obua and his party – NRM, to High Court in Lira district. The case was dismissed with costs in April 2017. The costs awarded were UGX 84,686,500 (US$23,201). Having spent all his money on party primary campaigns, he failed to pay, and went into hiding.

Lira High Court on April 1, 2019 issued an arrest warrant to M/S Collectica Associates High court and Auctioneers to arrest Mr Apenyo. He was tracked down, arrested and brought to the civil court on the 15th Day of April 2018. Court sent him to civil prison to serve a sentence of six months. By the time of the study, Isaac Apenyo was still nursing the wounds of his participation in the electoral processes as candidate.

Isaac Apenyo

(lying down & inset) being comforted by a relative before being given a civil sentence of 6 months in prison (Monitor Publications)
Case Study 3: Hon. Crispus Ayena Odongo Survives Serving in Jail

Hon. Crispus Ayena Odongo was the Member of Parliament representing Oyam North County in the 9th Parliament. In 2016 he stood again on the Uganda Peoples’ Congress (UPC) party ticket and lost the election to Col (Rtd) Charles Okello Engola Macadwong of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) party, by a margin of 5,989 votes.

Hon. Ayena Odongo did not accept defeat, he filed a petition in the High Court to nullify the elections on ground of questionable academic papers which Col. Okello Engola presented to the Electoral Commission for nomination. In June 2016, High Court nullified the election but Col. Okello Engola appealed the decision in the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal overturned the decision of the High Court and upheld Col. Okello Engola as the duly elected MP for Oyam North County. Court of Appeal further rewarded costs of UGX 146 million against Hon. Ayena Odong, which he failed to pay.

On July 11th, 2019, Hon. Crispus Ayena Odongo was arrested by agents of Spearlink Auctioneers and Court Bailiffs over failure to pay the costs that were rewarded against him by the Court of Appeal. He was presented in court the following day. Court reportedly ruled that the former legislator can regain his freedom after paying UGX 73 million or be committed to civil prison for six months for failure to offset the debt.

Hon. Ayena Odongo paid the money and regained his freedom but continues to nurse the bruises of the high cost of campaigning in Uganda. There many former candidates that have found themselves in the same situation as Hon Ayena Odongo and have gone on to serve the civil sentence after they failed to pay the costs of failed court petitions.

Hon Ayena Odongo (seated with Prison warder) before he appeared in Court (Photo by Bill Okech)

26 Also available at: [https://www.independent.co.ug/lawyer‐ayena‐jailed‐for‐failing‐to‐pay‐ugx‐146m‐debt/](https://www.independent.co.ug/lawyer‐ayena‐jailed‐for‐failing‐to‐pay‐ugx‐146m‐debt/)
Case Study 4: Simon Muyanga Lutaaya

Simon Muyanga Lutaaya is a renowned Journalist and Television Presenter who contested for Member of Parliament, Bulamogi County as flag bearer for opposition Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) Party, in the 2016 elections. He lost the election to National Resistance Movement (NRM) Party flag bearer and incumbent MP, Hon. Lubogo Kenneth. Lutaaya lost the election by a difference of 2,650 votes and did not accept defeat. He filed a petition challenging the re-election of Hon Lubogo.

Simon Muyanga Lutaaya at Court at the time of Custody (Photo courtesy of SoftPower News)

A court ruling at Jinja High court was made against him on August 19, 2016. Court further awarded the defendant (Hon. Lubogo) costs of UGX 153 million to be paid by Muyanga. He appealed the ruling at the Court of Appeal but was not successful as the ruling was upheld by the high court on November 22, 2017.

Lutaaya who was still nursing the concussions of unregulated campaign spending, is reported to have started the payment of debt by selling his remaining properties to reduce the outstanding figure to UGX 51 million.27 He failed to pay up within the deadline of December 2018. Subsequently High Court Registrar, Jinja District, Mr. Jesse Byaruhanga issued a warrant of arrest after Lutaaya failed to honor the court summons. Lutaaya was arrested and committed to Kirinya Prison and his property attached to recover the money.

He would later be released when a campaign code named “save Muyanga Lutaaya” was launched and contributed funds to secure his release. By the time of his release the debt had reduced to Ugx 37 m. Both parties through their lawyers would later make a settlement outside court.

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27 https://eagle.co.ug/2018/04/30/nbs-simon-muyanga-sent-to-prison-over-shs51m-court-debt.html
Case Study 5: Campaign Related Costs Turn Former Legislator into Jail Bird

In July 2016 High Court nullified the election of Hon. Apollo Kantinti as Member of Parliament for Kyadondo East, following a successful petition by NRM’s Mike Sebalu who had been beaten in that election by a small margin of 326 votes only. Whereas Hon Kantinti appealed against the High Court judgement, he lost and a by-election was organized. Kantinti lost the by-election to a musician turned politician Robert Kyagulanyi a.k.a. Bobi Wine.

When Hon. Kantinti lost the appeal against the High Court judgement following a petition files by his challenger Mike Sebalu, court awarded costs against him which he failed to pay and was incarcerated in July 2019. He was quoted in the local newspaper, Daily Monitor as saying, “court has committed me to Luzira prison for failure to pay Shs108 million to Sebalu over the election petitions, and am ready to go to prison and serve the 6 months’ sentence. Am not ready to pay that money to Mr Sebalu.”

As he was grappling with the jail term, another sentence was handed down to him. This time it was failure to pay a 3-year loan he contracted from Standard Chartered Bank. Hon. Kantinti allegedly borrowed UGX 300 million from the bank and was to pay it in 50 monthly installments. The loan was understandably taken in June 2016 shortly after he had been sworn in as Member of Parliament for Kyadondo East constituency. In 2017 following nullification of his election, he started defaulting on payments which prompted the bank to go to court. For this, Hon Kantinti was handed another six month jail sentence.

By the time of this study, the former legislator was still languishing in jail, but the genealogy of his woes is clearly traceable in unregulated election campaign spending in a country where politics is highly commercialized.

Source: https://chimpreports.com/former-mp-kantinti-sent-back-to-jail-over-another-shs-100million-debt/
Other Legislators Facing Court Proceeding or Committed to Civil Prisons

Every week Ugandans are awakened to news headlines of political leaders being arrested or jailed for failure to pay debts contracted from financial institutions and money lenders. This money is borrowed before, during and after elections. It is concerning to note that Members of Parliament who by the time of this study were among the best paid individuals in Uganda, are at the same time so deep in debt. Could it be that these legislators are so poor at personal finance management?

In her remarks during induction of the 10th Parliament, the Speaker of Parliament Hon. Rebecca Kadaga warned the new legislators many of them being youthful, to avoid loan sharks. But it seems they listened not to the words of wisdom from the Speaker – a long serving legislator. When loan officers and money-lenders prowled the corridors of Parliament, many legislators were lured to take up credit, and then took it. Taking loans to finance campaigns or settle debts contracted during campaigns has led to a number of legislators sink so deep in debt.

Gomba Woman Member of Parliament Hon. Nakato Kyabangi had earlier been committed to civil prisons for six months after failure to pay a debt of Ugx 100 million. Hon. Isaac Etuka the Member of Parliament representing Upper Madi County was sent to Luzira prison for six months in July 2019 for failure to pay UGX 21 million in legal and courts after an unsuccessful election petition. In November 2009, Former Tororo Municipality legislator Hon. Apollo Ofwono Yeri, was arrested over failure to pay Ugx 45 million in court costs. Hon. Florence Kintu, Kalungu District Woman MP (2011-2016) had her land in Mukono district confiscated after failure to pay Ugx 300m in debt. Hon. Simon Peter Aleper (Moroto) was also dragged to court by Felix Ogong who was a money-lender after he failed to pay UGX 70m ($19,178).28

MPs have been reported to continuously stay in parliamentary chambers to evade arrests by court bailiffs waiting outside. MPs reportedly make multiple borrowing on one account which is sign of financial illiteracy. Most MPs lacked financial literacy skills despite the measures by Parliament to call in experts to train them on personal finance management at every beginning of term of office.

28 Also available at: https://www.independent.co.ug/money‐problems‐ugandas‐parliament/
How Members of Parliament Cope with Unregulated Campaign and Constituency Spending

The study established that political leaders are inundated and overstretched by demands of the electorate to the extent of “effectively chasing them out of their constituencies”. The thought of being “swarmed” by the electorate to demand for monetary contributions, keeps elected leaders away from their constituents. Political leaders interviewed indicated that the situation would have been different if the electorate organized themselves into configurations that foster strategic investments than individual demands. The electorate is laden with immediate consumptive needs than longer term livelihood development interventions. A poor electorate was established as a burden the leaders and the country.

In July 2019, MPs voted to increase their salaries and allowance as a means of financing their income gaps. The parliamentary budget increased from UGX 190 billion to UGX 688 billion. The justification given by the MPs was the need to match the increase in regular internal constituency movements and consultations, which was a polite way of saying that they need a bigger war chest to be able to try and match the relentless constituency demands. Even when the increment in monthly emoluments for MPs was made, these leaders still do not visit their constituencies regularly. It was confirmed in the FGDs that MPs rarely visit the constituencies and that most of the constituency matters were handled by personal assistants who showed up with social contributions and making pronouncements on behalf of MPs in the constituencies.

A newspaper headline over MP’s salary increments
The Monster in the Room

The above reasons obviously look less convincing, and it is because they fell short of talking about the monster in the room. The monster is commercialized politics which is rearing its ugly head on the very legislators, battering and shattering their economic base before turning to democracy and the national economy as its other victims. The real reason why MPs regardless of political party or affiliation unanimously increase their emoluments is to enable them feed this monster and it has been well fed over the past 15 years.

This is why one should be less bewildered to learn that despite earning a total monthly package of UGX 30 million (US$8,200), many legislators visit the bank to find they have less than UGX 200,000 ($54) available. Question is; where does the rest of the money go? Simple. It is automatically deducted by the bank to service loans and debts from money lenders. These debts and loans will have been contracted during election campaigns and after the election as the legislator tries to steady the sinking economic ship. And those who sold their homes would pull out huge loans from the banks as soon as they are sworn in to purchase new homes. However, the voters are not privy to such financial information. They still have the image projected by the political leader during campaigns who spends limitlessly as if money if not a problem.

And so to the Ugandan electorate, the President and Members of Parliament are equated to something similar to mobile Automatic Teller Machines (ATM). They expect the political leader to continue spending throughout the tenure and at times voters hold the political leader at ransom by using such threatening language as “we shall meet in the basin”. This literary means that better behave and give us money to solve personal problems if you nurse any intentions to stand for re-election. So the political leader is inundated by all forms of financial demands from the constituents and one way of finding a balance is by increasing their monthly emoluments. The truth is that voters’ insatiable monetary demands lead political leaders into temptation to look for money using all means possible.

In the same vein, the President must move with sacks of cash or Khaki envelopes filled with cash or dummy cheques to be able to communicate to the electorate in the language that they understand – money. This is the monster of commercialization of politics that has trapped political leaders and is eating up Uganda’s electoral democracy to the core. It is not sustainable and everything possible must be done to stop it.
Unregulated Campaign Spending as Trigger for Domestic Violence

Women politicians encounter episodes of domestic violence arising from their change in political, economic and social status as political leaders which some of their spouses find hard to deal with. This is not to say that all male spouses are like this. Some female political leaders revealed that their spouses (husbands) constantly asked them for money they obtained from political parties, political financers and allowances for those that had been voted into power. In every ten female political leaders there is at least two who confront domestic violence triggered by the requirements of their responsibilities as political leaders. Some of the incidents that precipitate violence include; returning home late at night and spending nights away from marital homes. There were reports of counter accusations among spouses to have committed adultery due to prolonged political engagements. This in extreme cases lead to divorce and family separations.
Statistics about female political leaders who lost spouses after being elected are outside the context of this study.

**Dealing with Debts Contracted to Finance Election Campaigns**

Candidates who demonstrate capacity to win during campaigns get to be targeted by money lenders. On some occasion acting on advice of campaign managers/agents, candidates will approach banks and microfinance institutions to borrow campaign money. Lenders of such monies often impose high interest rates which candidate must grapple with in paying back.

Candidates who won electoral races were likely to be better off paying back borrowed monies using their monthly emoluments. Findings indicate that 61.2 percent of the respondents who were former political candidates, were making steady progress in paying back the debts. There are examples of former candidates whom notwithstanding their failure to get elected, obtained exposure to the business community. This exposure is helping them to build business networks through which they seemed to be recuperating from their economic bruises and servicing the debts contracted.

**A Guarantee that Things will come**

Being elected into political office whether at Presidential, Parliamentary or District Local Government in Uganda is a guarantee that “things will come”. It comes with increased personal profile, becoming the target of contractors, investors and entrepreneurs. Parliament or District Council provides platform for political leaders to engage in different forms of businesses including earning from brokering. Members of Parliament will often engage in rent seeking or receive a “handshake” to pass certain types of policies or legislation. There are numerous cases of this nature including among others passing of constitutional amendment for article 102(b), the sugar bill, and the bill on importation of used vehicles whose date of manufactures goes above 15 years. Those that are closer to the president often commoditise the presidency by charging a fee from those that are desperately seeking opportunity to meet President Yoweri Museveni.

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29 Handshake in this context refers to money paid out to political leaders to motivate them to pass a policy or piece of legislation.
The political leader is also the “Tenderpreneur” in the context of this study, refers to a person who uses their political connections to secure government contracts for personal advantage.

Limitless Constituency Spending

Being sworn in to start a new term in office marks the beginning of a new wave of spending to satisfy constituency demands which in most cases are personal. It is the general perception of the electorate that an elected candidate must keep spending. The reality of a Member of Parliament is that every day they are inundated with phone calls, request notes and at times physical visits of their constituents demanding for money to solve personal problems. And some of the problems against which monetary demands are made many not be real.

On average a Member of Parliament must send to the constituency a minimum of UGX 1 million every week to take care of burial contributions throughout the constituency. This money is sent to their agents on the ground who must make sure that the contribution from the honorable MP is read out loud at every burial. These honorable members feel safer to stay in Kampala away from the daily demands of their constituents and just visit their constituencies when occasion demands. District councilors face similar challenges. For instance, voters visit their homes constantly seeking for financial help and as a consequence they chose to relocate to the district urban centers. In other words, political leaders in Uganda are internally displaced from their constituencies, running away from the very voters that they endeared during election campaigns.
TESTIMONY OF AN MP

“I spent UGX 600m to be elected MP for Kajara County and yet in the eyes of voters I was the most invisible and poorest candidate in the race. That money was spent in 3 years during which I went to churches, mosques, funerals, parties and social gatherings. I contributed towards social costs but also engaged in direct service delivery. My businesses collapsed because I had pulled out all the money to finance my election campaigns.”

“In parliament I continue to spend and it is terrible. For example, between June 2019 and August 2019, I have attended 30 fundraisings in churches and other places of worship. At every fundraising the electorate expect the incumbent MP to donate or spend at least UGX 1 million.” If you don’t attend to those fundraisings, voters will say you are not performing.”

“I am in my final 16 months of my tenure in Parliament but I have never been able to recover my businesses.”

Hon. Micheal Kamugisha Timuzigu, Member of Parliament, Kajara County during Validation of the Draft Report.

Impact of Campaign Spending on Electorate/Voters

Voters are the unsung heroes of the electoral process without whose participation there would not be anything called votes. Votes come from voters and it is votes that produce elected leaders. Votes are the ones that produce the numbers that make an election because elections are about numbers. It is votes that give powers to elected leaders to govern. These are the men and women (young and old) who endure the scotching sun or rain to stand in queues at the polling station to cast their ballot. Their participation is central to the electoral process and it is because of this centrality that they are the target of campaign spending as political parties, candidates and campaign agents do the best they can to attract the attention of voters and influence their choice at the ballot.

Voters as Center of Attraction in Campaign Spending

The electorate/voters are the center of attraction for election campaign spending. Whether it is campaign paraphernalia, road shows, campaign rallies, door-to-door engagements, donations and all forms of inducement, the ultimate target of political parties or candidates are voters. With electoral...
politics being as commercialized in a society that is largely poor and economically vulnerable, being a voter is a good place to be in during election campaigns. This is because cash and gifts from all candidates competing in the race will come your way and all you will do is consume. In the course of an election campaign a Member of Parliament may spend up to UGX 600 million ($164,383) on voter inducement in the constituency. This level of spending drives the cost of campaigning. Out of desperation to be elected into political office, candidates will look for money from every source possible. This begs the question: How does this ultimately impact on the center of attraction in campaign spending – the voters?

Unresponsive Leadership
Citizens have been observing and watching helplessly as their elected leaders at different levels make and pass policies that do not resonate with the needs and aspirations of voters. For the past three electoral cycles, voters have been looking forward to improvement in their livelihoods but despite braving the challenges that come with queueing up for long hours at polling stations to vote. Instead more and more are slipping into poverty, youth cannot find jobs and are restless. With the increase in circulation of digital television, FM radios and the internet, many more citizens from the countryside are able to monitor the happenings in government, in parliament of district council through news bulletins and political talk shows. They do not see their elected leaders representing their (voters’) interests. This is an ugly consequence of highly commercialized electoral politics where elected leaders are more accountable to their campaign financiers than to the voters. There is a sense in which it is becoming clear to the candidates including aspiring ones that without money in significant quantities to attract and induce voters, one may not get elected. And candidates will go and pick money from whoever can provide it, but after being elected they will serve not the interests of voters but those of the person or entity that contributed the campaign funds that voters consumed. It’s that voters who were demanding for money and gifts from candidates are complicity in getting their elected leader snatched away from them in broad day light.

Poor Service Delivery
The direct impact of effect at the heart of the voters is poor service delivery. Uregulated electoral and campaign spending affects the quality of service delivery to the electorate. Leaders ought to effectively represent and lobby resources in order to improve livelihood standards. During the period of canvassing for votes, the candidates also promise to work around the clock
to improve the quality of services delivered to the electorate on the ground. These services include water, health, education, roads and agriculture among others.

Local governments are the implementing structures of the national service delivery apparatus. Some of these services are delivered by contracting out to the private sector as guided by the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assists Act. The reality is that when elected leaders assume public office, it is natural that they try to recoup the money invested into election campaigns including paying back those private businesses that could have made campaign finance contributions. The elected leader also has to keep responding to financial demands that come from his/her constituents throughout the tenure in office. This leads them into the “temptation” to manipulate the contracting processes to ensure that public contracts go to particular companies. At the root of all this is political corruption. The story may not be different at national level in the ministries, departments and agencies. This compromises the quality of services and in the end it comes back to haunt the voter who is the final user of public services.

**The Effect of Political Kingpins**

In the study districts Local governments tended to have class of people who were not politicians but have a lot of influence on political affairs. They are political *kingpins* and any politician that does not pay allegiance to them was not likely to win political processes. They have at times participated in politics themselves using their *moneybags*. They come in form businessmen, campaign managers and political Godfathers. They heavily finance political careers and electoral processes with a speculative motives of recouping government tenders and procurements when the candidate they support wins. The study connotes them as “tenderpreneurs”. The winners of leadership positions give them the contracts and tenders as reciprocal exchange of favours. The tenderpreneurs are associated with corruption, nepotism and clientelism, which combine to erode the quality of services delivered to the ordinary citizens.

Political leaders use their time in office to recoup what they invested in the election campaigns, and look for more money to meet constituency needs than plan for delivery of services to the electorate. Politicians have become tenderpreneurs, engaging in trade and business with government and underperforming to recover political costs. Others act as agents of political kingpins in regions and districts and all influence tenders, agency businesses and investment as reward for political support. The study
established a negative correlation towards service delivery. Respondents (69.2) recommended a campaign finance as a brake pad to politicians that would spend beyond limits in addition sensitizing the electorate on the dangers of unregulated campaign spending and commercialised electoral politics.

Figure 8: Perceptions on how Campaign Spending Impacts Service Delivery

The perception of the respondents that interacted with this study also alluded to the idea that unlimited campaign spending impacts the planning and antagonizes delivery of social services.

Impact of Campaign Spending on Political Parties

Political parties play a significant role in making democracy effective. The role they play is by offering a unique opportunity for citizens/electorate to participate in political and electoral processes. To achieve this, political parties need money to among other things mobilise citizens, popularize their agenda and to participate in election campaigns. Funding of political parties and electoral campaigns plays an important role in the functioning of democracy.

During election campaigns political parties spend massively on among other activities, organising delegates’ conferences, party primary elections, and making campaign finance contributions to their flag-bearing candidates at presidential and/or parliamentary level, in electoral colleges and at different levels in Local Government elections. In a country where electoral politics is
commercialised, financing these activities and fulfilling the responsibilities including coordination is not only costly but takes a huge toll on party coffers.

ACFIM Report of the Extended Study on Campaign Financing for Presidential and Parliamentary Election 2016, estimates that between June 2015 and February 2016, the NRM party for example, spent UGX1.2 trillion ($32.9 million) on several electoral activities. These activities included organising party primary elections and delegate’s conferences, and making campaign finance contributions to flag bearers. In the same vein FDC party is estimated to have spent UGX12 billion ($3.3 million) while UPC and DP parties spent at least UGX200 million ($54,794) each. The Farmers Party which fielded a presidential candidate is estimated to have spent a minimum of UGX 100 million ($27,397). This scale of spending begs the question: where did the money come from? However, in a country where there is no legal requirement for political parties and candidates to declare sources of campaign income, the question of where the money come from may never be answered.

What is certain though, is that political parties are bound to suffer consequences from this scale of spending in a short period. This study set out establish whether there is any impact suffered by political parties as a consequence of limitless campaign spending and if so to assess the magnitude of the impact, and how are these organisations coping in the post campaign period.

It is noted that political parties in Uganda are weak in part because they lack financial resources and in part because they are poorly governed and managed. The study reveals that none of the political parties in Uganda has the wherewithal to sustain the popularization of the party’s political philosophy, mobilise members on a continual basis and maintain party organs at the grass root level. By the time of study, none of the political parties represented in Parliament – including the party in power – was found to have functioning offices in the districts. The offices were closed before the end of election year 2016 and relocated to homes of party chairpersons.

At the root of this closure is the lack of funds to pay rent and stipend of an office attendant. Relocating party offices to homes of party chairpersons where they would stay put until the next election, epitomizes the weakness of political parties in Uganda.
Without functional grass root structures, political parties lack the locus on the ground. In the past two electoral cycles opposition political parties have failed to field candidates in more than half of the districts of Uganda. There is a claim on the ground that the ruling NRM Party is misusing village administrative structures headed by the Local Council (LC 1) chairperson to also serve as party structures. Whereas political parties represented in Parliament benefit from public financing, the distribution formula is based on numerical strength and amounts received are not enough to run party structures in all the 132 districts of Uganda.

The NRM takes 80% of funds appropriated in the national budget as public financing for political parties. In addition, the party attracts campaign contributions from private companies and corporations which adds on its resource envelop. This positions NRM as the most resourced political party in Uganda. This money is used for administrative and management processes of the party.

**Costs of court petitions and compensations**

Political parties just like their members also suffer heavy costs of court petitions and compensations where agitated members or groups sue them. Most of the petition arise from irregularities members allege happen during political party primary elections.

The study established that money was reported to propagate malpractices during party primary such as voter bribery and violence. This has sometimes been used by members to sue the party in the courts of law. The damages and financial and image implications to the parties.

NRM party was sued by management of Mandela National Stadium for failure to pay debts of up to UGX150 it incurred when they used the facility for the 2010 and 2016 delegates conference. Such cases affirm the negative influence of money on parties with likely challenges to developmental and credible electoral democracy.
Opportunity for Political Parties to assert themselves

Campaign spending has enabled the NRM Party to consolidate its grip at village level, and the opposite is true with opposition political parties. Between October 2015 and February 2016 in the middle of the election campaigns, the NRM party sent a total of UGX 500,000 ($137) to each of the 57,842 villages of Uganda. The money was received by NRM village chairpersons in two installments of UGX 250,000. The money was ostensibly intended to facilitate meetings at village level by covering the cost of drinks during village meetings and other mobilization activities for the NRM party ahead of the general election to be held on February 18th 2016. Recipients in the respective villages misconstrued the money to be “a token from NRM chairperson” and hence shared among all NRM supporters on the village. The NRM party has gone on to repeat the same during by-elections conducted after 2016 elections. Whereas ACFIM and other political commentators condemned this as an act of commercializing politics, in the perspective of the NRM party Secretariat, it had a positive impact of consolidating support of the party in rural areas.

The opposition political parties which did not have the luxury of spending in equal measure, remained weak in rural areas. As it was pointed out by the European Union Election Observation Report on Uganda elections 2016, disproportionate expenditure on behalf of the ruling party and incumbent president distorts the fairness of election campaigns.

Impact of Campaign Spending on Campaign Agents

Campaign agents are men and women who have mastered the act of swaying voters and project themselves as the link between the candidate and the electorate. Some project themselves as kingmakers and use this position to reinforce their importance in the electoral process with the ultimate object of making money from political candidates who are desperate to win the election. Political leaders know they cannot win an election without these campaign agents. They are partly responsible for the rising costs of election campaigns because they advise candidates on how much should be spent, and when. They are also the ones that often link the candidate to money lenders when push comes to shove. The impetus of campaign agents is money making.

Campaign Management Role

Campaign managers and agents take lead in analyzing electoral behavior and needs of the electorate and inform the candidates on the most optimal
campaign tactics. They are also crucial in cost estimation and giving guidance on the likely budget estimate the campaigns will require. They are the linchpin between the electorate (public) and candidates and are charged with going everywhere within their mapped territories to market the candidate ahead of other contestants. There are two categories; the long term and short term campaign strategists. Long-term campaign agents keep their presence with the candidate and the constituency. They engage in local political intelligence to establish approval ratings of their candidates and close any gaps to ensure that their candidate/client keeps relevant to the local (constituency) political environment. They constitute the political team of the candidate.

The short-term campaign managers/agents are hired professional campaign teams with the sole objective of delivering victory to the candidates within the stipulated number of days, say 30 days. The ability to successfully deliver victory to the candidate relies heavily on the speculative monetary incentives negotiated. They strategically position themselves to be visible and will work with more than one contestant irrespective of the political camps. They use a business model to performance the task at hand. Vote canvassing is a source of employment and look forward to the benefits that would come with it irrespective of whether a candidate won or lost. Former political candidates refer to campaign agents as “electoral hawkers and brokers”.

**Why support a Candidate**

As illustrated below, the major driving factor for campaign managers and/or agents to engage in the electoral is monetary benefits.
Once it is clear that the candidate has money, it does not matter to the campaign agent whether or not a candidate has a good campaign manifesto. Campaign manifesto received the lowest percentage rating on the pre-requisites for supporting a candidate at 39.2 per cent responses. A campaign manager/agent has no business with a candidate whose “pockets are shallow”. Other factors that attract campaign agents to the candidate include: party affiliation at 91.1 percent, social behaviour at 77.2 percent and oratory skills at 67.1 percent. Whereas a candidate needed to have money, it is important that he/she is also popular (social) and a good orator. This is why campaign agents engage in research on voter behaviour and dynamics including party affiliation. They will most likely support candidates that are holding the flag of a political party that is popular in a given context. In other words, it is the joy of every campaign agent to support a candidates that is well resourced / funded.

**Masked Face of Business Personalities**

It is extremely challenging for political candidates to handle campaign managers/agents because they rarely understood all their intentions. The obvious intention is to make money. Sometimes political candidates get on collision path with the campaign agents over management of resources. When the candidates disburse campaign funds to their campaign managers, the managers retain a portion of it and only pass on a smaller amount to the electorate, and the candidate doesn’t have the means of tracking this. This fact is known within the electorate because at the end of elections, campaign managers get to be seen improving their houses, acquiring new means of transport and doing other things that show they have made money during the campaign period. And the only way they make money is by getting it off the candidates. Voters know that political candidates out of fear to be seen giving out money, channel it through campaign agents, but these campaign agents always pocket some of it or a bigger proportion of it and pass on the remainder to the electorate. Losing candidates argue that if they had slightly more money to spend they would have won the election. But there are others who take it personal and blame their financial shortfalls and distress on disingenuous spending by their campaign management teams. They suggest that some campaign managers and agents are not people to be trusted in election campaigns. On the contrary, winners of electoral races partly attribute their success to the ingenuity of their electoral management teams. Whatever the case, it should be understood that just as political leaders have turned politics into a major occupation, campaign agents also feel the same. The campaign period is a season for them to harvest from political candidates and they must earn as much as they can.

Managers and agents were characterized as persons with “double-edged” like behavior. They may “eat” from different political camps promising the same results from the same electorate to candidates. They may also discreetly promote candidates against each other in order to extract money from both camps. They use the tactic of creating competition where it does not exist with the intent of extracting money from the candidate who has more of it. For example, if it transpires that a certain candidate may run unopposed, they may plant a competitor (another candidate) and negotiate a “buy out” by strong and wealthier candidate. In this case the artificial competitor becomes a bargain-chip and the campaign agent/manager would be the chief negotiator and receiver of the buy-out money.

The meaning of this is that some campaign agents are actually businessmen who purposely invest in the electoral process as well. They also acted as middlemen in negotiation for loan financing from banks and money lenders. In districts where the NRM party is predominantly strong, being a campaign agent/manager also provides a rare opportunity to meet the incumbent President on campaign trail.
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Advantaged Campaign Managers/Agents

Campaign management teams ensured that their business objectives are horned during the campaign management process. They are known for flashy lifestyles involving driving expensive cars, owning good houses, prime properties and prospering businesses in town where they operate. There were also suppliers of most logistical support services used in during campaign e.g. fuel (from their own fuel stations), car hire services, hotels, bars, public address systems, financial services, soda depots and printing companies among others. With the campaign season for 2021 election starting as early as July 2019, it promises to be an enjoyable moment for campaign managers/agents. By the time of the study it was understood that the seasoned campaign managers/agents were already undertaking electoral analysis of the potential candidates to choose the “juicy political camps” to join. The electorate tended to agree that campaign managers are money hungry and focus on returns rather than service to candidates.

Impact of Campaign Spending on Private Companies and Businesses

There is a perception that being aligned to right political side and having good political connections are necessary factor for private businesses to blossom and thrive in Uganda. The perception is borne by both indigenous and foreign business proprietors / companies. There are businessmen who are into politics either directly or indirectly through leaders they have bankrolled into political office. And the reverse is also true where you find politicians who are into business. The lines between business/economics and politics are blurred.

Often political parties and candidates target private business persons as sources of campaign finance and some of them make substantial campaign contributions. Business persons argue that the moment one transcends and stands out as successful businesswise, he/she will capture the eye of politicians at local and national level, and hence become the target for campaign finance sourcing.

Whereas the business companies / persons that support the ruling NRM party and its candidates are open and may wish it to be known to party leaders that they have made campaign contribution, when they support candidates in opposition they want to remain anonymous. There is genuine fear among the business community that if it transpires publicly that they have supported an opposition political party or candidate, the government
may retaliate by running them out of business. There is genuine fear of retribution from government for supporting opposition politicians.

Whereas indigenous business persons are also voters, in the context of this study participation of private business persons or companies is by way of making campaign finance contributions to candidates or political parties of their choice. More than half (55.1%) of the former political candidates at different electoral level that were interviewed under this study revealed that they received campaign finance contributions from businesses/companies. These companies mostly preferred that their identity remained concealed. It is understood that private companies that are doing well feel duty bound to make campaign finance donation to the incumbent party or its candidates as one way of securing their future. This feeling is shared by the Indian and Chinese business community and also members of the Bagagga Kwagalana Group.31

It is recalled that immediately after the new government was sworn in to take office in May 2016, the country was awakened to news reports about a list of 66 private companies and businesspersons that were seeking government bailout to save them from bankruptcy. The said companies needed a total of UGX 13 trillion ($3.6 billion) to bail out their distraught businesses which, according to the owners, was due to the high interest rates and non-payment of arrears by Government inter-alia.32 But it begged more questions: Why was government not able to pay its arrears during the election year? What explains the timing of the request for government bailout? Could the cause for bankruptcy trace its roots in financing of election campaigns 2016 which had been characterized by unprecedented spending?

For purposes of driving the point home, it should be noted that bailouts are generally not bad if they are justifiable, handled in a positive way, and with clear guidelines. Uganda has no shortage of precedents. It is recalled that in 2004 President Museveni directed Bank of Uganda to bailout Businessman Hassan Basajjabalaba with UGX 21 billion ($5.7 million) of taxpayers' money. The following year (2005) President Museveni ordered a tax waiver of UGX 13.4 billion ($3.8 million) for Mr. Bassajjabala. On the contrary, in the 2013-2014 case of a local investment, Sembuule Steel Mills was failing to pay its creditors and the owner was alleged to have fled to Dubai.

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31 Bagagga Kwagalana Group is an association of indigenous business that was formed to protect and promote the interests of local entrepreneurs.

to pay a bank debt of UGX 7 billion ($1.9 million) with Bank of Baroda. Government did not grant their request for bailout and consequently the company’s plant said to be worth UGX 50 billion ($13.7 million) was taken over by the bank. Today Sembuule Steels Mills exists only in the annals of history.

**Collapsing Businesses**

Participation in political processes resulted in collapse of some businesses due to loss of business networks and inadequate time to supervise businesses. Whereas, businessmen finance political candidates to "protect their business interests", this argument becomes inconsequential when the sponsored candidate loses elections. This is why businessmen will often sit on the fence until a particular candidate gains momentum and likelihood to win the election. Some business persons revealed to the research team that they may support two candidates in two camps namely the NRM and Opposition at the same time. Financing more than one candidate in a particular electoral race is ingenious but comes with consequences. The consequences manifest in terms of draining business coffers and eating into the business’ operating capital.

When a businessperson chooses to enter the arena of electoral politics as candidate, it is only natural that election campaign financing will drain the business and ultimately push it under. Candidates who won elections and had businesses were more likely to abandon their traditional businesses and take on the new leadership mandate. If they did not undertake adequate business succession procedures, the businesses were likely to collapse and many of them collapsed.

**Growth in Business Profile**

Whereas some companies were found to suffer from the effects of making generous campaign finance donations, there are others which support candidates and they profit significantly from it. Financing was either in form of donation in monetary terms, in-kind (provide vehicles, fuel, sodas, hotel facilities etc), or at times loans payable after the candidate wins the elections. This is particularly synonymous with businesspersons or companies that are accustomed to winning public contracts to supply goods and services at different levels of government including Ministries, Departments and Agencies, and district Local Governments. Financing successful candidates, guarantees steady flow of government contracts for the entire five year tenure.
**Businesses Protected**

Some businesspersons are motivated by other factors such as protecting their business from all forms of eventualities. For example, an investor working in a particular district may face a harsh bye-law passed by a hostile district council. One way of keeping the district council on side is by ensuring that you have supported the campaigns of a few successful councilors. The same is true with Parliament. International companies operating in Uganda in businesses such as vehicle vending, sugar manufacturing, pharmaceuticals and sports betting among others find it in their best interests to support potential candidates into Parliament to nip in the bud any hostile legislation that would otherwise make their stifle their business.

Consultations with Uganda Manufacturers’ Association (UMA) established that manufacturers are interested in a good and safe political economy and they are willing to support a political candidate if the money pulled out of the company does not have significant negative impact on the business.
Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion
The cost of financing election campaigns has been rising exponentially since 2006 when Uganda returned to multiparty political dispensation. Money has become the major motivation for political socialization and electoral participation, turning the relationship between voters and political leaders into a transactional one. The general perception is that Uganda’s electoral politics is commercialized. The down side is that Uganda lacks stringent legal and institutional framework to curb the vice of commercialized politics.

Unregulated campaign spending opens doors for disproportionate expenditure by and on behalf political parties or candidates who are very well resourced, which in effect distorts the fairness of election campaigns at all levels of elections in Uganda not least village council elections. When fairness of the election campaigns is distorted, the outcome of it may not be a fair one. This undermines the quality democracy in general but specifically it casts doubt on the integrity of electoral outcomes.

The absence of legal requirement for disclosure of campaign income and expenditure by political parties and candidates participating in the election makes accountability difficult and promotes negative influence of money in electoral competition. As highlighted by international election observers since 2006, Ugandan legislation does not contain campaign finance provisions to level the playing field for all electoral contestants.

Provisions against voter bribery as stipulate in the Parliamentary Elections Act (Article 64) and Parliamentary Elections Act (Article 68) are either not enforced or not stringent enough to be enforced. These allow all acts of inducement of voters to blossom and thrives, consequently making the campaign process very expensive and beyond reach of some would be capable leaders.

Recommendations

What the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, and Lawmakers can do?

a) Enact standalone election campaign finance legislation in accordance with good practices for mandatory public disclosure requirements, contribution limits, spending limits and reporting on pre-campaign and campaign spending by or on behalf of political parties and candidates. This law should also ban fundraising for at least 12 months preceding a general election. This will be a game changer in addressing the opaqueness that currently exists in the domain of election campaign financing. This will be a positive step towards creating a higher level of transparency and accountability which are critical for building electoral integrity for sustainable democracy. Where the country electoral legal framework contains some political/campaign finance provisions, they are scattered in different laws.

b) Tighten provision on vote buying to bar from contesting for at least 5 years political leaders whose elections are nullified in courts of law even if the nullification is as a result of a civil suit. Also prohibit the giving of donations by all candidates including a President who is also a candidate, in order to create a level playing field for all.
The electorate is so commercialized and determined to extract money from political candidates and this obscures the choices they make on Election Day. Voter bribery has deep seated roots in the heart of Uganda’s electorate that the country will need systematic, rigorous and multi-stakeholder interventions to stem it and doing nothing about it is no longer an option. Churches and mosques are complicity in propagating a society that views political leaders at mobile ATM machines. It is these worship centers that target political leaders and aspiring candidates in fundraising for different projects. Whereas there cases where a candidate spends less and wins an election, in most of the cases money is essential for determining the outcome of elections. Political parties and candidates that spend more, win the election.

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What Political Parties can do?

c) Develop campaign finance guidelines to curb the vice of commercialization of political party primary elections.

d) Support the debate and advocacy on enactment of stringent campaign finance laws in Uganda.

What Civil Society can do?

e) Carry out rigorous and sustained civic education aimed at changing the commercialized attitudes of the electorate in Uganda.

f) Conduct research, monitor electoral process and engage with relevant government institutions on feasible reforms.

g) Advocate for transparency in corporate political financing.

What Religious Leaders can do?

h) Ban all forms of fundraisings from worship centers for a period of 12 months preceding general elections.

i) Carry out civic awareness aimed at discouraging the electorate from engaging in the acts of commercialised electoral politics.
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About the authors

Henry Muguzi is a renowned expert on democratic governance and accountability in Africa with over 18 years of professional experience. He is the Executive Director of Alliance for Finance Monitoring (ACFiM) – a Pan African Civil Society organisation founded in Uganda to promote transparency and accountability in Political and Electoral Campaign Financing. Mr. Muguzi specialises in Political Finance Policy Analysis and Civic Engagement for Electoral Accountability in Africa. He has designed and implemented election campaign finance monitoring programmes, campaign finance reform interventions, and training programmes. He was the Principal Researcher for the African ground breaking Extended Study on Campaign Spending for Presidential and Member of Parliament Elections in Uganda general elections 2016, which quantified and published credible numbers of campaign spending. He is co-founder of the Political Finance Academy – an initiative that aims at building a critical mass of Political Finance Experts in Africa. Mr. Muguzi is an international election observer that has been a part of several election observer missions across the world. He has worked with Development Partners, Civil Society Organisations and the Private Sector. He holds a Master of Arts (MA) Degree in Public Administration and Management and a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Political Science and Public Administration, underpinned with a myriad of other certifiable post graduate qualifications.

Eddie Kayinda is an expert on Research, Public Administration and Management Expert, Economist and Teacher. He is a senior research associate at ACFiM and the lead researcher of the study on “unregulated campaign spending and its impact on electoral participants in Uganda”. He has grounded wealth of experience in electoral and democratic governance. He has actively participated in development monitoring tools and designed tailored training courses for election campaign finance monitors. He participated in the extended study on election campaign spending in Uganda that quantified the cost of presidential and parliamentary election campaigns (2015-2016). He has also consulted widely on people, poverty, governance and development with government of Uganda, CSOs and bilateral development partners. He has attained higher professional and career education from Makerere University, Kampala; a premier institution of higher learning in Uganda. He holds a Master of Arts (MA) Degree in Public Administration and Management, a Bachelor of Arts (BA) Degree in Economics and Post Graduate Diploma in Education.
About the Organisation

Who is ACFIM?
ACFIM aims to contribute towards electoral integrity through monitoring of election campaign finance; engaging the electorate on electoral accountability; and advocating for feasible legal/institutional framework for election campaign financing. ACFIM believes that sustainable democracy may not be realized if the question of money in politics and electoral processes is not addressed.

Our Vision
A society where political leaders are responsive and accountable to citizens.

Our Mission
To contribute towards building electoral integrity by promoting transparency and accountability in financing of political and electoral processes through research, civic engagement, monitoring and advocating for reforms.

Strategic Priority Areas

Priority Area 1: Political Finance Monitoring
a) Election and referenda campaign financing
b) Flow of budget resources during pre-campaign and campaign period
c) Compliance to the political finance legal framework
d) Corporate/business electoral financing

Priority Area 2: Civic Engagement for Electoral Accountability
a) Anti-vote buying campaigns targeting voters and politicians.
b) Facilitate political engagements between voters and elected leaders.
c) Training through The Political Finance Academy

Priority Area 3: Awareness Raising and Advocacy
a) Research
b) Symposiums and Youth Conventions
c) Legal and Institutional Reforms