



The Impact Of The Cost Of Politics On Inclusive Political Participation In Uganda

Netherlands Institute for
Multiparty Democracy



WFD

Research conducted by



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Executive Summary

This study applied a conceptual framework that uses a comparative and gendered approach to estimate the cost of politics, using a set of pre-identified variables regularly incurred by both candidates seeking political office and elected representatives while in office. This consideration was in line with the notion that analysis of election delivery and management should not be looked at in the realm of an event but rather as a cycle. The conceptual framework enabled the research team to arrive at both statistical and qualitative evidence regarding the cost of politics in Uganda.

Findings

1. Overall, the average amount of money spent by a candidate during the 2016 primary and general elections was estimated by the study to be 465 million Ugandan shillings (UGX) or 136,084 US dollars (USD) for parliamentary candidates, and UGX 237.5 million (USD 69,505) for Local Council V (LCV) chairpersons. At parliamentary level, the study found that candidates from the mainstream constituencies spent UGX 458.2 million while female counterparts running for affirmative action district women's seats spent UGX 496.4 million over both primary and general elections.
 - 1.1. The average amount of money spent by participants during the party primary elections ahead of the 2016 general elections was UGX 222 million (USD 64,969) and UGX 118 million (USD 34,533) for parliamentary candidates and LCV chairpersons, respectively. These estimates are irrespective of level of success, political party or gender.
 - 1.2. The average amount of money spent during the parliamentary and LCV elections ahead of the 2016 general elections was UGX 242.9 million (USD 71,085) and UGX 118.6 million (USD 34,708) for parliamentary candidates and LCV chairpersons, respectively.
2. Personal resources and contributions from family and friends topped the sources of campaign finances for respondents with 98.6% and 74.3% for parliamentary candidates and LCV chairpersons respectively. When the data was gender disaggregated, 81.6% of male respondents reported to have secured loans to finance their political campaigns as opposed to 18.4% of females. 68.9% of male respondents also reported to have secured funding from their political parties as opposed to 30.1% of female respondents.
3. The average cost of maintaining an office on a monthly basis is UGX 32 million (USD 9,363) for parliamentary office holders, with the Central region the most expensive at UGX 48 million (USD 14,045), followed by Western at UGX 30 million, Northern at UGX 28 million and Eastern at UGX 25 million (USD 7,320).
4. The study highlights several factors driving the cost of politics including the challenges of public service delivery at the local level, weak enforcement of campaign rules, lack of civic consciousness among

the electorate, parliamentary emoluments and privileges acting as an incentive and the way that patronage politics continues to characterise the multiparty dispensation.

5. This report argues that patronage has enabled President Museveni of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) to dispense rents to loyal cadres through political appointments that come with access to state resources for political mobilisation. These rents, and other incentives accruing through Museveni's political appointments, have made electoral politics competitive at the sub-national level and consequently a do or die endeavour, resulting in stiff intra-NRM competition across the various stages of the electoral cycle, wherein the highest bidder often wins out.
6. The cost of politics is negatively influencing Uganda's nascent democracy. This politics of patronage is driving a clientelistic electoral system, where ruling party candidates exploit state resources to allocate money or gifts to the electorate throughout the electoral cycle. This consequently undermines the right of voters to make free choices during elections, thereby corrupting their ability or willingness to seek political accountability for the delivery of public services. Furthermore, the increasing cost of politics undermines the functionality of political parties and organisations, and instead elevates individuals with resources and connections to centres of power. Ultimately, several categories of Ugandans including youth and women are excluded from electoral and political participation because they cannot afford the costs required.

¹ Average USD exchange rate in 2016 was 3417.4377 UGX

Recommendations

- a) Promote political accountability through harnessing laid-down mechanisms such as the use of barazas as accountability fora to develop civic consciousness among the electorate on the distinctive roles of MPs and local government leaders.
- b) A comprehensive review of the decentralisation policy is recommended, to give effect to local economic development through more fiscal and political autonomy of local governments.
- c) Strengthen the legal and policy infrastructure for campaign finance support especially for women. A special fund for women's political participation is required to support a new breed of women leaders able to take independent decisions, and able to make policies and laws aimed at serving the populace and achieving gender equality, as opposed to serving the political party and embedded godfathers.
- d) The appointment of a Registrar of Political Parties with a mandate to register, supervise and regulate the activities of political parties throughout the electoral cycle is recommended to strengthen the regulatory mandate of the Electoral Commission (EC).
- e) Inclusion of campaign finance disclosure in existing legislation such as the Political Parties and Organizations Act, to ensure that political parties and candidates disclose sources of campaign and election finance.
- f) Review the criteria for public financing of political parties in current laws to provide funding based on electoral participation of special interest groups such as youth, women, and persons living with disabilities. This will encourage political parties to sponsor more special interest groups and enhance the inclusivity of political participation.
- g) Democratic institutions should work with the judiciary, specifically the Anti-corruption Court, to strengthen the process of prosecution and sentencing for those who engage in illegal practices around elections. An empowered and independent judiciary can play a critical role in deterring the commercialisation of politics.
- h) Democracy-promoting institutions should identify and work with electoral integrity champions in the public and civil society sector. The champions are people and institutions committed to rooting out bribery in electoral activities.
- i) Strengthen political parties and organisations to establish and operationalise grassroots structures through which party policy platforms can be amplified. Political parties need to be supported to appear to be relevant and responsive to the local level issues that are key to influencing constituency and district level elections.



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Introduction

Background

Established political organisations emerged on the scene in Uganda in the 1950s as ‘loose networks of locally powerful politicians rather than centrally organised and programmatically unified institutions’ (Wilkins, 2018, p. 67). The first of these was the socialist-leaning Uganda National Congress (UNC) founded by Ignatius Musaazi and Abu Mayanja in 1952 under the slogan ‘Self Government Now’. Subsequently, the Democratic Party (DP) emerged in 1954 out of Catholic mobilisation against the Protestant establishment in the Buganda Lukiiko. The DP then spread outside Buganda on the strength of Catholic communities who, although a majority, had been systematically excluded from positions of power by the Protectorate’s de facto privileging of Protestants. In 1960, an ideological contestation alongside elite cooperation, religious and ethno-lingual tenets among the ranks of the UNC sowed seeds of pro- and anti-Buganda factions, resulting into a breakaway faction that formed the Uganda People’s Congress (UPC) led by Milton Obote.

At independence in 1962, the Buganda Kingdom was granted permission to elect its national representatives through the Lukiiko (Buganda Kingdom Assembly) by a newly created Kabaka Yekka party (KY - The King Only). KY won 65 of the 68 seats available and elected KY members to all the Buganda seats in the National Assembly. The UPC and DP split the seats outside Buganda, leaving no party with a clear national mandate. ‘An unlikely coalition between the mildly progressive UPC and the aggressively ethnic-oriented KY formed the first post-independence government under Obote’s leadership in October

1962. The coalition unravelled soon after and was dissolved less than two years after independence.’ (Mujaju, 1975, p. 450). UPC and DP occupied the political scene in post-independence Uganda in a period characterised by civil unrest and limited electoral contestations. The period 1962 – 1995 saw a myriad of political systems; from multipartyism to one party rule, to a no party system. The period was devoid of strongly entrenched nationalistic ideologies but rather was characterised by politics aligned to religion and local interests.

Upon capturing power in 1986 after a five-year conflict, the National Resistance Army led by Yoweri Museveni, under Legal Notice 1 banned political parties’ activities and pushed competitive politics out of the national sphere. The Notice had several defining impacts on Uganda’s electoral trajectory. First, existing political parties went into an abyss and were only allowed to operate in the capital Kampala; secondly, the ‘Movement’ political system was introduced based on an underlying principle of individual merit, where elections were contested not on the basis of a party label but on the capacity of the individual. This principle of individual merit consequently shrank the importance of party labels in national elections and introduced money as well as ‘candidates’ ability to “deliver” patronage as the most important criterion of “merit” for many voters’ (Wilkins, 2018, p. 97). This marked the beginning of Uganda’s clientelist and patriarchal state.

The ‘Movement’ political system that formed the basis of the formal political party that the NRM became in 2005, when Uganda reintroduced multiparty democracy, inherited several state infrastructures which slowly but surely dislodged the DP and UPC

from their footholds in the local political arena. ‘The conversion of the movement structure into the NRM political organisation and the removal of term limits in 2005, together marked the transition into the dominant party system that we see today in Uganda’ (Wilkins, 2018, p. 108). Understanding the cost of politics in Uganda requires a study of how the NRM emerged and consolidated itself as the dominant political organisation controlling the space of local and national politics.

The 2016 election

Following a return to a multiparty political system in 2005, Uganda has had three general elections, the results of which though contested by the opposition, have shown the dominance of the NRM political organisation in contemporary politics. In 2016, a total of 1,343 candidates contested for the 290 direct seats in Parliament, with the main opposition Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) fielding candidates in 203 constituencies, the DP in 87, UPC in 22 and the NRM in all 290 seats. A further 709 candidates, the majority of whom were defeated in the NRM primaries, opted to contest as independents but remained NRM-leaning. Opposition political parties did not manage to field candidates in 91 parliamentary constituencies. The story was replicated with district women’s seats, of which there are 112, with only the FDC managing to field 60 candidates, whilst the NRM had a candidate for all. The NRM consequently won a majority number of seats in the 10th Parliament.

The capacity of political organisations to field candidates across local government and parliamentary seats has a direct correlation with the significance of the electoral outcomes. In the 2016 elections, the ruling party registered a total of 288 out of 400 seats, giving it control of 72% of parliament. In addition, a total of 67 independent candidates won their elections with an estimated 81% of them NRM-leaning and subsequently voting on the NRM-sponsored issues. Furthermore, four of the five youth MPs were sponsored and won on the NRM ticket, all ten MPs representing persons living with disabilities and workers in the house were elected on the NRM ticket, whilst the 10 army MPs, even though they are barred from being attached to any party, have also traditionally sided with the government. The story was no different at local governance level, as NRM won 82

of 112 district chairperson seats, while independent candidates won 17 seats and the FDC and UPC just four each.

Key concepts

a) The cost of politics

This study considered political participation as a process that exacts costs in typically defined parameters which are largely regulatory and economic in nature. These costs included the monetary expenses of participation incurred by political candidates for party primaries and general elections, as well as those incurred to maintain office once elected to office. The study applied a comparative, as well as gendered approach to estimate the cost of politics using a set of pre-identified variables regularly incurred by candidates seeking political office and elected representatives while in office. The delineation of costs of politics, summed up by International IDEA as all financial flows to and from political parties and candidates was applied. This includes formal and informal income and expenditure, as well as financial and in-kind contributions. It also extends beyond the election campaign period to capture the costs of politics when in office, in recognition of the cyclical nature of this expenditure. The framework thus used a comparative and comprehensive notion of the cost of politics that considered use of money by political actors throughout the whole electoral cycle including the pre-campaign, campaign, polling day and its aftermath to maintain office for elected representatives at parliament and local government levels.

b) Inclusive political participation

The widely used definition of political participation in contemporary democratic studies is by Verba and Nie, 1972 cited in Teorell et al., (2007, p. 335) and includes ‘those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and / or the actions they take’. However, this study took a broader and intrinsic definition of political participation as ‘any action by private citizens to offer themselves for election into political office’. In delineating the parameters of participation, the study investigated the impact of the cost of politics on

political inclusivity for, mainly, women and youth in the country.

Objectives of the study

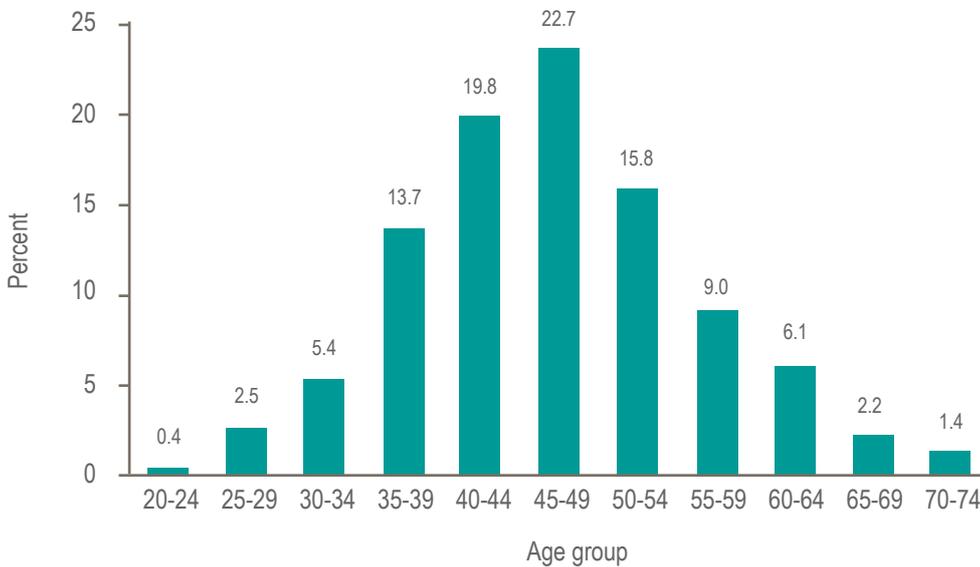
The study sought to respond to the following questions:

- a) What costs do politicians incur both at parliamentary and local government levels during the electoral cycle?
- b) What are the key social, economic, and political drivers of the cost of politics at the parliamentary and local government levels?
- c) How does the cost of politics at parliamentary and local government levels impact on the participation of marginalised and special interest groups (youth, women, persons with disabilities) in electoral politics?
- d) What are the legal, policy and programming options to reduce or regulate the cost of politics in Uganda?

Methodology and analytical framework

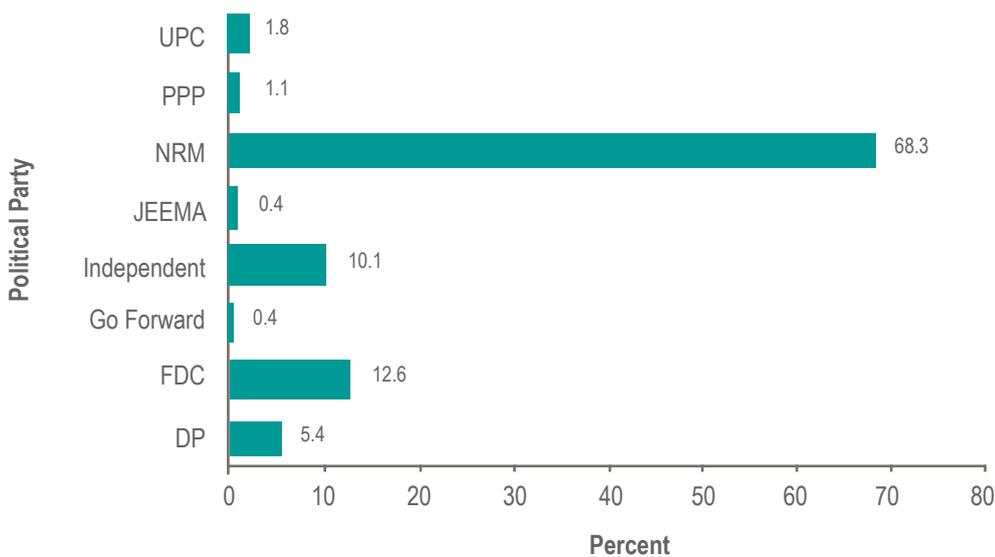
A mixed methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques was used to collect data from both primary respondents and secondary sources. Respondents who participated in the quantitative survey also participated in the qualitative interviews. The study gathered qualitative and quantitative information from 89 districts (including Kampala, the national capital and seat of government), from politicians who participated in elective politics at parliamentary and LCV level in the 2016 elections. Stratified random and purposive sampling techniques were applied taking into consideration level of success, political party inclination, as well as youth and women as special interest groups. The strata were clustered into four regions: West (74% males and 26% females), East (75% males and 25% females), Central (79% males and 21% females) and North (68% males and 32% females). The following figures highlight the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Figure 1: Age of respondents



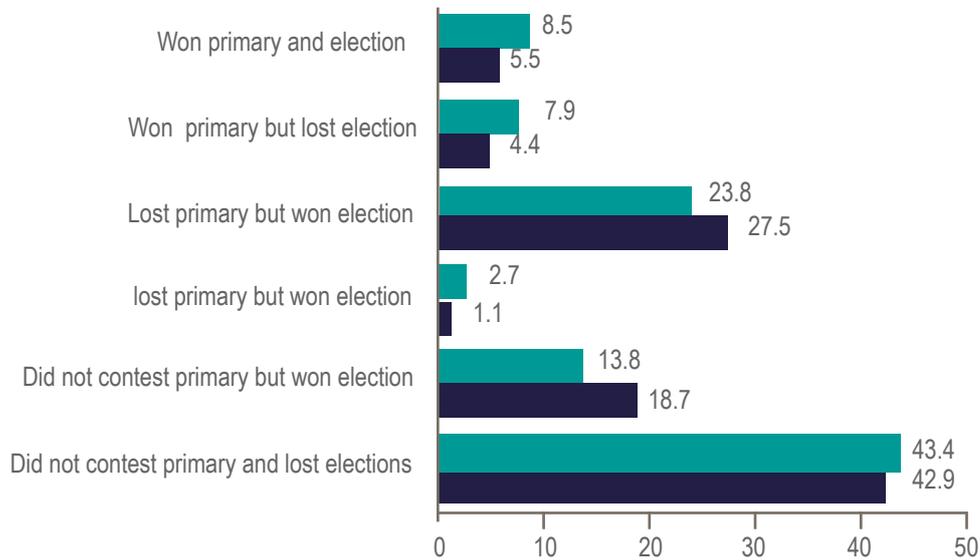
Only 2.9% of the respondents were youth in the age bracket 20-29 years, while most of the respondents (87.4%) fell in the age category 30-59 years. The remaining respondents were 60+ years.

Figure 2: Respondents by political party/affiliation



As illustrated in Figure 2 above, 68.3% of respondents were from the ruling NRM, 12.6% were from the main opposition FDC, 10.1% were independents and 9% were from other political parties. This is broadly reflective of the parties' representation in the current parliament.

Figure 3: Level of success in the 2016 general elections disaggregated by mainstream MPs and female MPs contesting affirmative action seats.



To appreciate the impact of the cost of politics on inclusivity of women at parliamentary level, respondents were disaggregated both by mainstream seats and affirmative action seats contested by women, and by the level of success in the 2016 primary and general elections (see Figure 3). Most respondents did not participate in primaries but lost an election for both mainstream MP seats (43.4%) and woman MP seats (42.9%).

The time scope of the study was limited to the 2015-2020 election cycle. Unlike previous studies in Uganda, this research looked beyond campaign spending because of the unclear distinction between campaign costs and regular expenses incurred by elected representatives such as maintaining offices, social contributions, and development support to their constituents. The framework thus proposed a comparative and comprehensive notion of the cost of politics and how it negates the participation of competent persons that may not be able to raise the money needed throughout the whole electoral cycle, including the pre-campaign, campaign, polling day and its aftermath, to win and maintain office for elected representatives at parliament and local government levels.

Data collection and quality control

a) Quantitative data collection

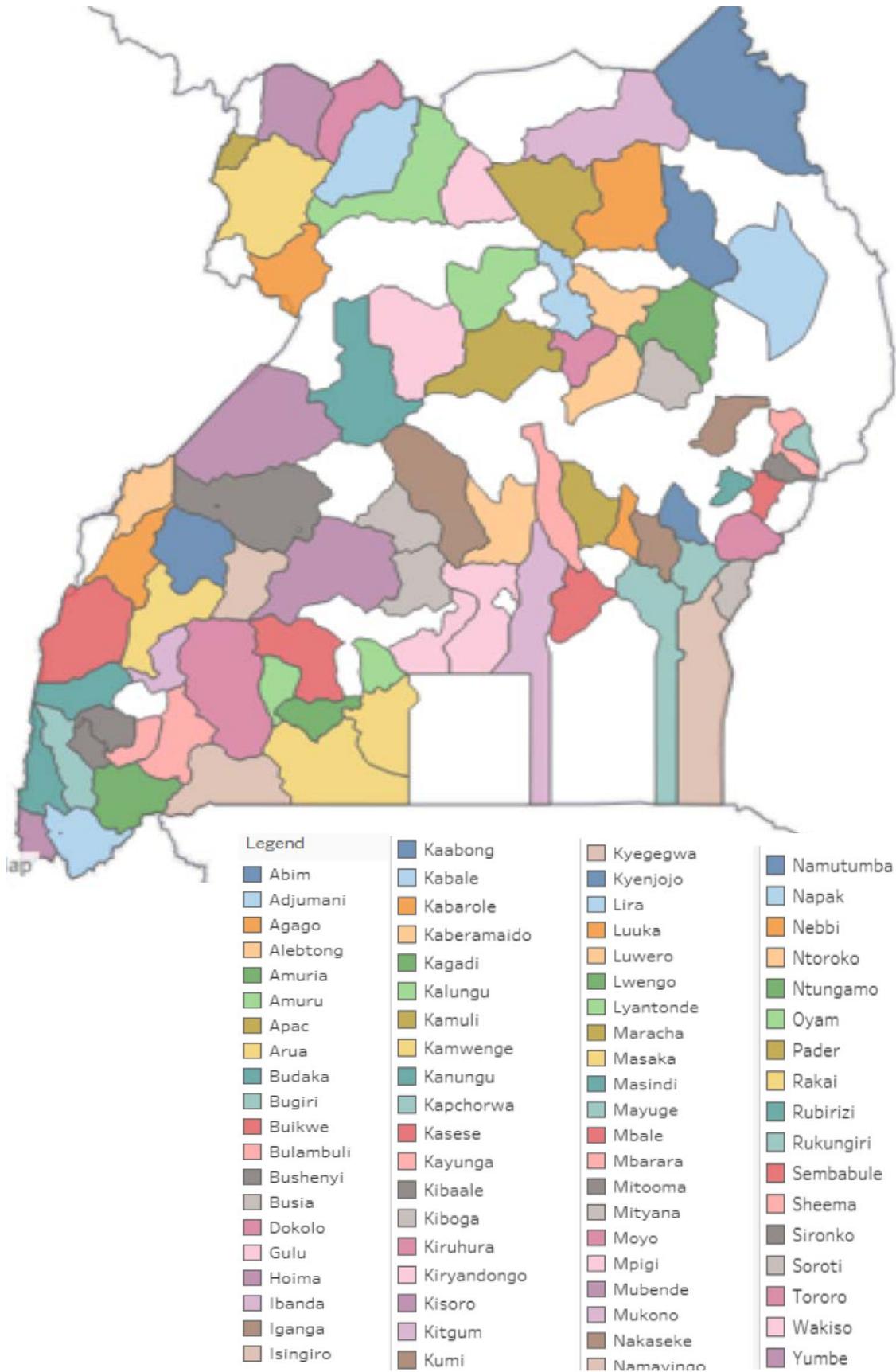
A quantitative data instrument was designed and used to collect data from respondents

(see Annex 1). Research assistants were not only trained to familiarise themselves with the questionnaire but also on how to ask questions. Data collection took place in February, May, and June 2020. Prior to the main data collection exercise, a pre-test was conducted on 12-13 February 2020 to test the suitability of the instrument, and lessons learned from the pilot were incorporated in the design of the final data collection instrument. Ethical clearance to conduct the study was granted by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). All participants gave consent to participate in the study. Quality control was provided by PPI's Senior Research Associates. All interviews were conducted in English since all respondents were comfortable with the language.

b) Source of data and sample size

The quantitative approach drew from a cross-sectional national sample. The survey aimed to gather information on the cost of politics for parliamentary and local government leaders in Uganda. The quantitative survey collected data from respondents in 89 districts, which were randomly selected from four (Central, Eastern, Northern and Western) major regions (strata) of Uganda. In each district, respondents were selected using simple random sampling. The quantitative survey collected data from 280 respondents while the 20 respondents provided qualitative data to make a total of 300 respondents.

Figure 4: Map of Uganda showing districts covered by the survey



c) **Qualitative data collection**

Five participatory workshops – one per region, plus one held in Kampala - served as focus group discussions (FGDs), using an FGD guide based on the qualitative questions for the study (see Annex 2). Each of the four workshops at the regional level were designed to have a total of 80 participants, with 44 for the national level workshop. The discussions in each of the workshops were moderated and the consulting team then transcribed the key issues emerging from the discussions.

Data analysis

Quantitative data was carefully captured using the EpiData software. Data was then imported into the Stata software for analysis. Frequency distribution tables were presented at the univariate level. For analysis, we provided average costs of publicity (posters, t-shirts, banners, flyers, newspapers), welfare (meals, accommodation), broadcast media (television, radio, generator), transport (fuel, vehicles, driver's allowance), office (office space, stationery, internet, office equipment), communication (airtime, phones, social media), social contributions (weddings, religious, saccos, construction, education medical bills, burial contributions, payments to influential persons such as traditional leaders), administration (party costs, electoral commission, documents), and personal effects (clothing). Average estimates related to running campaigns represent a period of six months while average estimates related to maintaining an office represent a period of one month.

Some preliminary thinking was undertaken around the qualitative information that emerged from the participatory workshops and webinars with the sole aim of reducing the bulky datasets into codes. Inductive analysis was undertaken to build the patterns, categories and themes intended to provide initial information for analysis. In creating the themes, the team maintained plausible and thematically relevant quotes and phrases to build evidence that speaks to the quantitative analysis.

Limitations and adaptations

Following the disruptions to business and normal life occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, PPI revised the methodology after only one regional participative workshop had been convened (in the East) and a total of 66 respondents reached. The revised methodology was intended to allow a resumption of data collection to cover the remaining strata. The revised methodology incorporated the use of virtual tools as there was no indication of when the lockdown would be lifted to allow a return to normalcy. The revised methodology maintained a

mixed methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques targeting primary respondents as follows:

- a) Using the same approved quantitative data collection instrument, PPI deployed research assistants and one supervisor in the precinct of parliament to administer the tool on a one-to-one basis. Unlike the rest of the public sector, parliament remained in session during the lockdown with up to 100 MPs allowed in plenary and a host of others attending to committee business.
- b) To collect data from district-based respondents, a mixture of approaches was applied:
 - For districts with accessibility to reliable internet, telephone and virtual meeting applications were used to collect quantitative data. This mainly targeted categories outside of the current MPs.
 - PPI also deployed a total of 15 district-based research assistants to support the collection of quantitative data at the local level using a one-to-one approach. They were virtually trained to familiarise themselves with the tool.

A total of four online webinars were held in the place of participatory workshops. Three for the remaining three regions - North, West and Central - and one covering the national level. A total of 86 participants were reached through these workshops. This was less than originally planned but still provided sufficient levels of qualitative data. The webinars targeted those who had participated in the quantitative data collection while the national webinar targeted a total of 20 national level governance experts, civil society leaders and public policy advocates.

Finally, the estimates related to expenditure costs while in office may be affected by errors such as desirability bias or memory lapse and as such may not correlate precisely with what respondents actually spent. Respondents were likely to report financial estimates that might not be a true reflection of their earnings. For example, in this report, we observe that reported expenditure while in office does not tally with official monthly salaries. Yet, respondents may not be willing to disclose how they meet this apparent funding gap. In such a situation, the estimates presented in this report may not be a true reflection of what we claim to measure as expenditures while in office. We therefore advise that caution should be taken not to over-interpret the financial estimates of the cost of politics while in office presented in this report. But given the sample size we are confident that they are at the very least illustrative of some of the costs.





Findings

This section highlights the major empirical findings of the study. The findings are presented in a sequential format reflecting the objectives and broad themes of the study. Each finding is evidenced by statistical data and quotes from the primary data collected or excerpts of the literature and documents reviewed. The findings are presented as estimates of the cost of politics using a set of pre-identified variables regularly incurred by candidates seeking political office and elected representatives while in office. Findings are triangulated and compared with previous studies conducted by Afrobarometer and the Alliance for Campaign Finance Monitoring and efforts have been made to situate the findings in the broader political participation processes where appropriate.

Cost by numbers for parliamentary and local government leaders

This sub-section underscores the costs of politics at three levels; (i) during the internal party candidate selection processes (primaries), (ii) running for the general elections (campaigns) and (iii) maintaining office for elected representatives. In addition, the section further highlights the sources of funding and the considerations that influence the spending of money in politics. In all cases, attempts are made to disaggregate and present comparative figures for both parliament and local government LCV chairpersons as well as across regions, and by gender or level of success.

Primary costs

Political parties and organisations in Uganda are required by law to conform to the democratic principles enshrined in the Ugandan Constitution including making substantive contributions to governance through periodic elections of office

bearers, internal democracy, and policy development. Political parties and organisations conduct primary elections to internally identify candidates for the various elective positions during the general and residual elections in the country. A combination of adult suffrage and electoral college systems is used by political parties to identify candidates for sponsorship during elections. The ruling NRM is the only political organisation that conducted nationwide primary elections in all villages in Uganda ahead of the 2016 elections to identify its flag bearers in the parliamentary LCV elections. All NRM members registered in a popularly named 'Yellow Book' before the primary elections were eligible to vote for the party flag bearers through secret ballot. Opposition political parties identified their flag bearers mainly through electoral colleges constituted by leaders of party structures at the district level.

The average amount of money spent by participants during the party primary elections ahead of the 2016 general elections was UGX 222 million (USD 64,969) and UGX 118 million (USD 34,533) for parliamentary

²These pre identified costs include publicity, broadcast media, communication, personal effects, fees, welfare, social contributions, party contributions, transport, and office costs.

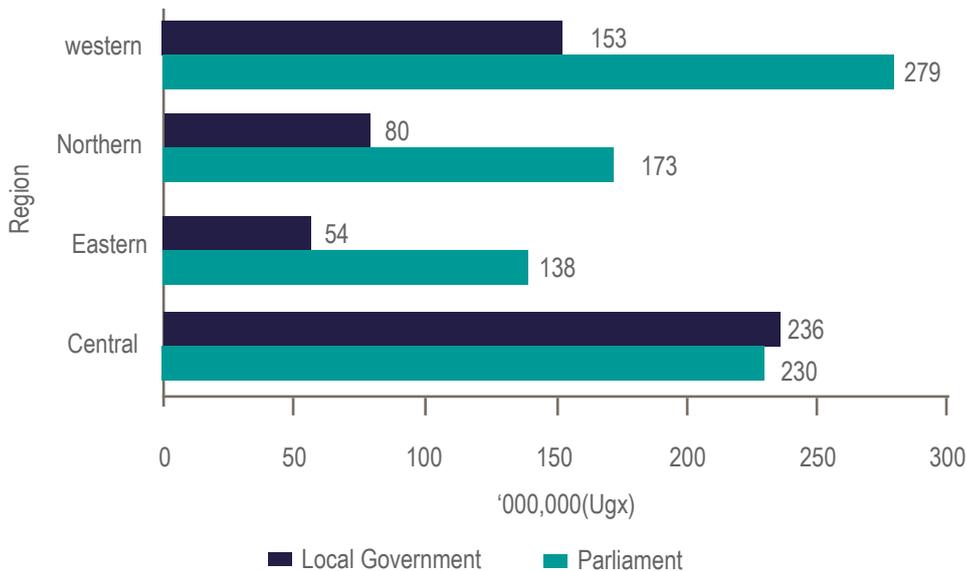
and LCV chairpersons, respectively. These estimates are irrespective level of success, political party, or gender.

Overall, parliamentary aspirants spent more than their local government counterparts by a difference of UGX 104 million (USD 19,750) but in the central region, contesting for a local government seat is more expensive than for a parliamentary one. Analysis, mainly from the qualitative excerpts, indicated that local government elections in the central region are highly competitive owing to higher urban concentration and cost of living. Furthermore, districts such as Masaka, Wakiso and Mukono have higher numbers of polling stations and voters, making it more expensive for aspirants to reach the electorate.

When disaggregated by region, the central region constituted the highest average expenditure (UGX 236 million) for local government while the western

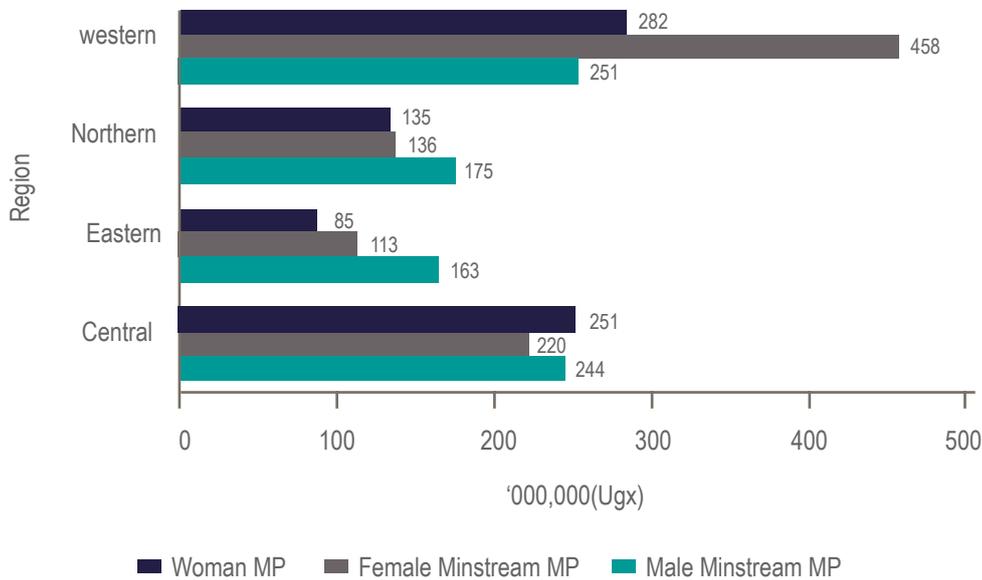
region had the highest average expenditure (UGX 279 million) for parliament. This reality is corroborated by the fact that these regions score substantially higher human development and wellbeing indicators. According to the Uganda National Household Survey 2016/2017 report, the average monthly consumption expenditure per household for three survey periods after adjusting for inflation put Central region, excluding Kampala, at UGX 397,400 and Western region at UGX 341,900 above the Eastern region at UGX 232,900 and Northern region at UGX 247,500. One key informant argued that ‘the higher income levels of people in the central region meant that their demands during elections were much higher than in other regions’ (Key Informant Interview), prompting aspiring candidates to spend higher amounts than their counterparts in other parts of the country.

Figure 5: The cost of running in party primaries disaggregated by region and type of leader



Source: generated from quantitative data

Figure 6: The cost of running in party primaries disaggregated by region and gender

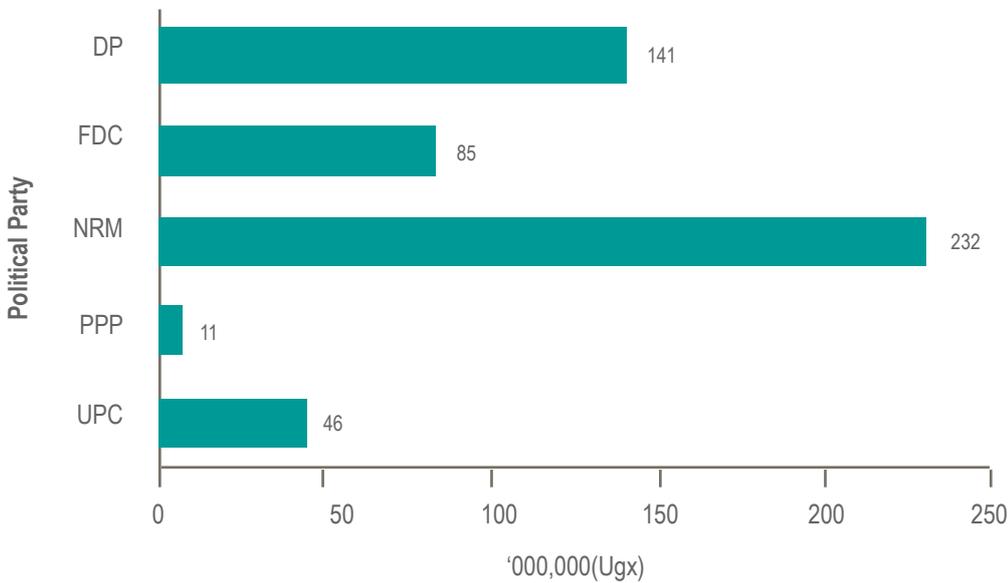


Source: generated from quantitative data

Irrespective of regions, mainstream male parliamentary aspirants spent UGX 219 million while their female mainstream parliamentary counterparts spent UGX 272 million; a difference of UGX 53 million. Candidates for the women parliamentary special seats, of which there is one per district, spent UGX 186 million. Female mainstream MPs from the Western region spent on average 458 million, significantly higher than all other regions and more than double the overall average. The Eastern region had the lowest expenditure when compared to the other regions for all categories of aspirants - woman MPs, female mainstream MPs, and male mainstream MPs. However, it is important to note that few women compete for the mainstream seats and because of this, the number of respondents interviewed was small (six in Central, six in Eastern, three in Northern and seven in Western), and so the estimates may not be representative. Nevertheless, the data collected showed that those who contested on mainstream seats spent more than their male counterparts.

An analysis of the costs of running in party primaries by political parties showed a marked difference between the ruling NRM party and opposition parties. As highlighted in Figure 7, NRM parliamentary aspirants spent UGX 232 million with the DP at UGX 141 million, FDC at UGX 85 million, PPP at UGX 11 million and UPC at UGX 46 million. NRM party elections were held across over 60,000 villages mimicking the general elections through adult suffrage involving all registered members in each constituency. One of the respondents had this to say: 'NRM aspirants participate in two different kinds of elections that are both costly as we have to converse for votes first in the primaries and then the general elections' (Key Informant Interview). Indeed, Wilkins, (2018, p. 111) argues that 'the obligation to stand in party primaries added a costly and time-consuming burden entirely separate from the general election itself. In the party's strongholds in the rural south, where linkages with Museveni and the government had long been a critical source of political capital, the idea of being the NRM's official nominee (or "flag bearer") instantly became a highly coveted title.'

Figure 7: Average expenditures in party primary elections disaggregated by political party



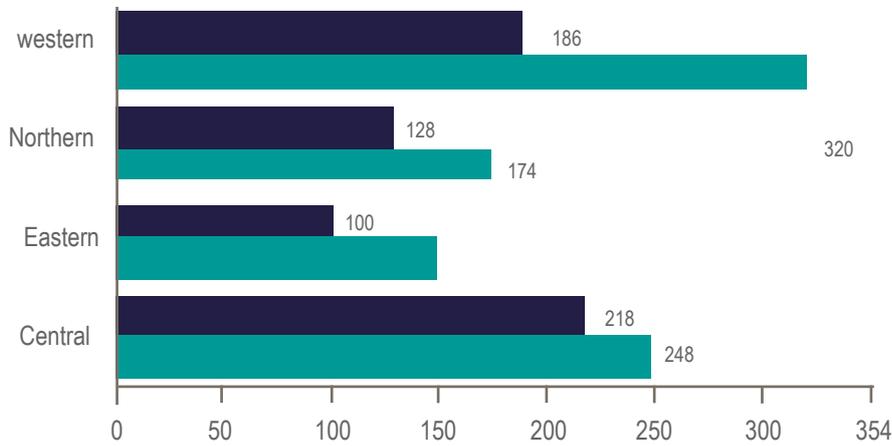
Source: generated from quantitative data

Opposition political party primaries were mostly conducted through electoral colleges which significantly reduced the amount of resources required to engage and converse for endorsement by the parties. However, it is important to note that while it has turned out to be a costly venture for political aspirants running to secure the NRM party nomination, those who successfully secure the party flag have higher chances of winning the parliamentary contest and thus of becoming a parliamentarian. This is partly because the primary electoral process exposes potential candidates to the electorate ahead of their competitors, which presents an added advantage over and above being a ruling

party flag bearer. In the discussion of the findings in the subsequent section, we explore how the NRM electoral system presents several advantages over their competitors and partly drives the cost of politics at both parliamentary and local government levels.

Finally, we analysed the cost of participating in primary elections for parliamentary aspirants using a 'level of success' parameter disaggregated by region. Those who won party primaries on average spent more than their competitors in all regions (see Figure 8). The estimates shown imply a positive correlation between spending money and winning the party primary elections.

Figure 8: Average expenditures in party primaries disaggregated by region and level of success



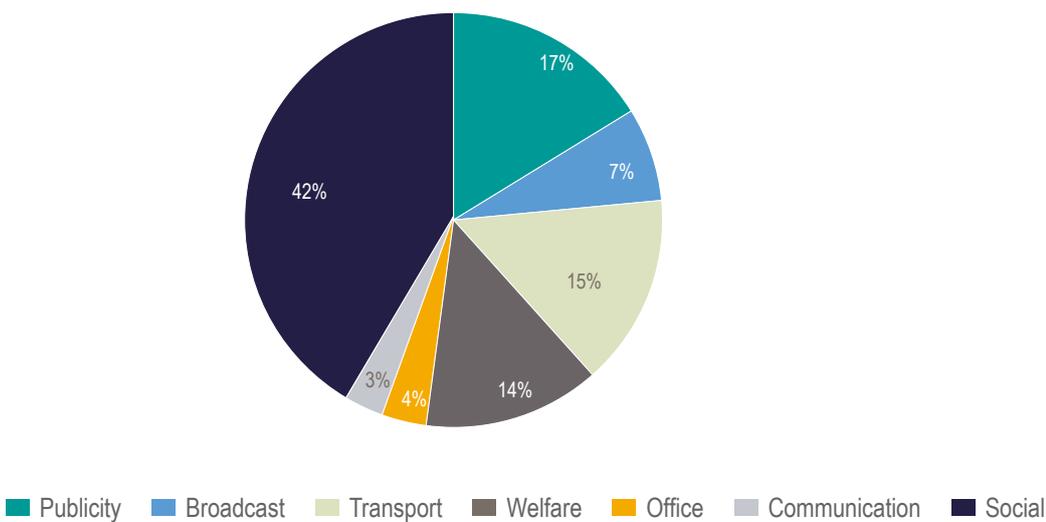
Source: generated from quantitative data

Election expenditure

The average amount of money spent during the parliamentary and LCV elections ahead of the 2016 general elections was UGX 242.9 million (USD 71,085) and UGX 118.6 million (USD 34,708) for

parliamentary and LCV chairpersons, respectively. Figure 9 illustrates the different variables on which candidates spent the money in campaigns with social costs accounting for 42%, followed by publicity (17%), and transport (15%).

Figure 9: Breakdown of average costs by theme



Source: generated from quantitative data

Mainstream male parliamentary aspirants spent UGX 212 million while their female mainstream counterparts spent UGX 307 million, UGX 95 million more than men. Candidates for the affirmative action women parliamentary seats spent UGX 247 million. This was mainly attributed to the geographical size of the special seat which meant that female candidates conversed for votes across the span of a district. On average, each district has up to three mainstream

constituencies. In Iganga, one of the sample districts in the eastern region, a total of 222,276 voters were eligible to vote in the 2016 general elections. The district has four constituencies, Bugweri Country (51,409 voters), Kigulu County South (75,607 voters), Kigulu County North (39,200 voters) and Iganga Municipality (56,060 voters) who each elect an MP. One respondent had this to say:



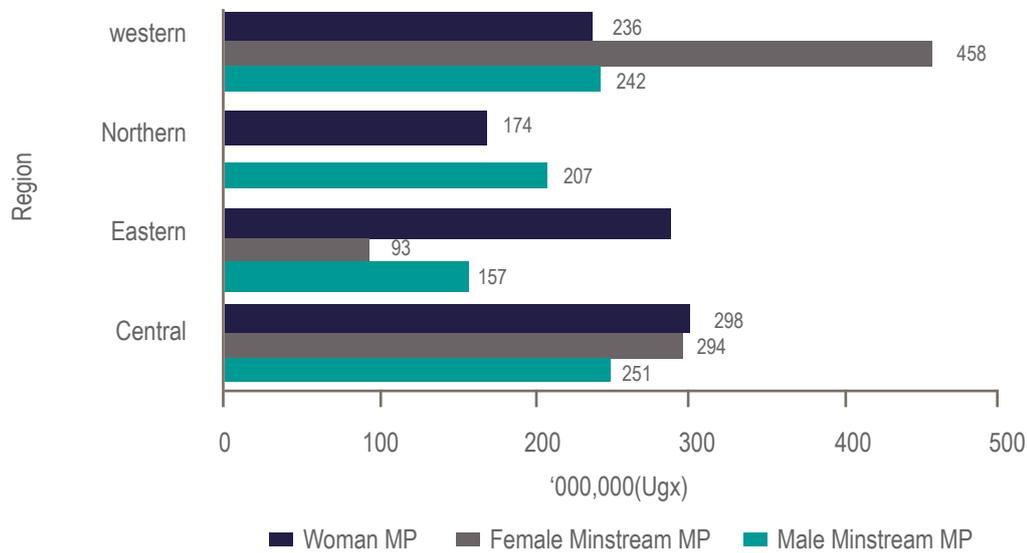
My campaign was extremely expensive because I was a newcomer and therefore had to converse for votes across the entire district. I spent two to three times what the male candidates on the general seats spent.



Just like in the primary elections, female mainstream contestants in the Western region spent more than their male mainstream counterparts; in this case by UGX 216 million (see Figure 10). According to some respondents these very high expenditures by women can be attributed to the multiplicity and

resourcefulness of political godfathers in the Western region who bankrolled female contestants. Although three of the 13 women in the Northern region contested for mainstream seats, none provided detailed expenditure for their campaigns.

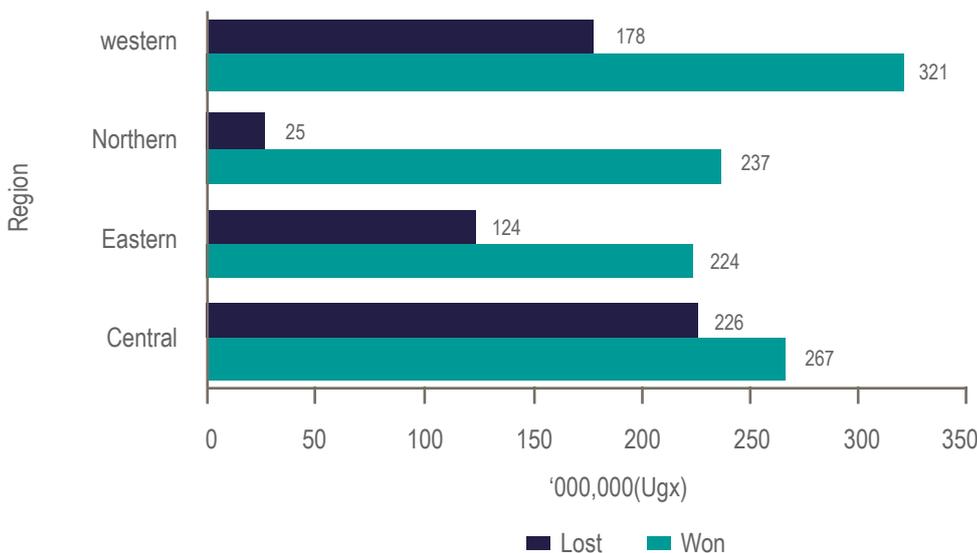
Figure 10: Average expenditures in the 2016 parliamentary elections by region and gender



Source: generated from quantitative data

Similar to the primary findings, candidates who won their seats spent more during campaigns than their counterparts who lost in all regions (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: Average expenditures during the 2016 elections by region and level of success

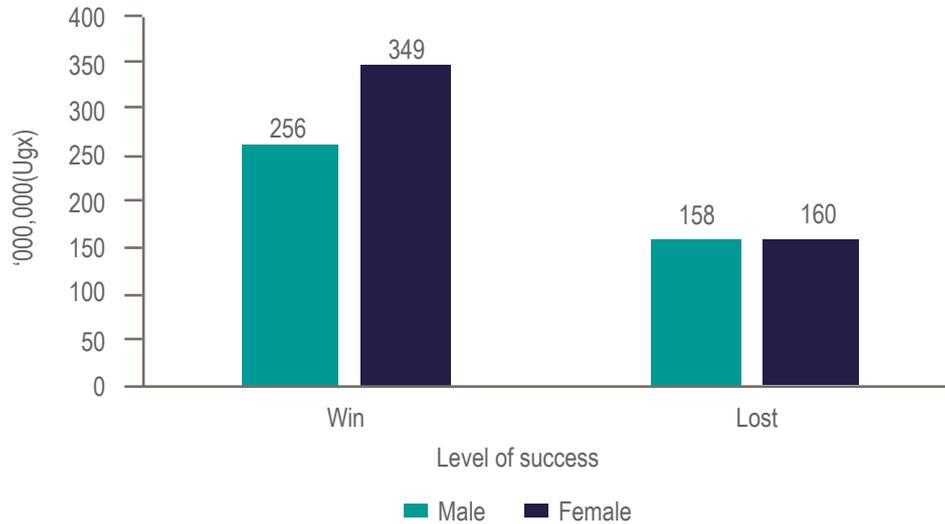


Source: generated from quantitative data

A gender analysis of this data reveals that women who won their seats at parliamentary level spent UGX 349m while the men spent UGX 256m (see Figure 12). On average, a female parliamentary

candidate spent UGX 93m more than a male candidate to secure a seat in the parliament during the 2016 election. On the other hand, the findings indicate a fringe expenditure difference of UGX 2m during campaigns between males and females who lost at the parliamentary level.

Figure 12: Average expenditures during the 2016 elections by gender and level of success

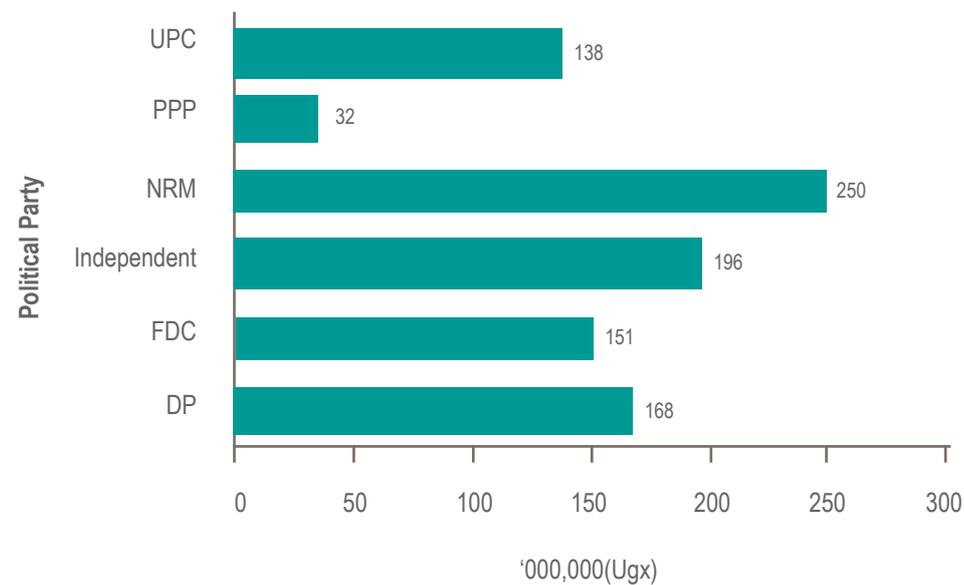


Source: generated from quantitative data

Regarding political party or affiliation, the average expenditures during the 2016 parliamentary and local government elections show that NRM candidates spent UGX 250 million, followed by independents, the majority of whom were NRM-leaning, at UGX 196 million. With the NRM garnering majority

seats at both parliamentary and local government levels, it further strengthens the evidence and correlation between incumbency, money and a positive outcome. Regression analysis implies that the likelihood of winning an election is reduced for participants who spend less than their counterparts with welfare and social costs emerging as strong predictors of success.

Figure 13: Average expenditures during the 2016 parliamentary and LCV elections by political party



Source: generated from quantitative data

Overall costs to make it to parliament

Overall, the average amount of money spent by a candidate during the 2016 primary and general elections was estimated by the study to be UGX 465 million (USD 136,084) and UGX 237.5 million (USD 69,505) for parliamentary and LCV chairpersons, respectively. At parliamentary level, the study estimated that candidates from the mainstream constituencies spent UGX 458.2 million while female counterparts (affirmative action per district) spent UGX 496.4 million.

Female candidates that cover the whole district outspent their counterparts from the mainstream constituencies by UGX 38.2 million.

To win a parliamentary seat, the study estimated that, on average, candidates in the 2016 elections spent UGX 484.75 million over both the primary and general elections. On average, successful candidates outspent their rivals by a difference of UGX 194.5 million. Over both primaries and general elections, NRM candidates spent UGX 482 million while their opposition counterparts spent UGX 309 million (DP), UGX 236 million (FDC), UGX 43 million (PPP) and UGX 184 million (UPC).

Table 1 highlights the regional variations in expenditures by both parliamentary and LCV candidates over both primary and general elections.

Table 1: Summary of regional variations in expenditures by type of leader in primary and general elections in UGX, 000,000

| Region | Parliamentary Costs | LCV Costs |
|----------|---------------------|-----------|
| Central | 489 | 425 |
| Eastern | 315 | 135 |
| Northern | 384 | 306 |
| Western | 570 | 253 |

Source: generated from quantitative data

Parliamentary candidates in the Western region spent the highest, up to UGX 570m over both the primary and general elections, whilst aspirants contesting in the Eastern region recorded the lowest levels at UGX 315m. Expenditure for LCV candidates was also lowest in the Eastern region (UGX 134 million), but highest in the central region (UGX 425 million) where turnover was highest.

Sources of campaign finance

Respondents were asked how and from whom they raised the money to fund their electoral activities. Table 2 outlines the responses.

Table 2: Sources of campaign finance

| Source | Yes (%) | No (%) |
|--------------------|---------|--------|
| Personal resources | 98.6 | 1.4 |
| Loans | 13.6 | 86.4 |
| Business interests | 46.1 | 53.9 |
| Social groups | 6.8 | 93.2 |
| Political party | 43.9 | 56.1 |
| Family and friends | 74.3 | 25.7 |

Source: generated from quantitative data

Personal resources and contributions from family and friends topped the sources of campaign finances for respondents with 98.6% and 74.3%, respectively. When the data was gender disaggregated, 81.6% of male respondents reported to have secured loans to finance their political campaigns as opposed to 18.4% of females. 68.9% of male respondents also reported to have secured funding from their political parties as opposed to 30.1% of female respondents. Data was not collected regarding the amounts obtained from these sources, only the frequency with which respondents acknowledged their importance as a source of funds.

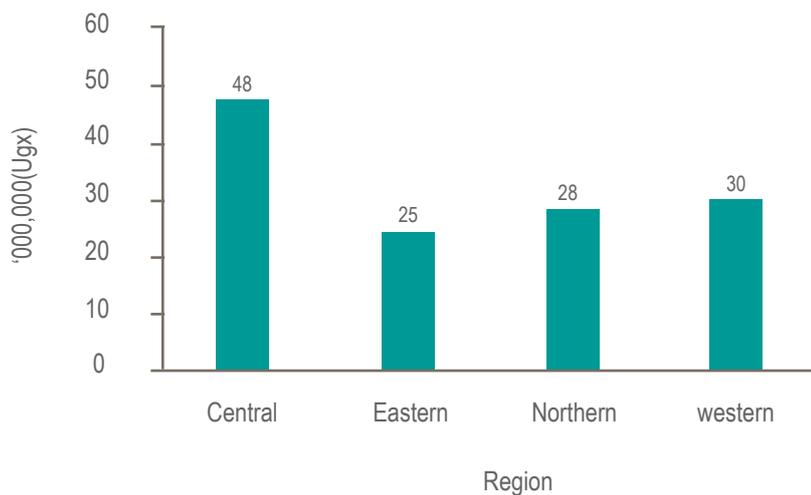
Cost of maintaining political office

The average cost of maintaining office on a monthly basis is UGX 32 million (USD 8,850) for parliamentary office holders. Overall, the most expensive region in which to hold a political position was the Central region at UGX 48 million, followed by Western at UGX 30 million, Northern at UGX 28 million and Eastern at UGX 25 million.

These expenditures were incurred in publicity, media, transport, communication, and social contributions. Beyond these recurrent expenditures, office holders also incur costs in the form of development and infrastructural projects, many of which, such as grading of roads and the buying and maintaining of ambulances, among other things, involve large sums of money. On average, an MP earns a monthly salary of UGX 30 million, plus additional benefits. This finding thus reveals that many parliamentarians are spending far beyond their guaranteed monthly emoluments.

Overall, social costs were rated as the major costs while in office. Figure 15 illustrates the social costs in numbers that MPs incurred in the period under review. MPs spent up to 41% of their monthly outlays on all sorts of social contributions such as donating to savings and credit Cooperative Societies, paying for constituent medical bills and school fees, meeting burial expenses, and paying influential persons in the constituency. Other expenditures include publicity (17%), and transport (15%) among others.

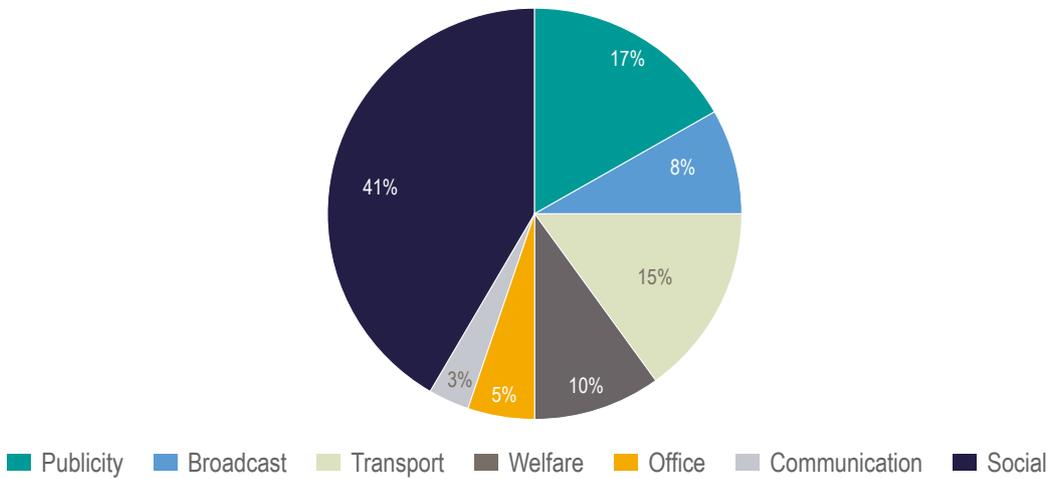
Figure 14: Average expenditure of MPs while in office by region



Source: generated from quantitative data

³The average exchange rate for the USD against the shillings in 32 months consideration was 1 USD = 3616.1887 according to Bank of Uganda. <https://www.bou.or.ug/bou/bouwebsite/FinancialMarkets/>

Figure 15: Social costs in office



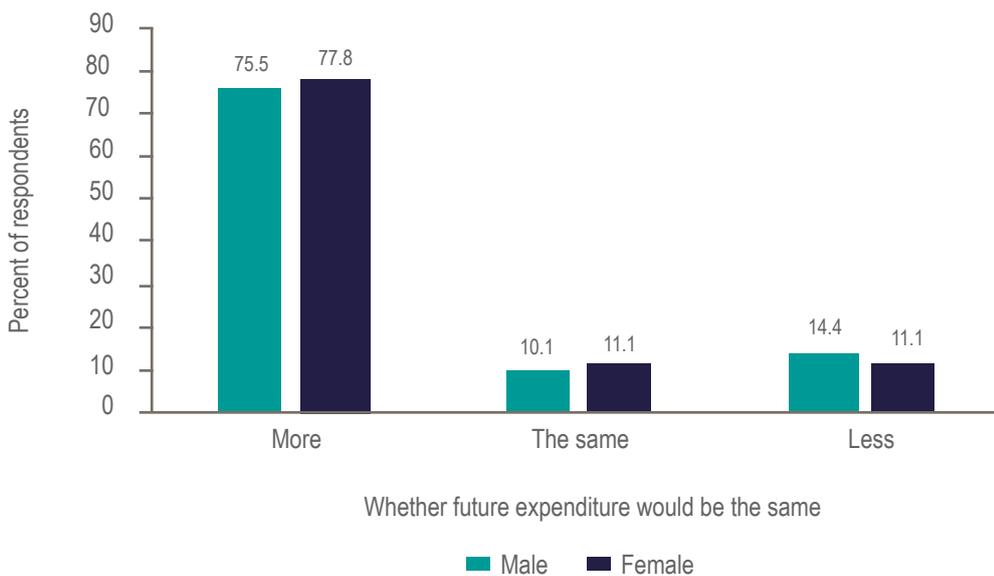
Source: generated from quantitative data

Future Costs

Each category of respondents was asked: ‘If you would run your campaign again, would you spend more, less, or the same money as you did in the 2016 elections?’ Most males (75.5%) and females

(77.8%) reported that they would spend more in the next elections than in the previous should they contest again, while about 10% said they would spend the same. Just 11.1% of women, and 14.4% of men, said they would spend less when running again in the future.

Figure 16: Predicted expenditure by gender



Source: generated from quantitative data

What are the drivers of the cost of politics?

To appreciate the drivers of the cost of politics in Uganda, this section discusses what it considered as mediating factors, many of which are symptomatic of a bigger underlying problem within the contemporary political architecture. This architecture is characterised by weak political institutions and a dominant NRM political organisation with President Museveni and his style of organisation and leadership pivotal to the current system's functioning. Six key areas are worth analysing in detail.

a) Public service delivery inadequacies

Since 1993, the government has been implementing a decentralisation policy, with fiscal, administrative, and political authority devolved to the districts and sub-counties. These are responsible for the delivery of several services in the health, education, and roads sectors. Indeed, several observable achievements have been registered over the last 27 years especially around political participation in local public affairs, enrolment in education and development of commerce. However, several policy shifts have rendered local governments incapable of meeting the expectations of the citizens. The multiplication of districts, from 39 in 1996 to 142 in 2020, has had a negative impact on the amount of intergovernmental transfers notwithstanding the quantity and quality of services delivered by local governments (LGs). The percentage share of LG financing has been gradually reducing despite the fact that LG administrative units and national revenue collections have increased. In addition, 'inadequate financing and investment

in human resources and facilities, weak systems and coordination, conflicting legislations and local leadership challenges' (Mushemeza, 2019, p. 27) have made the delivery of services challenging at the local level.

This reality is driving the cost of politics in two different ways. First, local political actors have been shrewd to cry foul and convince the citizens that much of the authority over LG fiscal space has been recentralised, leaving them with mainly conditioned funding. This has meant that the centre is seen as responsible for the delivery of services and MPs with the responsibility for addressing service delivery issues either through lobbying the centre or paying for the cost of the services. Where citizens notice service delivery inadequacies, the first line of contact is not the local government leaders but rather their MP. One key informant had this to say:



Government failure to provide a service or complete its mandate becomes my failure (MP) and can be a ground for me to lose an election. In order not to invite the ire of the people, I am left with no choice but to use my money to provide the services.



Figure 17: A picture of a bridge being constructed by the local MP



It's impossible, it's a joke, it can't be, how special is she as so many have failed.....Those used to be the statements from haters and those who doubt my performance strength when I told mourners in

Makena at the send-off of one of my voters in 2017 that if the bridge is not worked on they should not vote me again.' (KII)

Figure 18: One of the ambulances owned by an MP



In a recent response strategy to COVID-19, the Ministry of Health wrote to several MPs through the Clerk to Parliament, requesting for their ambulances to constitute part of the Government's response fleet of vehicles. In Uganda, MPs own over 180

ambulances stationed in their constituencies across the country. This is an example of how MPs are bridging the gap left by the inadequacies of government and directly making the cost of winning and maintaining a political office expensive.

These are examples where MPs have gone the extra mile to deliver services that should be the responsibilities of central or local governments. Most of these services are promised to the citizens during campaigns, to enable a competing candidate to position himself or herself as either the most resourced or connected to meet the service delivery needs of the voters. This was repeatedly echoed in all the qualitative discussions with respondents across the country and stands strong among the mediating factors driving the cost of politics.

b) **High parliamentary emoluments and privileges**

The 1995 Constitution in Article 85 (1) provides that an MP shall be paid such emoluments and such gratuity and shall be provided with such facilities as may be determined by parliament. This provision means that MPs determine the amount to award themselves. Indeed, the

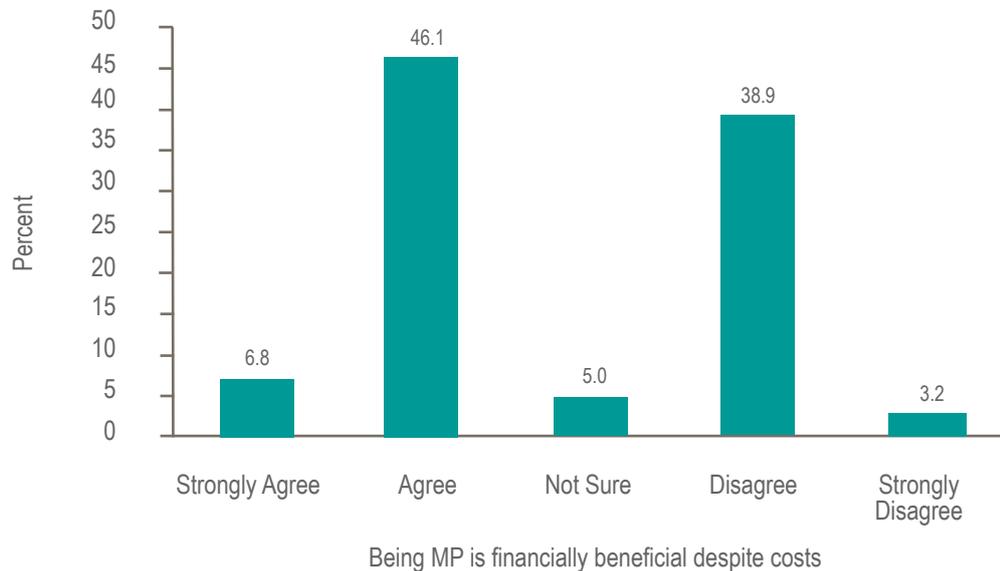
practice by MPs of increasing their emoluments has been a rampant phenomenon over the life of the legislature in Uganda. Each MP in the 10th Parliament earns approximately UGX 30 million (USD 8,200) per month in addition to several other privileges such as an official car, a gratuity - paid at the end of the five year term – which amounts to 30% of the salary earned, and a host of travel and committee sitting allowances. These emoluments and privileges are responsible for incentivising and indeed catalysing the increasing costs of running for office, especially at the parliamentary level.

Unfortunately, many of the MP respondents believe that their emoluments and privileges are meagre compared with the demands from their constituents. According to one key informant interview:



Our salaries should be increased to at least UGX 100m (USD 27,300) [monthly] because what is paid to us is too little. Since we have become an arm of government outside the traditional roles of representation, legislation, appropriation and oversight, our salaries should be increased so that we are able to dispose of the services government has failed to deliver.



Figure 19: Is being an MP financially beneficial despite the costs?

Source: generated from quantitative data

These benefits that accrue to a MP drive the urge to spend while campaigning to attain that office. Figure

18 illustrates MP's responses when asked if being an MP came with financial benefits despite the costs. 52.9% of the respondents believe that being an MP is financially beneficial despite the huge costs involved.

c) Lack of enforcement of campaign laws

Having 'institutionalised and regulated political parties and organisations is considered to be a vital element in the consolidation of democracy' (Svaasand, 2014, p. 277). Organised and regulated political entities function within a set of predefined rules and regulations including a prescribed code of conduct. In addition, enforcement and adherence to campaign rules and regulations levels the playing field and provides equal chances to competing candidates during an election. These provisions function to regulate all facets of political organising and competition, including the concept of campaign finance. There are several legal provisions within the country's laws that bar the use of money for politics.

Before highlighting some of the provisions, it is critical to underscore the two essential differences. On the one hand, there is 'money for politics': that which is required to meet

official fees and campaign requirements. In the case of official fees, parliamentary and LCV candidates are required to pay for nomination fees during primary and general elections, and certify and validate their academic papers with the Uganda National Examination Board and the Uganda National Council for Higher Education, respectively. They are also expected to meet campaign costs such as printing publicity materials, communicating, and where necessary offering refreshments at town hall and community meetings. On the other hand, there is 'money in politics', which we describe as the undesired campaign costs incurred by candidates to induce voters and edge their rivals.

Section 68 (1) of the Parliamentary Elections Act states that:

Furthermore, in the 2010 amendment of the Act, an insertion was made to strengthen the



A person who, either before or during an election with intent, either directly or indirectly to influence another person to vote or to refrain from voting for any candidate, gives or provides or causes to be given or provided any money, gift or other consideration to that other person, commits the offence of bribery and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding seventy two currency points or imprisonment not exceeding three years or both.



The EC should bar intending aspirants from campaigning before the official campaign period because it is such early electioneering that makes the cost extremely high. We are put under pressure by our rivals and in many instances, an MP begins spending on the next campaign the day they are elected because that is the time opponents also begin campaigning and spending money. It is clear that election spending is a five-year cycle as opposed to the common narrative of five campaign months.



provision and bar candidates, or their agents, from carrying out fundraising or giving donations during the period of campaigning. During qualitative discussions, respondents pointed to a lack of capacity in the election management bodies, specifically the EC, to enforce campaign rules and regulations. During the campaign period, the EC is preoccupied with election delivery and management as its lean staffing structure is incapable of policing the electoral environment to enforce laws and apprehend those who fail to comply. One MP had this to say:



While there are legal and institutional arrangements to support detection and deterrence of money in politics, the country's electoral commission lacks the capacity to enforce the existing legislations. This is due to a litany of factors, most of which rotate around the country's political system.

d) Low levels of civic consciousness among the electorate

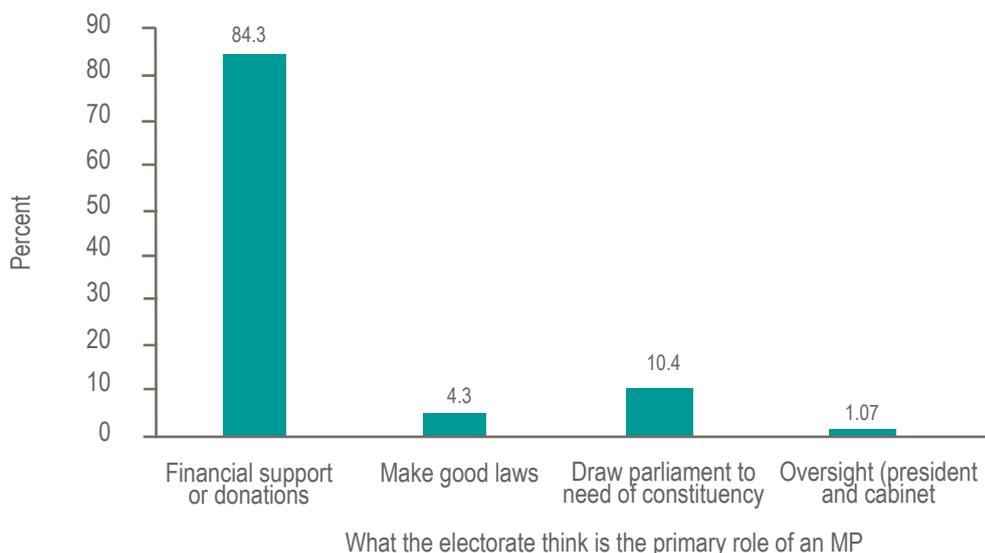
The official roles of an MP seem to differ from what the electorate perceive them to be. There are four major roles for MPs in Uganda:

- (i) legislation which involves debating and passing laws through which the institutions of government endeavour to guide the country's development and governance processes;
- (ii) budget approval/appropriation which

involves analysis and approval of the national Budget;

- (iii) oversight which entails monitoring and bringing to the attention of Ministers and the public, Executive misuse of funds, violations of rule of law and unlawful activities;
- (iv) representation where MPs represent their constituents' views in Parliament and bring local development issues directly to the Executive for redress. These official roles significantly differ from what the electorate expects.

Figure 20: MP perceptions of what the electorate considers the role of a MP to be



Source: generated from quantitative data

But MPs think that constituents believe that they are the ones to be approached when they have any dissatisfaction with the delivery of government services at the local level (see Figure 20). Their appreciation of the roles of MPs is linked to an elected leaders capacity and connectedness to the state and the ability to deliver state resources; a consequence of the 'Movement individual merit system', the legacy of which has continued to prevail despite the 2005 transition to multipartyism.

Incumbent politicians have shied away from directly engaging and informing the voters about the official roles they are expected to play as MPs. Indeed, this study confirms that any incumbent representative who fails to adhere to pressures of the local polity will bear the rage of the voters, based on his or her incapacity to deliver state resources. Sub-national politics is a consequence of local issues and voters are keen to elect individuals who are deemed fit and well positioned to ably articulate and cause change

within the local polity. Representatives are keen to bridge the gaps occasioned by inadequacies in public service delivery as this improves their chances of being elected.

e) Weak political institutions

In Uganda, formal political organisations are generally too weak to perform their mandate which principally includes governance, aggregation of the interests of their members, political mobilisation and effective representation. Instead, political institutions function 'through a system of relations linking leaders not with the "public" or even with the ruled (at least not directly), but with patrons, associates, clients, supporters, and rivals, who constitute the "system"' (Arriola, 2009, p. 1344). The effect of such demonstrates a presence of strong clientelist and horizontal dyadic structures within various political processes, or patron-client relationships which affect women (as newcomers in politics) more than men.

Political parties and organisations in Uganda have a tendency to rotate around a cult-like leader who superintends the affairs of the party, usually working in intricate ways through a networked system of factions or loyal cadres. Deeply embedded gender-biased patterns in public decision-making and policy implementation are largely as a result of inescapable loyalty to political godfathers that help women win a seat at the table (Ahikire 2019).

President Museveni of the ruling NRM has been at its helm since it became a political party in 2005 – and president since 1986 – and the party constitution has been amended several times to strengthen his grip on the party. In 2015, ahead of the general elections, the NRM party constitution was amended to give its chairman absolute power to choose the top party leaders including the Secretary General. This amendment, according to several key informants, was necessary to shield President Museveni from an internal growing threat from the then Secretary General, Amama Mbabazi who went on to challenge, unsuccessfully, Museveni and the NRM in the 2016 elections. The NRM organisations failed to manage and ensure party cohesion. Another visible functional weakness can be seen in the NRM's failed attempt to first discipline its rebel MPs and then expel them from the party, for opposing official party positions in parliament.

Kiiza Besigye, founder of the FDC, has also dominated his party in the multiparty era. He has been the party's flag bearer in the last three elections, emerging through internal electoral processes, deemed democratic but alienating several members and causing internal strife that has led to the departure of high profile figures, such as General Mugisha Muntu who formed his own political entity, the Alliance for National Transformation.

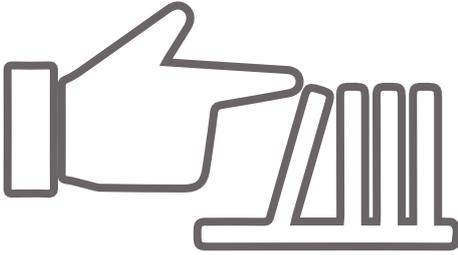
These functional and structural weaknesses are driving the cost of politics in Uganda. Political parties and organisations are only visible at the national level and lack social rootedness at the sub-national level. Although these structures resurrect towards electoral times, they do so only to serve the interests of the political elites. The absence of structures at the sub-national level means that political elites emerge either on individual merit or because of local political issues and less because of political party support. This impacts on the way campaigns are run.

f) **Prevailing patronage norms**

President Museveni has ensured political settlements and patronage through power sharing that has strongly demonstrated elite cooperation. One of his considerations for a ministerial appointment and other key political positions is how strongly one is linked to the sub-national polity and national level-based alliances. Those who are appointed thus represent powerful power bases and in return, the appointments introduce them to state resources that are used to support political mobilisation. This reality is illustrated by Wilkins, (2018) who argues that 'for a number of historical and geographical reasons, the local polity in Uganda has been stronger than the national one in terms of the political issues and movements that mobilise mass political participation'.

President Museveni therefore depends on these alliances with sub-national actors more than on the centralised NRM political party. His political appointments come with a fat salary and a host of other privileges from state coffers and this directly drives escalation of money in politics. Arriola, (2009, p. 1344) sums this up by illustrating that 'by maintaining elite clientelist linkages that connect them to a cross-section of ethno-regional groups, as well as localities where the state cannot make itself felt, patronage serves as an instrument for regulating intra-elite competition, permitting the leader to ration state resources in placating aggrieved groups or punishing would-be challengers'.

Running for office in the NRM comes with benefits and other material dimensions for either winners or losers. Rival intra-party candidates spend enormous resources co-mobilising for President Museveni during the general elections. This is done in anticipation of future rewards from the President and indeed, there are numerous examples where the President has appointed losers to positions such as Resident District Commissioners and to boards of statutory agencies, for example.



The impact of the cost of politics

In 2016, a total of 1,749 candidates contested for parliament for both direct seats and women representative seats while 369 candidates contested for LCV. The survey data collected implies that the total expenditure by parliamentary candidates in the 2016 election was UGX 813 billion (USD 238 million) and UGX 87 billion (USD 25 million) by LCV candidates. Using the World Bank's 2016 GDP per capita of UGX 2.08m (USD 609), a candidate aspiring for parliamentary office spent

up to 210 times the average income of a Ugandan in campaigns. In a country with an estimated nine million people (21.4% of the population) classified by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2015/16 National Household Survey as 'absolutely poor and another 18 million (43%) as non-poor but insecure', there is no doubt that these costs are not only exorbitant but exclude key segments of the population from electoral participation.

Exclusion

Figure 21: Are the costs of politics rising?

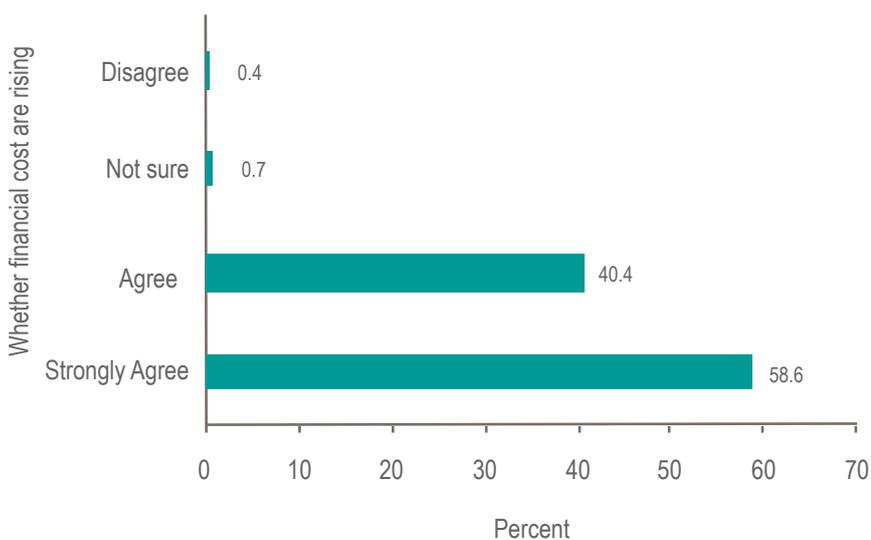
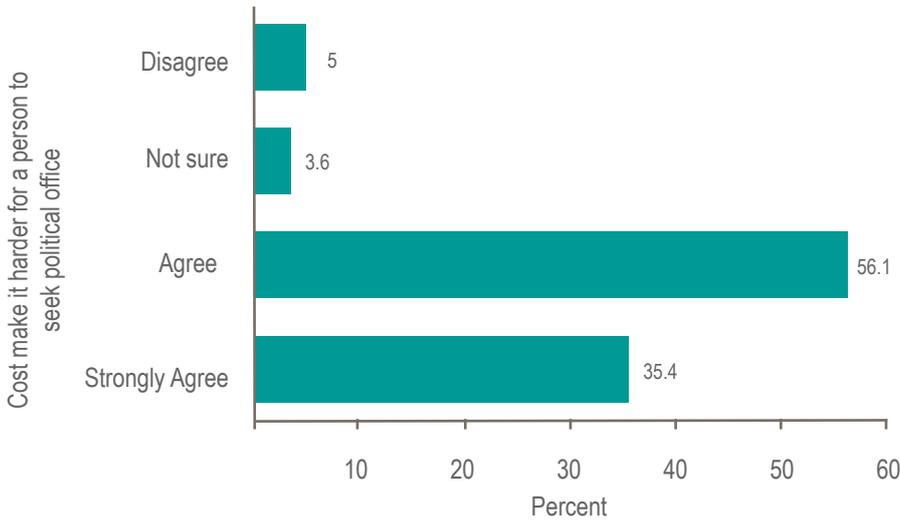


Figure 22: Has the cost of politics made it difficult for the average person to seek political office?

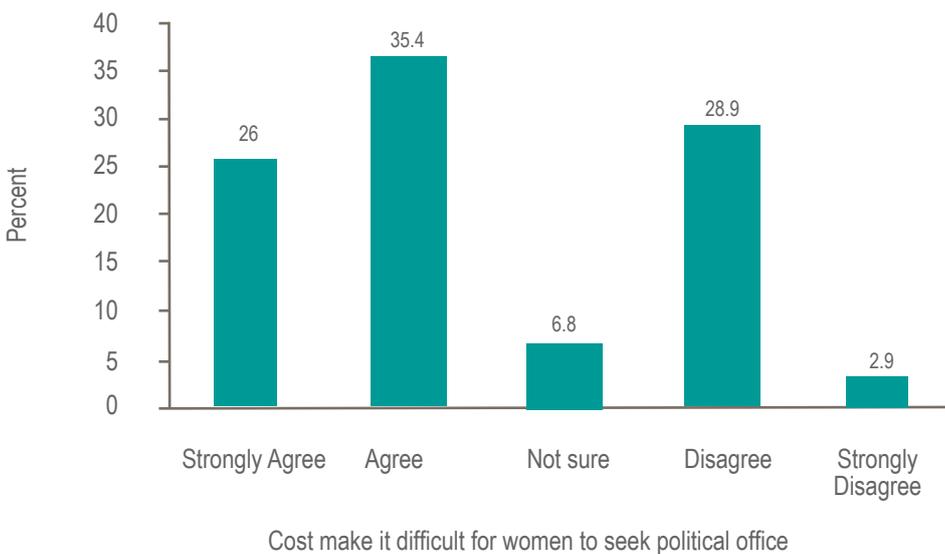


Source: generated from quantitative data

Almost all respondents (98.9%) agree that the cost of politics is on the rise. As a result, 91.5% agreed that the cost of politics made it quite impossible for the average person to seek political office. When respondents were asked how the cost of politics was affecting the participation of vulnerable and minority

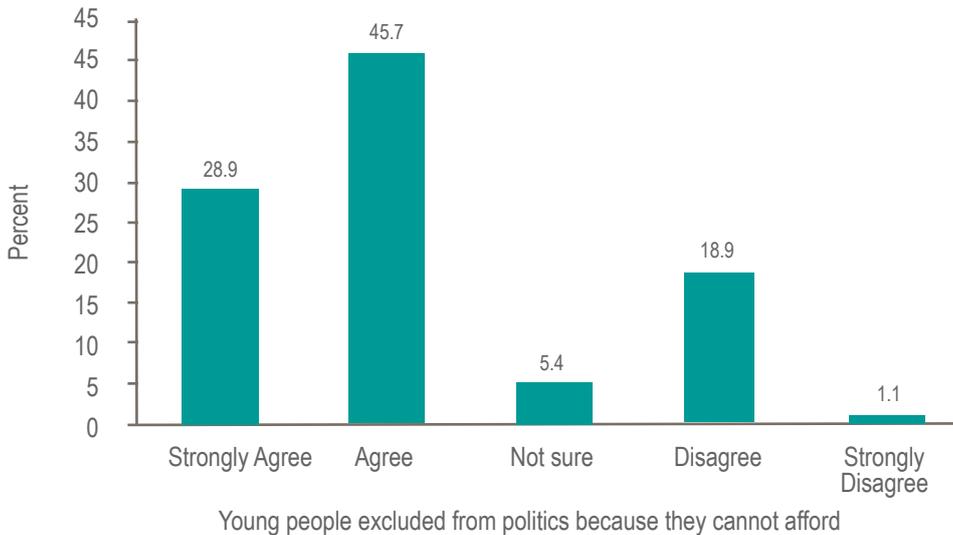
groups, 62.4% (see Figure 23) indicated that the financial cost of engaging in politics makes it difficult for some women to seek political office. Furthermore, 74.6% of respondents (see Figure 24) agreed with the statement that young people are excluded from the outset simply because they cannot mobilise resources to compete in politics.

Figure 23: Does the financial cost of engaging in politics make it difficult for women to seek political office?



Source: Generated from quantitative data

Figure 24: Are young people excluded from politics due to a lack of resources?



Source: generated from quantitative data

The impact of this is that the Ugandan Parliament is replete with several categories of representatives connected to either the echelons of power or business. In some of the qualitative discussions, respondents said that in some regions such as Western Uganda, newcomers to politics, especially women, must secure political godfathers to clear their points of entry and also secure the much needed funding to successfully run their campaigns. While this study does not provide data regarding specific funding from godfathers to women, other studies have noted the sexualisation of political space persistently emerging as a major obstacle to women's political effectiveness. This manifests itself in the lived experience of women political leaders, reflecting the dominant discourses that frame women as sexual objects (Tamale 1999; Ahikire et al 2019).

Uganda's political positions, especially at parliamentary level, are going to the highest bidders. Such a system excludes otherwise capable, experienced, and knowledgeable people who, owing to lack of resources, will refrain from standing for election and ultimately contributing to societal development.

Threatening Uganda's multipartyism

The rising costs of running for and maintaining office, as illustrated in this study, are a direct threat to the growth and sustainability of Uganda's multiparty political dispensation. Opposition political parties in Uganda use the electoral college system as the method for the internal identification of candidates for sponsorship during general and residual elections. The electoral college system is preferred by opposition political parties because it is less costly compared with the adult suffrage used by the ruling NRM. As highlighted in the study, ruling party candidates at both

parliamentary and local government levels are required to present themselves to all party-registered voters and with the individual merit principle still hanging over the country's democratic processes, the money factor and linkage to higher echelons of power often become the key determinants influencing voter choices at the local levels. Limited capacity to mobilise resources from party membership, coupled with insufficient state funds made available to political parties, makes it difficult for parties to fund their candidates across the various levels, leaving it to the candidates to source and fund their own campaigns.

Fuelling electoral clientelism

Political appointments of elites are a means to access state resources for political mobilisation. One of the impacts of patronage politics is electoral clientelism, whereby ruling party candidates leverage state resources to allocate money or gifts to their own constituents throughout the electoral cycle. According to ACFIM, 'a "minimum" of USD 716 million was spent by presidential and parliamentary candidates across the country throughout the 2016 election period. Of the 716 million US dollars, 94.4% was spent by either NRM candidates (76.6%) or Independents (17.8%)' (Kayinda & Muguzi, 2019, p. 14). This narrative therefore suggests that the ruling NRM relies heavily on money to finance elections and sustain itself in power. It further highlights how the NRM benefits from the centralised control of national resources to build and oil a clientelist network. State resources are used by political elites to overcome the government's service delivery inadequacies at the local level. The resultant electoral clientelism has made it difficult for the opposition political parties to successfully challenge the NRM and promote an issue-based electoral system.



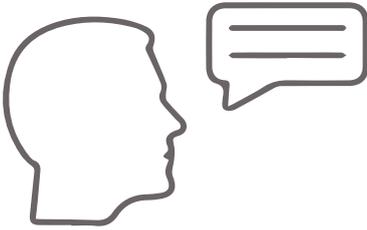
Conclusion

This study has adduced evidence that on average there is agreement from respondents that costs incurred while seeking political office are rising irrespective of gender, level of success, and region with several unintended consequences for Uganda's nascent democracy. Higher expenditures among successful candidates suggests that the more an aspirant spent, the more his or her chances of winning at both parliamentary and local government levels increase. The results imply greater participation by those who can afford the costs in elective politics excluding those who may be more competent but with limited financial resources to contest.

The report shows that political actors aligned to the ruling party (NRM flag bearers and NRM-leaning independents) spend more than their colleagues in opposition political parties. Based on the evidence of the correlation between spending and level of success, there is no doubt, money is partly responsible for the dominance of the NRM at both parliamentary and local government levels. It also showed that women, particularly in the Western region of Uganda, spend more than their male counterparts. This is attributable in part to the geographical area (district) that they have to cover as well as the increasing influence of political godfathers in the Western region, who are bankrolling female contestants.

The study has highlighted several intervening factors driving the cost of politics including the challenges of public service delivery at the local level, weak enforcement of campaign rules, a lack of civic consciousness among the electorate, and parliamentary emoluments and privileges acting as an incentive. However, these are considered symbolic of a bigger underlying problem nested within the patriarchal nature of the political processes which provide a conducive environment to men as political actors with the prevailing culture of militarism, the normalised sexualisation of women, and the patronage politics characterising Uganda's multiparty dispensation.

Patronage has enabled President Museveni of the ruling NRM political organisation to dispense rents to loyal cadres through political appointments that come with access to state resources for political mobilisation. The rents and other incentives accruing through Museveni's political appointments have made electoral politics competitive at the sub-national level and consequently a do or die endeavour, resulting into stiff intra-NRM competition across the various stages of the party electoral system, often with the highest bidder taking the day. Regulating and reducing the cost of politics in Uganda will thus require a combination of legal, policy, and programmatic interventions in the short, medium, and long term. At the heart of all of these is the political will to drive essential electoral reforms to build a value-driven electoral system, not a money-driven one.



Recommendations

Five key areas are outlined in this section as avenues for reducing the costs involved with politics in Uganda.

Strengthen political accountability at the local government level

Political accountability must be strengthened at the local level to transfer the responsibility for public service delivery and accountability back to the hands of local government leaders. Public service delivery inadequacies are currently seen as reflecting the incompetency of the area MP and rarely are local government leaders blamed for such failures. The following specific actions are proposed:

- a) Promote political accountability through harnessing laid-down mechanisms such as the use of barazas as accountability fora to develop the civic consciousness of the electorate on the distinctive roles of Members of Parliament and local government leaders.
- b) The reform of the decentralisation policy is long overdue. The policy has been watered down by several piecemeal recentralisation actions, rendering local governments incapable of meeting the costs of delivering much-needed services. We recommend a comprehensive review of the decentralisation policy to give effect to local economic development through more fiscal and political autonomy of local governments.

Tackle patriarchal politics

This study has indicated that the issue of political patronage, more specifically political godfathers, has contributed to the increasing monetisation of politics.

The study recommends the need to strengthen the legal and policy infrastructure for campaign finance support and disclosure. A special fund for women's political participation is required to build a new breed of women leaders able to take independent decisions, and make policies and laws that aim at serving the populace and achieving gender equality, as opposed to serving the political party and embedded godfathers. Through support from the fund, women leaders can emerge on their own merit and build a unified women's voice at national and local levels. This can attack the prevailing patriarchy 'head on'. As it stands the existing cultural institutions nurture women and men differently, conferring gender-differentiated social capital that limits women's effectiveness.

Strengthen the Electoral Commission's capacity to regulate and supervise political parties and organisations

We recommend the amendment of the Electoral Commission Act and the Political Parties and Organizations Act (PPOA) to make provisions for the following:

- a) A registrar of political parties with a mandate to register, supervise and regulate the activities of political parties throughout the electoral cycle. A registrar at the level of a Director within the Electoral Commission can guarantee dedicated time and resources to supervising the activities of political parties throughout the electoral cycle. In addition, the registrar will be responsible for overseeing and sanctioning non-adherence of political parties to the proposed Code of Conduct for Political Parties.

This proposal deviates from the provision in the PPOA Amendment Act, 2019 Section 20 (3), (4) and (5) that provides for the National Consultative Forum as the body that should be responsible for enforcing and sanctioning non-adherence to the Code of Conduct for Political Parties. The National Consultative Forum lacks the structural and institutional framework to undertake the prescribed mandate owing to its loose nature and method of business.

- b) Inclusion of campaign finance disclosure in the PPOA to ensure that political parties and candidates disclose sources of campaign and election finance. This provision should distinguish campaign expenditure (incurred to promote a candidate) from election expenditure (incurred to promote a party throughout the election cycle). In addition, the provision should distinguish foreign campaign and election finance from contributions made by citizens, NGOs, businesses, and other private entities.
- c) Review the criteria for public financing of political parties in Section 14A (b) of the PPOA to provide funding based on electoral participation of special interest groups: youth, women, and persons with disabilities. This can encourage political parties to sponsor more special interest groups and enhance the inclusivity of political participation.

Strengthen the judicial system to enhance electoral justice

Democratic institutions should work with the judiciary, specifically the Anti-Corruption Court, to strengthen the process of prosecution and sentencing and, reposition the judiciary to play a critical role in deterring the commercialisation of politics. The judiciary can better enforce laws around electoral bribery that will serve as a deterrent. This may require supporting the judiciary to review current Sentencing Guidelines for Courts of Judicature that were developed in 2013 with a proposal to include, in

the guidelines, the sentencing range for voter bribery and related practices that takes into consideration the fact that such acts are pre-mediated, sophisticated, and undertaken with knowledge of effect.

Support efforts to build a culture of zero tolerance to electoral bribery

The President has publicly committed to zero-tolerance on corruption and related acts. Campaigners for electoral integrity should be supported to design and implement strategies to support the organic growth of electoral integrity in the country. This may include:

- a) Identifying and working with electoral integrity champions in the public and civil society sector. The champions are people and institutions committed to rooting out bribery in electoral activities. These champions could use both overt and covert measures to develop institutional anti-bribery approaches around elections. One of the actions that can be taken up by these champions is to publicise judicial processes and judgements in the 'spirit of naming and shaming' which could place heavy social costs on those found guilty of voter bribery.
- b) Strengthening political parties and organisations to establish and operationalise grassroots structures through which party policy platforms can be amplified. Political parties need to be supported to appear to be relevant and responsive to the local level issues that are key to influencing sub-national elections. In addition, party grassroots structures will enhance the visibility of the party throughout the electoral cycle and endear it to the electorate. The success of this will consequently propagate a culture of policy orientation as opposed to 'the individual merit', which characteristically fuels the cost of politics.



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Appendix 1: Quantitative Tool



THE COST OF POLITICS, 2019/2020

INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARLIAMENTARY AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENT CANDIDATES

Target group (tick where applicable)

| | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| Parliament | 1 | |
| Local government | 2 | |

A. IDENTIFICATION PARTICULARS

Questionnaire Number

A1. ADMINISTRATIVE AREA

| Area | Name | Code |
|-----------------|------|------|
| Region | | |
| District | | |
| Sub county | | |
| Parish/Ward | | |
| Village/LC1 | | |
| GPS Coordinates | | |

A2. INTERVIEW CONTROL

| Item | Visits | | | Interview Result | |
|------------|--------|---|---|------------------------|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | | |
| Date | | | | Successfully completed | 1 |
| Start Time | | | | Partly completed | 2 |
| End Time | | | | Refused | 3 |
| | | | | Inadequate informant | 4 |
| | | | | No contact | 5 |

A3. DATA AND STAFF CONTROL

| Interviewer's comments | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Field Supervisor's comments | | | | |
| Authentication | Interviewer | Field Supervisor | Data Coding Officer | Data Entry Officer |
| Name | | | | |
| Signature | | | | |
| Date | | | | |

Background characteristics

| 100: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (Circle the appropriate response) | | |
|--|--|---|
| 101 | Name of respondent (optional) | |
| 102 | Sex of respondent | 1.Male 2. Female |
| 103 | Age of respondent | |
| 104 | Which political party do you subscribe to? | |
| 105 | In what constituency did you stand? | |
| 106 | Why did you choose to stand in that particular constituency? | |
| 107 | What level of success did you have in the election? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Won primary and won main election 2. Won primary but lost main election 3. Lost at primary and won main election 4. Lost at primary and lost main election 5. Did not contest primary and won main election 6. Did not contest primary and lost main election |
| 108 | What was your occupation before getting into politics? | |
| 109 | What is your candidate status? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current Member of Parliament 2. Previous Member of Parliament 3. Contestant for MP (Did not win) 4. Current LCV Chairman 5. Previous LCV 6. Contestant for LCV (Did not win) |
| 110 | If successful, what was your margin of your victory? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Landslide (over 75% of votes) 2. Simple Majority (51 – 74%) 3. Simple win (highest number of votes) |
| 111 | If not successful, what was the margin of defeat? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Average loss (49 - 24%) 2. Narrow Loss (less than 25% of votes) 3. Significant loss (less than 15% of votes) |
| 112 | Highest education level attained | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A -level 2. Post-secondary 3. Others |

200a) Did you participate in the primaries?

1.No

2.Yes

200b) If yes, how much did you spend during the primaries?

200C) Now, I want to ask you about the things you spent money on during campaigns. Please tell me if you spent any money on anything during the 2016 campaigns, and if Yes, how much?

| Item | Yes | No | If yes, how much did you spend |
|------------------------|-----|----|--------------------------------|
| Publicity | | | |
| Posters | | | |
| T-shirts | | | |
| Banners | | | |
| Flyers | | | |
| Newspapers | | | |
| Broadcast media | | | |
| TV | | | |
| Radio | | | |
| PAS (Generator) | | | |
| Transport | | | |
| Fuel | | | |
| Vehicles | | | |
| Driver's allowances | | | |
| Welfare | | | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Meals and refreshments | | | |
| Accommodation | | | |
| Office costs | | | |
| Office space | | | |
| Stationery | | | |
| Internet | | | |
| Office equipment | | | |
| Communication | | | |
| Airtime | | | |
| Phones | | | |
| Social media | | | |
| Social contributions | | | |
| Weddings | | | |
| Religious | | | |
| SACCOS [self-help cooperatives] | | | |
| Construction | | | |
| Medical bills | | | |
| Burial contributions | | | |
| Payments to influential persons such as traditional leaders | | | |

200d) Did you spend more, less or about what you expected in your campaign?

1. More
2. Less
3. What I expected

200e) How much money (in figures) does your political party give you to aid your campaigns?

.....

200f) How much money (off your salary in figures) do you reimburse back to your political party once you assume office?

.....

200g) How/from who did you raise the money to fund your electoral activities?

1. Personal resources
2. Loans from financial institutions such as banks or loan schemes
3. Contributions from business interests
4. Contributions from social groupings such as community organisations or professional organisations
5. Contributions from your political party and party officials
6. Contributions from friends and family
7. Other (specify)

200h) Overall, how much money do you realistically think that most candidates will have to raise to run a successful campaign?

.....

200i) Being a Member of Parliament is a demanding assignment but also comes with financial rewards.

In a year, how much do you make from the following sources?

1. Salary.....
2. Allowances (such as responsibility allowances, per Diems, sitting allowances, and reimbursements).....
3. Gratuity and pension.....

200j) Would you run again?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Do not know

200k) If you would run your campaign again, would you spend more, less, or the same money as you did in this election?

1. More
2. The same
3. Less

200l) Who is benefiting from the costs incurred in the elections?

- a. Voters
- b. Service institutions
- c. Regulatory institutions
- d. Media
- e. Others (specify)

200m) Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements (strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, strongly disagree):

- a. The financial cost people incur when seeking political office is rising.
- b. The cost of politics has made it quite impossible for the average person to seek political office.
- c. The financial cost of engaging in politics makes it difficult for women to seek political office.
- d. Young people are excluded from the outset simply because they cannot mobilise resources for the costs involved.
- e. Despite the costs of attaining political office, being an MP is financially beneficial.
- f. It is worth incurring debt if your chances of becoming an MP are high.

200n) In your opinion, what is the primary function of a leader in your country?

- a. offer financial support to constituents, such as donations, school fees and hospital bills
- b. make good laws for the country
- c. draw parliament's attention to the development needs of the constituency they represent

- d. oversight of the executive (president and cabinet) to prevent abuse of power and corruption
- e. other (specify)

200o) In your opinion, what do citizens in your constituency view as the primary function of a leader?

- a. offer financial support to constituents, such as donations, school fees and hospital bills
- b. make good laws for the country
- c. draw parliament attention's to the development needs of the constituency they represent
- d. oversight of the executive (president and cabinet) to prevent abuse of power and corruption
- e. other (specify)

200p) Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following campaign strategies (strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, strongly disagree):

- a. mobilising voters on ethnic grounds
- b. offering cash to voters to support you
- c. providing public goods in exchange for political support
- d. rewarding loyal supporters for their support during campaign

200q) Optional follow-up: looking back to your own campaign, is there anything you would do differently?

1. Yes
2. No

200r) If yes in 200q above, what is it?

200s) Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following options for reducing the cost of politics (strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, strongly disagree):

- a. public funding for political parties
- b. regulate individual expenditure during election campaigns
- c. institute fines to candidates for overspending
- d. educate voters to stop their demands for gifts during elections
- e. reduction of electoral commission, nomination and filing fees

300a) Overall, can you tell me how much you have spent so far per month while in office?

300b) Now, I want to ask you about the things you spend money on while in office. Please tell me if you spend any money on the following while in office, and if yes, how much?

| Item | Yes | No | If yes, how much did you spend |
|------------------------|-----|----|--------------------------------|
| Publicity | | | |
| Posters | | | |
| T-shirts | | | |
| Banners | | | |
| Flyers | | | |
| Newspapers | | | |
| Broadcast media | | | |
| TV | | | |
| Radio | | | |
| PAS (Generator) | | | |
| Transport | | | |
| Fuel | | | |
| Vehicles | | | |
| Driver's allowances | | | |
| Welfare | | | |
| Meals and refreshments | | | |
| Accommodation | | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Office costs | | | |
| Office space | | | |
| Stationery | | | |
| Internet | | | |
| Office equipment | | | |
| Communication | | | |
| Airtime | | | |
| Phones | | | |
| Social media | | | |
| Social contributions | | | |
| Weddings | | | |
| Religious | | | |
| SACCOS | | | |
| Construction | | | |
| Medical bills | | | |
| Burial contributions | | | |
| Payments to influential persons such as traditional leaders | | | |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Party contributions | | | |
| Administration related fees | | | |
| EC costs | | | |
| Party costs | | | |
| Documents | | | |
| Personal effects | | | |
| Clothing | | | |

Thank you so much for your responses.

Do you have anything you have to say before I leave?

.....

NAME OF INTERVIEWER:

TIME OF END OF INTERVIEW:

NAME OF SUPERVISOR:





Appendix 2: Qualitative Guide

The following are the key questions that guided the qualitative discussions during the participative workshops.

- 1) What are the key social, economic and political drivers of the cost of politics at the parliamentary and local government levels?
- 2) How does the cost of politics at parliamentary and local government levels impact on the participation of marginalised and special interest groups in electoral politics?
- 3) Does the current formula used to provide funding to political parties meet minimum standards for the financing of politics?
- 4) How does the requirement by political parties to have their elected officials reimburse a percentage of their salaries back to the party likely to be construed as overbearing, yet parties are publicly funded?
- 5) Are there marginalised and special interest groups which are unrepresented or underrepresented in elections due to the cost of politics?
- 6) How does the Electoral Commission exercise its authority to enforce the campaign and political party finance laws?
- 7) What are the legal, policy and programming options to reduce or regulate the cost of politics in Uganda?

