The Politics of Fear

(DE)MOTIVATION AND UNCERTAINTY DURING AND AFTER UGANDA'S 2020/2021 ELECTIONS

A Research Report on the 2021 General Elections undertaken by

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15 Baskerville Avenue, Kololo,

Kampala

January 2021

Introduction[1]

Uganda's 2020/2021 general elections, while now the 6th round of elections since the 1995 constitution[2], display interesting features that are useful for understanding relations between the politics of fear and electoral outcomes. First, these elections witnessed, for the first time, a challenger to incumbent Yoweri Kaguta Museveni who has not been part of the country's political "old guards". A new political party, National Unity Party (NUP), emerged and adopted a slogan drawn from a youthful pressure group, People Power. Underlying this slogan is the fear that people's power hitherto eroded by "no change" politics need to be reclaimed. This naysays the ruling National Resistance Movement Organisation (NRM-O)'s prosperity and security slogans, creating a contestation of ideas about what "the people" deserve and should have in future. Second, the elections exhibited unusual contestation between celebrity status, personified by musician-turned-politician, Robert Sentamu Kyagulanyi, on one hand, and untamed incumbency displayed in the controversial removal of presidential age limit from the Constitution. This 2017 constitutional amendment hit the last nail in the coffin of constitutional limits to Museveni's rule after the controversial removal of presidential term limits in 2005. His re-election interest implied that the ruling NRM-O might have to wait longer before fielding another presidential candidate, a move which repeats intra-NRM-O uncertainty and raptures that have previously characterized the Movement. Third, while state repression against opposition shows continuity with previous practices, intra-party violence during the NRM-O primaries in different parts of the country engendered even more fear than signal healthy intra-party competition. Finally, both government and opposition have appealed to fear in the bid to win electoral sympathies: fear of increasing militarisation of state and society, and fear of sliding into untested leadership. All sides of the political divide have uncritically embraced the politics of fear as a weapon of choice, which portends to post-election violence.

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[2]. Following promulgation of the 1995 Constitution, Uganda held elections in: 1996/1997, 2001/2002, 2006/2007, 2000/2011, 2015/2016, and now 2020/2021. Initial polls were held August-December 2020 for representatives of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) who will constitute councils and electoral colleges that will vote for members of parliament (MPs) representing those SIGs: Women, Youth, People with Disabilities (PWDs), UPDF, Workers (both unionized and non-unionised) and Elderly.

This paper examines the politics of fear and its expression during the 2020/2021 general elections in Uganda. Underlying this analysis is the desire to contribute to an in-depth understanding of possible measures to mitigate the potential triggers of election violence, which has typified most electoral processes, at all levels, in Uganda's body-politique. This effort requires conceptual and theoretical articulation of "the politics of fear"; a critique of the disconnect between normative political arguments about the role of regular [multi-party] elections in entrenching democratic practices and how these arguments are becoming peripheral to political actors' considerations during elections; and suggestions on how the politics of fear may be tamed to avoid it unfolding dangerously through election and post-election violence. This effort serves to answer the following questions: How does the *use of fear as a political tool impact on political participation* across both sides of the political divide? How does this [instrumentalization of fear] affect election outcomes? Experiences of election and post-election violence in Kenya or Zimbabwe (2007/2008)[3], Nigeria[4], India[5], Azerbaijan[6], and other countries indicate that the politics of fear can engender election violence with serious implications for voter turnup[7], the decision of election monitors and observers to expose election fraud[8], and can affect post-election peacebuilding and violence mitigation.

This paper analyses the extent to which the 'Fear Factor' emerged as a driving force in the considerations, decision making, and campaign pledges of political actors at

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3. John Hickman, "Explaining Post-Election Violence in Kenya and Zimbabwe", Journal of Third World Studies, 28 (1):29-46
4. Lawrence I. Edet, 2015, "Electoral Violence and Democratization Process in Nigeria: A Reference of 2011 and 2015 General Elections", Acta Universitatis Danubius. Administratio, 7 (1):43-53
5. Ursula Daxecker, 2020, "Unequal votes, unequal violence: Malapportionment and election violence in India", Journal of Peace Research, 57(1):156–170
6. Emilie M. Hafner-Burton, Susan D. Hyde, and Ryan S. Jabłoński, 2014, "When Do Governments Resort to Election Violence?", British Journal of Political Science, 44 (1):149-179, see p. 149
7. Beckoe and Burchard argue that election violence is recurrent in Africa, and is mainly used to depress turnout, mobilise supporters, and punish victors. It is possible violence is rooted in fear of losing elections. Dorina A. Bekoe & Stephanie M. Burchard, 2017, "The Contradictions of Pre-Election Violence: The Effects of Violence on Voter Turnout in Sub-Saharan Africa.", African Studies Review, 60 (2):73-92
8. Daxecker and von Borzyskowski find that when international observers criticize elections over fraud and other malpractices, the post-election politics is more likely to slide into violence than in situations of non-condemned elections even if such elections may not have respected the rules of the game or met minimum international standards. Ursula Daxecker, 2012, "The cost of exposing cheating: International election monitoring, fraud, and post-election violence in Africa", Journal of Peace Research, 49(4):503–516; Inken von Borzyskowski, 2019, "The Risks of Election Observation: International Condemnation and Post-Election Violence", International Studies Quarterly, 63 (3):654–667

different levels in Uganda's run-up to the 2020/2021 general elections. It reveals that political fear was reproduced and deployed, deliberately and inadvertently, to influence voting behaviour through: (i) candidate/party manifestos, (ii) campaign speeches and pledges (hate speech), and (iii) actions by candidates and their supporters. To flesh out this three-pronged instrumentalisation of political fear, this paper relies on desk research and physical and media-based observations of campaign and post-polling processes subject to Covid-19 constraints to fieldwork. After conceptualising political fear and linking it to election violence, the paper synthesises these ideas into this three-pronged conceptual articulation that is applied to Uganda's 2020/2021 elections. Attention is paid to the ways in which fear was [covertly or otherwise] used as a political tool during elections; the categories of political actors who reaped the most [direct and indirect] dividends from instrumentalizing fear, and where attempts to use fear failed to achieve the intended outcome; how state authorities (duty bearers) and targets of fear responded to counter possible side-effects of political fear; the most prominent sources of fear that impacted on elections; and the role of the media (traditional and social) in fear politics during electoral processes. After this synthesis, proposals follow on taming political fear to mitigate election violence.

The paper does not examine relative degrees of deploying fear by incumbent and opposition groups, the possible pre-existing voter fears before political actors evoked more fear, the role of external actors in fuelling in-country fear, and the distinction between forms of election violence instigated by fear and those ignited by other factors. The paper has not made a quantitative assessment, say a survey, of the possible correlation between fear and voters' choices, voter turnup, and voter behaviours during campaigns, an important gap future studies should fill. Thus, while fear may have informed voters' choices, it is not possible to conclusively determine which polling-day choices were informed by fear and which were not, but the general prevalence of fear can be discerned from the three aspects aforementioned and possible implications drawn. The paper, instead, relies on information, drawn from party manifestos, campaign speeches, media reports, behaviours of major political actors, to draw preliminary conclusions about the possible role of political fear in the trajectory of election violence and election outcomes. Clashes between security forces and candidates' or party supporters during campaigns are categorised as election violence as are clashes among supporters themselves both in party primaries and

general elections. Riots and demonstrations related to arrests of candidates, or restraints upon them by security forces, are also categorised as election violence. To the extent that these clashes took place during and in the context of election campaigns, they are considered to be forms of election violence. Post-polling clashes, demonstrations, riots are also considered as such. This gives rise to pre-polling and post-polling election [non]violence. The message is then clear: political fear breeds election violence, which, in turn, affects election outcomes. This relationship can be theorised and empirically tested.

From Politics of Fear to Election Violence and Election Outcomes

The politics of fear is rooted in political fear as distinct from other human and societal fears. Political fear is here used to imply apprehension about *political threats* to one's political power, political pursuits, and political advantages, which is then generalised to include larger groups and/or publics. It is the worry that afflicts individuals and groups who are involved in power struggles, that is, *politicians* (viz election candidates, rebels, incumbents) and *political structures* (say cabinets and executives, politburos, militaries, or political parties). Political threats can be human and non-human. Both as individuals and groups, human threats range from the minutest to the grand, and can take the form of election opponents, rebels, terrorists, pressure groups, potential and/or actual coup-plotters, assassins, as well as internal and external supporters to such individuals and groups. Non-human threats can be natural catastrophes, pandemics, economic crises, and generalised fears resulting from group conflicts and trepidations about historical processes in which individuals and groups may have been involved. These *situational threats* make political actors fear for their power, survival, and/or ability to continue with their political pursuits.

Being diverse and elusive of singular categorisation, political threats are the greatest challenge to politicians and political structures. Original threats may be rooted in Hobbesian State of Nature, first in which beasts and violent human beings threaten a group which is forced to create a Leviathan or primordial State as a security measure to counter the "war or man against man". Then the Leviathan fears other Leviathans, thus fears of States about other States possibly intent at capturing one another's territory, resources, and colonising their peoples. This inter-State fear is rendered worrisome by the anarchical structure of international politics in which there is no

authority to prevent un-polices sovereign States from behaving dangerously against other states. The solution to fear, the creation of the Leviathan, ignites fear among other Leviathans, thus creating a never-ending spiral of fear that has typified Realist and Neo-Realist international relations theorising in reference to origins of interstate wars, evocation of arms races, and perpetuation of the "security dilemma".[9]

Awareness about political threats is the everyday concern of an astute politician, whose fears create incentives for making appropriate choices, decisions and taking actions depending on the nature of threat faced or perceived. Political fear by individuals and groups may be generalised into public fear, through appeals to contemporary and historical threats, in order to win sympathies, attract cooperants, create social hedges against those fears, and acquire resources to counter those fears. Mock threats can also be created or rumours circulated for the same purpose. In this case, the political fate of individuals and groups is presented as intricately linked with the fate of a whole society or nation. The political figure and/or institution can rely on "premeditated uses of fear" to create public reactions that helpful to consolidate or maintain one's power, instil public order, exercise control, "*undermine individual autonomy and its inherent rationality",* and evade responsibility for current or past actions.[10] Premeditated use of fear need not be based on real dangers; it may.

Whether at small-group, community, national or international level, collective political fears need not be based on empirical reality or real threats; they can be instrumental guises deliberately constructed to serve political ends of particular individuals and groups. The fear of China becoming a hawk state is reflected in John Mearsheimer's warning. On account of economic development and military modernisation, "China will be transformed into an enormously powerful country", writes Mearshiemer. The balance of power will, in the long run, shift against the United States. The hope of a

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9. Thomas Hobbes of Malmasbery, 1651. Leviathan, Or the Matter, Forme, and Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiastical and Civill. Andrew Crooke: London; Kenneth N. Waltz, 1979. Theory of International Politics, Illinois: Waveland Press; Robert Jervis, 1978, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma", World Politics, 30 (2):167-214
10. See, e.g. Sasha Stillman, 2012, "Fear Factor: The Role of Fear in a Liberal Democracy". Featured Research. Paper 38, Pepperdine University. Italics original

peaceful rise is naught because China will pursue regional hegemony in a dangerous business of international politics.[11]

A similar mechanism operates at domestic level. The rise of a given politician or political group can be presented as a threat to the status-quo. Presented as a cause for national alarm, the ruling group resorts to efforts to intimidate and publicly discredit opponents, selective persecution and open harassment of political adversaries and their supporters in media and civil society.[12] A society, nation, or international community, which finds itself enmeshed in this fear, may fail to differentiate fake and real threats because of information asymmetry and control over communication channels that politicians exercise. Constructed fears may also ignite response by other groups or nations, leading to actual threats. This construction and articulation of real or imagined danger serves the state's and rulers' purpose (and in the case of international politics, hegemonic powers and regions), and has typified insecurities between groups and nations alike.[13] In domestic politics, incumbents and their opponents, governments and rebel groups, insurgents and defence forces, bandits and terrorists, organised criminals and anti-crime agencies, can all perpetuate fear. This is common during highly-competitive political situations, such as intense negotiations, counterinsurgency operations or elections.

During elections and/or referenda, the fear to lose an election is presented as a threat to a country's policy stability and as potential discontinuities or disruptions to ongoing developments by incumbents. Election opponents, viewing incumbents as fearsome adversaries, present incumbents' failures as threats to society that need to be reversed by voting out incumbents when in reality they may fear losing a costly election. The fear of loss is frightening and deplorable. Election opponents tend to appeal to voters by claiming the danger lurking in the dark should they lose, while intermixing this with promises of opportunities and incalculable benefits that should arise from one's election victory. Thus, political fear in the context of elections serves

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11. John J. Mearsheimer, 2014. "Can China Rise Peacefully?", Washington D.C.: The National Interest (from https://nationalinterest.org/commentary/can-china-rise-peacefully-10204?page=0%2C11, 7 Jan 2020)
12. Vladimir Gel'man, 2015. "The Politics of Fear: How the Russian Regime Confronts Its Opponents," Russian Politics & Law, 53 (5-6):6-26
13. David Campbell, 1992. Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity, Manchester: Manchester University Press

as a campaign purpose in which the hearts and minds of voters are both the centre and object of contestation.

The foregoing synthesis brings us to the conclusion that political fear is not unlike other fears–strong emotions of aversity toward some real or imagined person, group, object, thing, or situation–except in three respects: first, it revolves around power struggles involving individuals and groups, and is mainly typified by concerns about threats to *power wielded* (coercive and decision-making positionality a person or group occupies) and/or *power pursued* (expectations of acquiring positions of responsibility in which one is enabled to make decisions about other people's access to resources and opportunities or coerce them into some desired end). Second, it transcends individual psychological emotions we ordinarily characterise as fear, and tends to quickly evolve to large-group fear. Political fear can also characterise despair after losing an election, a war, or even victory without clear purpose. For instance, after the end of the Cold War and the apparent triumph of Anglo-American capitalism, "A preponderance of power and vanished enemy had rendered America's military strength an ambiguous resource, its strategic mission a black hole of uncertainty: What were we to do with all this power? Against whom was it to be lever."[14] In other word, lack of a clear purpose amidst absence of a clear threat can also ignite new forms of political fear. Third, unlike other fears, say about physical danger or illness, political fear tends to acquire socio-structural dimensions. It is a fear that, once it has evolved beyond individuals and small groups, becomes a commons requiring collective action. No longer is the politician or small-group of politicians that are responsible, but large numbers of people: electorates, armed and police forces, intelligence agencies, media, civil society, bureaucracies.

The notion that fear evolves from individual or small-group fear to collective or common fear allows us to synthesise three forms of political fear: first is *sub-political emotion*, which is rooted in primal forces and sources like psychology and culture. Here lies such emotions as personal fear of the unknown, fear of other identity groups, and other trepidations that are rooted in non-political sources. These fears, however, can and do find expression in people's political behaviours and choices, such as

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14. Corey Robin, 2004, "Liberalism at Bay, Conservatism at Play: Fear in the Contemporary Imagination", Social Research, 71 (4):927-962, at p. 936

decisions to vote and who to vote, election contests, desire to dominate or rule, and defence of identity interests.[15] The second form, herein called *Politically-Vital Fear*, is the fear of real political dangers, which in turn gives vitality to specific political processes beyond psychosocial motives. The fear of possible political dangers not yet experienced but known to exist or to have occurred in some geopolitical or socio-historical contexts is a common reference.

Fears of repression, group attacks and counter-attacks, terrorisms, despotisms, ethnic cleansing or genocides, are all reactive emotions which incentivise individuals and groups to act in a collective and passionate way that creates political institutions, structures, and processes. Such reactions can engender collective efforts against supposed threats. In a word, such fear has both political uses and abuses: it can promote idealism, pursuits of liberty, institutional safeguards against abuse of power; but it can also drive extreme choices and actions with dangerous implications for human safety, security and wellbeing.[16] The third form combines sub-political and vital fear into what I call *Experiential Fear*. This is fear that an individual or group that acquired power through processes that are known to erode power (such as insidious espionage) or displace those in power (such as armed rebellions). Groups struggling for power, through the same methods, also express such fears. The worry is about *real dangers* to one's power or pursuit of power in a given political context.

In election contexts, a politician or political group that defeats a reasonably popular or powerful opponent, may remain fearful if the opponent is not an intra-party competitor because the opposing group may continue to undermine the victor. Barack Hussein Obama's victory against Hillary Rodham Clinton during the 2008 Democratic primaries in the USA was an intra-party competition that benefited both, as Clinton worked with Obama as Foreign Secretary. But Donald John Trump's imprecise triumph over Hillary Clinton in the 2016 US presidential election ignited experiential fear, and, expectedly, Trump had a rough presidency exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, near impeachment and disappointing failure to win the second term. The fear was founded, experiential; contentions against Democrats in the legislature were serious; and the ability of the opposing party to undermine Trump's presidency was not an issue to

15. Campbell, Writing Security
16. Robin, "Liberalism at Bay, Conservatism at Play".

ignore. In Central African Republic (CAR), there was serious threat against presidential candidate, Fautin Touadera, during the December 2020 presidential and legislative elections especially given claims that former president Francois Bozize was behind rebel threats to disrupt elections after Court annulled Bozize's candidature.[17]

While drawing upon lived experiences, or lived fear, political fear has elements of psychological, socio-identity, and other non-political trepidations. These anxieties, having acquired a group, community, identity-group, or even national, dimension, become expressed in political processes. Such is the fear with which coups, counter-coups, and attrition coups are staged in many parts of the world.[18] It is the fear that motivates incumbents in semi-authoritarian regimes to inflict election violence against those threatening their power and seek to retain power by all means.[19] When fear is expressed through political processes, such as elections, referenda, negotiations, insurgency and counter-insurgency operations, it gives rise to the politics of fear.

The Politics of Fear during Elections

Having indicated that political fear is dread about threats to one's political base, political power, and political advantages and pursuits, we come to the notion of *politics of fear* to which political fear gives rise. By "politics of fear" is here meant the processes of utilising fear as an instrument of politics. Altheide has presented politics of fear as "decision makers' promotion and use of audience beliefs and assumptions about danger, risk, and fear to achieve certain goals."[20] Public discourses of fear, usually by governments and allied media channels, can propagate and the politics of fear in contexts where the state has diminished or lost control (e.g. after the death of President Habyarimana in 1994 Rwanda or post-1991 Somalia). This form of politics rests on the discourse of fear, and "resides not in an immediate threat from an individual leader… but in the public discourse that characterizes social [and political] life as dangerous, fearful, and filled with actual or potential victims" of the activities of certain groups. In justifying or spreading fear, practitioners of the politics of fear call

17. Antoine Rolland, 2020 (Dec. 27), "Central African Republic Votes 'Massively' amid Sporadic Rebel Gunfire.", Reuters, Toronto: Thomson Reuters
18. Donald L. Horowitz, 1985, Ethnic Groups in Conflict, Berkeley: University of California Press
19. Hafner-Burton, Hyde & Jabłoński, "When Do Governments Resort to Election Violence?"
20. David L. Altheide, "Terrorism and the Politics of Fear", Cultural Studies<->Critical Methodologies, 6 (X):1-25

for more protection, more policing, and intervention of stronger arms of the state like militaries to prevent victimization of innocent masses, as well as alignment of masses' choices and decisions with specific groups as a means of surviving possible threats resulting from non-compliance.[21]

These dangers and risks can be presented as threats to a dominant state ideology especially when there are identity and other demands for the redefinition and reconfiguration of state ideology by identity groups (such as Kurdish and Islamic identity claims in Turkey), pressure groups (such as Walk-to-Work in Uganda after 2011), interest groups, or complex groups and organisations now commonly called "terrorist".[22] The discourse of fear, now a common barrage in the war on terror, enables political actors to control masses through propaganda and other means. Thus, the politics of fear takes multiple forms revolving around identifying factors, processes, or actors, around which fear may be perpetuated and/or justified. The fear-mongering regime, opposition party, pressure group or insurgent group, may use modern communication technologies, rearticulate societal grievances and experiences or events in other countries, to communicate to the masses and other target audiences about the reasons to fear such actors, factors or processes.[23]

During elections, opposition groups may cause fear through threats. Armed groups like the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, or Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, might threaten voters against voting incumbent leaders and governments. Disrupted elections–events "that could substantially delay or prevent normal voting, election administration, or campaigning"[24]–can result from deliberate fear-mongering activities [as well as natural disruptions like disasters and pandemics]. Incumbents tend to use different forms of violence, psychological, techno-scientific, institutional-structural, and physical, against opponents. Government-sponsored election violence, defined as "events in which incumbent leaders and ruling party agents employ or threaten

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21. Ibid, p. 9
22. M. Hakan Yavuz, 2002, "The Politics of Fear: The Rise of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) in Turkey", Middle East Journal, 56 (2):200-221; Eltheide, Ibid.
23. Maria Ahmad, Aradhana Sharma and Marianne Perez de Fransius, 2018. "Fear and Propaganda: a Case for Peace Journalism." In Yasemin Giritli İnceoğlu & Tirşe Erbaysal Filibeli, Journalism 'a Peacekeeping Agent' at the Time of Conflict, Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, pp. 148–169
24. Congressional Research Service, 2020 (March 26). "Disrupted Federal Elections: Policy Issues for Congress", In Focus/CRS, Washington D.C.: CRS

violence against the political opposition or potential voters before, during or after elections", is so common that governments are "the most common–and often the most brutal–perpetrators of election violence."[25] The politics of fear during elections may be multifaceted, but three dimensions are commonplace in domestic political contexts and are worth our consideration: propaganda; repression; and mass threats.

Propaganda is here narrowly used to imply the spread of information intended to persuade a people to "merge" their personal and small-group interests with bigger, more important, meanings and purposes beyond individual lives. Psychological in targeting and broad-purposed in intent, propaganda is a public-communication tactic to make individual interests sacrificed at the altar of a country, society, or political party.[26] While not inherently negative[27], propaganda consists in utilization of access to information and communication channels and technologies, mass media and socio-cultural means of access and engagement to spread news, views, and ideologies that support a given group which has articulated itself as representing the national interest as against other groups which are presented as antithetical to such common good. The target of propaganda is the broad society. Both governments and opposition groups may use propaganda. But governments in semi-authoritarian contexts tend to have more resources and institutional-structural wherewithal to spread fear-instilling propaganda. They also constrain opposition groups' access to media, curtail political mobilization by non-regime actors, and threaten private-media houses that may allow opportunities to opposition groups to easily and readily communicate with the masses.[28]

Today, the mass media is a contested domain as the main channel of propaganda, though sociocultural (e.g. religious), special-interest (e.g. professional, workers' union) and civil society groups, education institutions, can be targeted as channels of propaganda. The key concern for political actors using propaganda is to control

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25. Hafner-Burton, Hyde & Jabłoński, p. 150
26. And not confused with marketing, public relations, advertising, or mass communication. See Alexander V Laskin, 2019, "Defining propaganda: A psychoanalytic perspective", Communication and the Public
4(4):305–314
27. Douglas Walton, 1997. "What Is Propaganda, and What Exactly Is Wrong with It", Public Affairs Quarterly, 11 (4):383-413
28. Yasemin Giritli İnceoğlu & Tirşe Erbaysal Filibeli, Journalism 'a Peacekeeping Agent' at the Time of Conflict, Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV

information that flows to the public, channels of such information flow, and information processing. In many regimes, decision makers serve as key news sources. They shape perceptions of mass audiences. Regime chatterboxes promote compliance with regime control measures while dissuading masses against following opponents. Government and security officials can exaggerate, as "extraordinary", the measures needed to combat problems, which are presented as being associated with or originating from some political groups. In the process, regime actors almost singlehandedly set political agendas. They give to news agencies fear-arousing information whose truth and veracity eludes opposition groups and masses, rendering it a one-sided discourse of fear. The result is the pervasive dangerisation of opposition politics and persuasion of masses against following groups whose interest and activities are presented to be antithetical to the masses' everyday life.[29] When propaganda fails, some regimes resort to repression to perpetuate politics of fear.

Repression is the threat and actual infliction of pain, suffering, disruption of everyday life, even death, against opponents, their supporters and sympathizers. Repression can range from inflicting direct physical pain, arrests, kidnappings, targeted injuries, and to extremities of assassinations. Other economic strategies, such as targeting businesses and freezing bank accounts; or social means like dissuading allies, friends and partners from freely transacting with the target person or group, are also common. The main target is a select few elites who are opposed to the regime. State-sponsored violence and harassment of opposition groups is the commonest form of repression. Incumbent regimes have been severalty blamed for doing so in semi-authoritarian contexts in which regime survival is intricately linked with national safety and security.[30]

Repression need not target large masses for several reasons. First, strong opposition to semi-authoritarian regimes tends to come from a small segment of political [and other] elites, not from masses unless opposing elites have opportunity to access and mobilise these masses. In the process, elites are more often subjects and victims of repression more than the masses, which precludes strong mass hatred for the regime. Second, mass violence is no longer a legitimate means of maintaining political power, especially in the context of regional and international condemnation of such behaviour.

29. Altheide, p. 3
30. Hafner-Burton, Hyde & Jabłoński

Third, regime legitimation amidst mass violence is problematic, and ruling regimes have incentives to moderate their resort to open violence and use targeted, even subtle, repression and intimidation.[31] Finally, direct repression may not be sustainable in contexts where security and intelligence agencies are intricately linked to and dependent on society for their institutional survival, corporate interests (in the case of militaries), and regional and international legitimacy.

Repressive regimes are aware that security institutions may not massively attack their co-citizens beyond certain limits. They appreciate the costs and difficulties of relying on mercenaries, specifically the risk of alliance between national security services and the masses against the regime and its mercenary defenders. Therefore, repressive regimes rely on calculated repression. In the process, targeted elites are denied the opportunity to freely access and interact with the citizenry, rendering them incapable of undertaking effective political mobilization during elections or mass protests after elections are rigged.

Mass Threats: while mass violence, repressive curfews and states of emergency are becoming less common as modern dictatorships resort to targeted repressions, mass threats can also be crafted and used against peoples. Beyond the pains of propaganda and repression, political actors can and do threaten masses with dire political consequences if certain electoral choices are made. During the 1980 elections, candidate Yoweri Kaguta Museveni threatened war if the elections were rigged: war followed the elections, brought him to power, and continued in the form of pacification campaigns against the opposing armed groups whose roots are traceable to the crises of the 1980s.[32] To-date, at least two of Uganda's armed conflicts remain unresolved mainly because Joseph Kony is at large and the ADF remain in Congo.[33] The threat of war of 1980 contributed to a series of processes that have plunged the country into protracted armed conflicts of various permutations.

Mass threats may also be indirect references to dangers lurking in citizens' choices that are not consistent with political actors' interests. Dangers can entail decisions and

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31. Gel'man, p. 8
32. Ruddy Doom and Koen Vlassenroot, 1999, "Kony's Message: A New Koine? The Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda", African Affairs, 98(390): 5-36
33. Michael Tiernay, 2015. "Killing Kony: Leadership Change and Civil War Termination", Journal of Conflict Resolution, 59 (2):175-206

actions that directly target masses, such as severing communication channels, declaration of curfews and states of emergency, or excessive deployment of menacing security forces. Inseparable from these manoeuvres are "contingent" election strategies like intimidation of voters. When strategies like intimidation are applied, formal rules that enshrine the secret ballot, promise protections to voters' choices, and would guarantee non-victimisation in case of contrary electoral choices, are rendered so insignificant as to offer insufficient protection to voters.[34] The free exercise of franchise rights is endangered. Voters may be forced to vote the intimidating group in order to avoid post-election backlash. Parties or candidates may threaten masses via campaign messages as do supporters. When electoral threats transcend elite repression and target masses, the politics of fear may unfold dangerously, leading to counter-threats and post-election violence, such as followed the 2007 elections in Kenya.

The Politics of Fear during Uganda's 2020/2021 Elections

The politics of fear during the 2020/2021 elections in Uganda was expressed through a combination of propaganda, repression, and mass threats. Hardly was this the first time that political-electoral mobilisation and counterintuitive attacks and counterattacks have taken place between the incumbent and opposition. Previous elections have witnessed similar actions in which fear was used to win over voters, discourage voters from voting certain candidates, and/or dissuade voters from exercising their franchise rights altogether.[35] The politics of fear also entailed utilisation of unique features. Compared to the 2016 elections, when the main protagonists were the ruling NRM-O and FDC, the 2021 general election witnessed the emergence of completely new political parties, such as NUP under which Kyagulanyi Sentamu contested; and the splinter from FDC, Alliance for National Transformation (ANT), represented by Maj. Gen. (Rtd) Mugisha Muntu.

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34. Karen E. Ferree And James D. Long, 2016. "Gifts, Threats, and Perceptions of Ballot Secrecy in African Elections", African Affairs, 115 (461):621–645
35. Joe Oloka-Onyango and Jospehine Ahikire, eds., 2016. Controlling Consent: Uganda's 2016 Elections. Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press; Julius Kiiza, Lise Rakner and Sabiti-Makara, eds., 2008. Electoral Democracy in Uganda: Understanding the Institutional Processes and Outcomes of the 2006 Elections, Kampala: Fountain Publishers

Several features render Uganda's 2020/2021 elections unique compared to previous elections: first, the elections were held in the midst of the novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19), a pandemic that had ravaged the world and was spreading rapidly within the country. Fearful of the possible accusation of extending his presidency without seeking electoral legitimation, Museveni about-turned on his previous claim that Uganda would not hold elections amidst Covid-19 pandemic. Instead, while the Ministry of Health (MoH) insisted on Covid-19 prevention and control measures–social distancing, avoiding crowded places, and keeping personal hygiene–neither Cabinet nor Parliament proposed postponement of elections. Constitutionally, postponing elections would have required declaration of a State of Emergency; even then within six months elections would be held. Government insisted on a "scientific election" in which campaign rallies would be restricted to 70, later 200, supporters–as though there were institutional and structural mechanisms for preventing campaign rallies and political crowds swelling beyond 200 or ensuring sufficient social distancing among the 200; as though 200 people cannot infect one another. The Covid-19 pandemic restrictions were defied during NRM-O primaries and general campaigns, rendering the notion of "scientific election" bogus.

Second, incumbent Yoweri Museveni suffered neither intra-NRM-O and nor constitutional limit to his continued context in elections. Within the NRM-O, his single candidature was not contested. His presidential campaign did not face opposition from historical stalwarts from within the NRM-O, such as Dr. Kiiza Besigye did during the 2001, 2006, and 2011 elections; or from Amama Mbabazi in 2015/2016. Moreover, the NRM-O had been purged of possible intra-party resistance: "rebel MPs" had also been 'contained', and Museveni's bush-war colleagues have grown too old to mount strong opposition to him. Constitutionally, Museveni now held a politico-constitutional high-ground, not as a legitimate NRM-O flag-bearer *per se*, for he hardly allows opportunity for intra-NRM-O contest against his candidature, but as a legally-freed perpetual contender for Uganda's presidential race for as long as he wished. Presidential term limits had been removed from the constitution in 2005. Presidential age limit had been removed in 2017. With Museveni's NRM-O candidature unquestioned, the strongest challenge was expected from opposition groups.

Third, old-actor opposition political parties, such as Uganda People's Congress (UPC) and Democratic Party (DP), and the previously strong FDC, had weakened significantly and rendered insignificant by 2020. The FDC had split with its former national president, Mugisha-Muntu, forming the ANT. Its previous pressure channels, such as Walk to Work, had waned significantly. The DP had split between the Nobert Mao group and the Erias Lukwago group, and some of its members had joined a new pressure group, People Power, later NUP. In other word, by 2020, Museveni's strongest threat came not from old organised political parties or seasoned politicians, but from a youthful People Power/NUP galvanising around Kyagulanyi.

Another point of departure between previous elections and the 2020/2021 contest is that artists, more than previously, were drawn into the political fold. Kyagulanyi's landslide victory against an NRM-O candidate during the post-2016 parliamentary by-elections in Kyadondo constituency, and his subsequent support for candidates that won against NRM-O candidates in other areas like Arua, signalled crucial departure in the politics of Uganda. Celebrity politics had taken centre-stage. The youth, frustrated by urban unemployment and joblessness, and unattracted by the liberation propaganda upon which the NRM-O had thrived over the years, identified with these youthful celebrities. Museveni's NRM-O also rushed to recruit musicians, such as Ronald Mayinja, Daniel Kazibwe (aka Raggae Dee), Mark Bugembe (aka Buchaman), Jeniffer Nakangubi (aka Full Figure), and Catherine Kusaasira, possibly to counter Bobi Wine/Kyagulanyi. Other musicians reportedly received money from Museveni in his bid to win them over to his political side. As Bobi Wine threatened Museveni's power, Uganda's politics changed: money, music, media and manipulation became key.[36]

Alongside these domestic dynamics was the increasing bilateral tensions between Rwanda and Uganda, each accusing the other of interfering in domestic affairs. Traceable to their 1998-2000 armed confrontations in eastern Democratic Republic of

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36. See, e.g.: Sadaab Kitatta Kaaya, 2020 (Jan. 1), "Kusaasira: I regret Museveni's Job", Kampala: The Observer (from https://observer.ug/news/headlines/63064-kusasira-i-regret-museveni-s-job, 13 Jan 2021); The Independent, 2020 (Sept 18), "Ragga Dee wins NRM lord mayoral flag after fresh tally", Kampala: The Independent (from https://www.independent.co.ug/ragga-dee-wins-nrm-lord-mayoral-flag-after-fresh-tally/, 13 Jan 2020); The Sunrise, 2019 (Nov. 1), "Musicians owe it to Bobi for Museveni's cash bonanza", Kampala: The Sunrise (from http://www.sunrise.ug/news/201911/bobi-wine-to-thank-for-museveni-cash-bonanza.html, 13 Jan 2021)

the Congo (DRC), the Rwanda-Uganda fall-out had evolved through turns and twists. But between 2017 and 2019 the conflict re-intensified. Some security and civilian officials were accused or suspected of close links with Kigali. Events unfolded dangerously, "the degradation of relations continued throughout 2018 and 2019", and a meeting between Museveni and Kagame at State House, Entebbe, on 25 March 2018, did not improve the situation. In March 2019 the conflict nearly "crossed the Rubicon"[37] when media outlets in both countries reported deployment of troops along the common border and a near eruption into armed hostility. Some efforts to diffuse tensions were made. Apparently, Ugandan forces seem to have been ready, and some sections of the public had become psycho-mobilised for war, but Museveni may have expressed unwillingness to go to war with Rwanda. On 21 August 2019 Rwanda and Uganda signed a memorandum of understanding in Luanda, Angola, "under the good offices of Angola and the DRC", but the MoU has not witnessed "effective implementation". Instead, "reciprocal verbal abuse continued during 2019 and early 2020, and there are no signs of the mending of relations."[38] Due to these tensions, the fear that Rwanda might interfere with the 2020/2021 elections, Rwandaphobia, if you will, became part of the defining features of these elections.[39] A Rwandan newspaper reported about a study which showed that the 2021 elections would be violent.[40]

Claims and counter-claims with the social media company, Facebook, led to the closure of some Facebook accounts of Ugandan officials. In retaliation, Uganda shut down not only Facebook but other social-media outlets. The masses, both government and opposition supporters, became threatened and disrupted.[41] In a speech on the

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37. See: Dominic D.P. Johnson & Dominic Tierney, 2011. "The Rubicon Theory
of War: How the Path to Conflict Reaches the Point of No Return", International Security, 36 (1):7–40
38. Filip Reyntjens, 2020, "Path dependence and critical junctures: three decades of interstate conflict in the African great lakes region", Conflict, Security & Development, DOI: 10.1080/14678802.2020.1852720, p. 9
39. The Independent, 2019 (Dec. 23). ""Museveni, Rwanda and 2021 Elections", Kampala: The Independent (from https://www.independent.co.ug/museveni-rwanda-and-2021-elections/, 13 Jan 2021)
40. Kam Isaac, 2020. "Study Shows 2021 Elections In Uganda Will Be Violent", Kigali: Taarifa (https://taarifa.rw/study-shows-2021-elections-in-uganda-will-be-violent/, 13 Jan 2021).
41. Al-Jazeera, 2021 (11 Jan.), "Facebook shuts down Ugandan accounts ahead of general elections", Doha: Al Jazeera (from https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/11/facebook-shuts-down-ugandan-accounts-ahead-of-general-elections, 13 Jan 2021); Halima Athumani, 2021 (January 11,), "Facebook Shuts Down Accounts Linked to Ugandan Information Ministry" Washington DC: Voice of America (from https://www.voanews.com/africa/facebook-shuts-down-accounts-linked-ugandan-information-ministry, 13 Jan. 2021); The Independent, 2021 (12 Jan.). "Breaking: Facebook now inaccessible to many in Uganda", Kampala: The Independent (from

evening of 12 January 2021, the last day of official campaigns, Museveni announced that government had closed Facebook: "Facebook decided to block NRM message centers… Why would anyone do that? I told my people to close it. If it is to operate in Uganda, it should be used equitably."[42] In other word, the politics of fear had evolved to media and social media restrictions and bans, which signaled important concerns about possible utilization of these media channels for post-election mobilisation.

The above features make Uganda's 2020/2021 elections uniquely distinguishable from previous elections. The utilisation of political fear was reflected in candidate/party manifestos; campaign speeches and pledges (in terms of hate speech); and in actions of candidates'/parties' and their supporters. The elections, in other word, became riddled with public-health fears, foreign-interference fears, the fear of celebrity politics, and the generational divide between old-age NRM-O contenders and the youthful People Power/ NUP opponents.

Politics of Fear in Candidate/Party Manifestos

The politics of fear is discernible from political party and/or candidates' manifestos. Propaganda, mass threats, and repression can feature in election promises and manifestos may also indicate some of these elements. While manifestos are public relations instruments intended to win over the masses, a critical reading of some of the manifestos can reveal elements of the politics of fear, mainly propaganda, except perhaps repression. While the NRM-O and FDC had, during the 2006, 2011, and 2016 elections, displayed significant levels of fear mongering, the 2020/2021 elections fears had included NUP as well. A newly-formed political party, NUP appropriated the dwindling appeals of UPC, DP and FDC, and attracted to itself youth groups and a significant section of the Buganda population. Propaganda played in all this.

Three key elements typified the NUP manifesto: promise of a "New Uganda" characterised by "people-centred governance"; the reform of armed services; and a new "national security policy and international relations". The promised "new Uganda"

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https://www.independent.co.ug/breaking-facebook-now-inaccessible-for-many-in-uganda/, 13 Jan. 2021).

42. Godfrey Olukya, 2021 (Jan. 13), "Uganda's president bans Facebook for being 'arrogant': Move part of broader ban on social media platforms ahead of polls", Ankara: Anadolu Agency (from https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/uganda-s-president-bans-facebook-for-being-arrogant-/2107913, 13 Jan 2021).

would entail "the first ever inclusive, non-violent transition of political power in Uganda", indicating that Ugandans should shun the previous politics of violent transitions. The vision of a Uganda that is peopled by "a dignified people thriving under an inclusive constitutional democracy", insinuated to exclusive politics and constitutional uncertainties which rendered Uganda politically fragile.[43] While the NUP manifesto acknowledges the efforts of the NRM-O over the past 30 years, it underlines the serious shortcomings that militated against Uganda's transformation, such as poor governance, corruption (hence "We plan to eliminate the nepotism, patronage and cronyism…"), patronage[44], incompetence, growing inequality, declining trust and confidence in public administration and the economy, a system of justice that does not uphold rights, and a bloated public administration and parliament.

The politics of fear plays in these manifesto promises in three respects. First, it is stressed that Uganda's continued languishing under these conditions of poor governance threatens the achievements of the past generation: "after thirty-five years Uganda still struggles to provide basic capabilities like access to primary education and primary health. Enhanced capabilities like specialized medical treatment, and secondary and tertiary education are beyond the reach of the majority."[45] In the security realm, for instance, the NUP insists that the country remains insecure even when the government claims to have restored security. "threats to internal security have been constant. Land-grabbing, the unsolved spates of murders of women, the rise of kidnappings, and social unrest caused by poverty and met with state brutality", have been on the increase, indicating perverse insecurity for Ugandans.[46]

Unfortunately, NUP argues, the Uganda Police Force (UPF) "is dominated by the ruling party and made to further the interests of that party", through intolerance of political dissent, and brutality against students and the general public. Moreover, the working conditions of middle and lower ranks are deplorable.[47] Thus, NUP promises

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43. National Unity Platform (NUP), 2021. A New Uganda: 2021-2026 Manifesto. Kampala: NUP, p. 2
44. On patronage the NUP Manifesto states: "Recruitment to [public] agencies is used by the ruling elite to maintain a system of political patronage. NRM cadres are favoured and they receive exponentially higher pay than their traditional public service counterparts. The outcome is poor or absent service delivery." Ibid, p. 4
45. Ibid, p. 4
46. NUP, p. 35
47. Ibid

reforms in the police services, and focus the purpose of the armed forces from preserving the regime to preserving national security and integrity: "Under NUP's administration, the UPDF will not be expected to preserve the regime but to preserve the integrity of the State. The army will not be put under pressure to repress the citizens."[48] The party, therefore, promised to right the wrongs of the ruling party while initiating reforms that would reduce the prevailing conditions of fear and uncertainty within the armed forces and between the armed forces and the general public.

The NRM-O, on its part, has not been short of propaganda both in terms of promising to secure Uganda and improve the general conditions of the citizenry. The politics of fear played in this propaganda machine when pre-election party functionaries and public officials dismissed opposition ideas and downplayed the possible role of opposing opinions in transforming Uganda. Senior party functionaries, such as General Elly Tumwine, periodically appeared in the media and publicly threatened "those who threatened the peace we now enjoy", and is reported to have vowed to crush opposition groups who resort to violent protests: "police have a right to shoot you and kill you if you reach a certain level of violence… Can I repeat? Police have a right to shoot you and you die for nothing.... do it at your own risk."[49] While also sending fears to potential protestors, the message also indicated the fear-laden response with which government responded to these protests.

The fear logic was extended to parties' claims about regional international affairs. The NUP accuses government of failing to protect Ugandan diaspora during the Covid-19 pandemic, including denying them a free airlift from other countries: "Our government failed the Diaspora when they required diplomatic protection when they were evicted on racial grounds during this pandemic. Government failed them again when it rejected an offer of a free airlift for all those wishing to return."[50] This underlined the fear of abandonment which Ugandans should be aware of as they vote during the 2021 polls.

Museveni himself, in a speech after election results were announced, accused opponents of not talking about Africa's strategic survival. He claimed to have been

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48. Ibid, p. 38
49. BBC, 2020 (20 November), "Bobi Wine protests: Shoot to kill defended by Uganda minister", London: BBC (from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55016519, 19 Jan 2021)
50. NUP, p. 40

working for the unification of the region and the continent. Historical record, however, seems to contradict this claim considering the difficulties faced in the East African Federation project since Uganda lifted presidential term limits in 2005. The subsequent lifting of presidential age limit in 2016 possibly strangles the harmonization of national political processes in preparation for the East African Federation: since other EAC Partner States have constitutional limits to the presidency, Uganda's periodic alteration of constitutional rules regarding the presidency sends negative signals about possible harmonization of major policy standpoints in keeping with demands for regional federation.

Mass Threats in Manifestos

Mass threats in manifestos are indirect. They are indications that when certain political choices are made, the masses are wont to suffer. While the DP and other parties and independent candidates that participated in presidential elections all had manifestos, the NUP and NRM-O are most relevant to this analysis for two reasons: first, many opposition parties or their candidates, specifically DP, JEMA, and some independent candidates originally aligned to the NRM, identified with NUP and/or its predecessor pressure group, People Power. Second, the NUP seems to have replaced the FDC as the most important opposition party not just in terms of voter mobilisation and presidential election performance but also in terms of the numbers of parliamentary victories scored during the 2020/2021 elections. Finally, the FDC standpoint is well-known, and its party manifesto has not changed significantly since 2006. Acritical rereading of NUP and NRM-O manifestos should provide an analytic glimpse into the logics of the politics of fear in party manifestos.

Mass threats can also be direct in manifestos. The NUP Manifesto, for instance, laments that Uganda has been under dictatorship yet claims to want to acquire peaceful change of power from dictatorial to democratic regime: "We seek a transition from the 35-year-long dictatorial regime to a people's choice government through free and fair elections."[51] Indicating that Ugandans have been living under a dictatorship threatens them with continued dictatorial rule if they do not embrace change. In other word, mass threats take on a nature of reassurance subject to election support:

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51. NUP, p. 2

> The catalogue of Failed Government Programmes should convince you that that there is an urgent need for change. To allow NRM misrule to continue is to prolong the struggle to recover. We shall lose more natural resources with no benefits to show, and our youth will continue to leave school early and to seek menial work abroad. The disease burden shall increase as investment in health continues to shrink. Poor international relations will lead us further in to debt and our economy will be dominated by those we owe money that we cannot repay.[52]

This exploitation of the language of fear in manifestos is intended to raise mass fear of the coming socioeconomic, personal, security, welfare, and resource catastrophes if voters do not embrace change. Fear is propagated by packaging the language of the manifestos in such a way that readers who study these documents are made to mentally witness the coming danger.

The NRM-O manifesto was premised on "Securing Your Future". Apparently, without the NRM-O in power the future of its audience would be insecure. Threats of security/insecurity have been a core of NRM-O lingo. The idea of an insecure future calls for fear votes: avoid voting or vote opponents in protest against a claimed insecure future. While it is too early to tell whether Ugandans voted to secure their future or against this claim, the apparent loss of NRM-O especially in the Buganda region possibly indicates that there was a protest vote against NRM-O Members of Parliament and the president despite promises of securing their future.

The NRM-O Manifesto was a 5th one since the 1996 manifesto on "Tackling the Tasks Ahead."[53] It departs from the various forms and expressions of the politics of fear save for reproduction of the 2001 arrests and intimidation. The overt intimidation, public discrediting, and rhetorical dismissal of government critics is blurred with convincing language. The manifesto sugar-coats the selective persecution, open harassment, and legal and administrative disparaging, of opposition supporters and activists, and

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52. NUP, p. 2
53. The 1996 and 2001 manifestos were crafted during the 'no-party', individual-merit, "Movement System". The 2001 manifesto was premised on "Consolidating the Achievements of the NRM"; the 2006 one on "Prosperity for All"; the 2011 one on "Peace, Unity and Transformation for Prosperity"; and the 2016 one on "Steady Progress: Taking Uganda to Modernity through Jobs Creation and Inclusive Development."

the insidious muzzling of independent voices in both the state and society.[54] The NRM's efforts to assuage voters' doubts about ballot secrecy has not worked. Instead, these doubts have persisted and enable vote buying (at and before polling-station levels) and voter intimidation (before polling. Both strategies enable state functionaries, mainly District Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) and Internal Security Organisation (ISO) officials to bypass formal rules that enshrine the secret ballot. The resulting insufficient protections for voters' secret choices perhaps explain the declining voter turnups since 2001.[55] Thus, while the ruling NRM-O may deploy politics of fear tactics, its manifesto may read as a more attractive and less intimidating.

Nevertheless, the NRM-O Manifesto claimed that Uganda's future is bleak. A bleak future displays politics of fear. Picturing an elderly Museneni alongside recent infrastructure projects (including the yet-to-be undertaken Standard Gauge Railway), ripen coffee and a smiling braided girl-child displaying the NRM-O right-thumb sign, the manifesto opens by stressing that securing the future of Uganda is paramount: "*The mantle of securing the future of Uganda is so great a task for one to play bets on. It is not a gamble. It is a matter which requires lifelong commitment, unending sacrifice and vast experience. NRM is the only political organisation that can be trusted with the sacred responsibility of securing Uganda's future.*"[56]

Three threats are clear from this statement. First, an insurmountable danger faces Uganda's future should Ugandans choose an inexperienced, uncommitted, and foresighted leadership. Second, the responsibility, called "mantle", of securing the country's future is not to be played with, indicating that some political groups seem to be viewing the task at hand as a simple one, an issue that Ugandans should be cautioned about. Finally, Uganda is unfortunate to lack any other political party or organization, than the NRM, which can handle such a "mantle". Hence the foreword: "NRM has *managed to sail Uganda through the most violent and turbulent storms* in

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54. Gel'man, "The Politics of Fear".

55. For a deep analysis of these "contingent election strategies", see: Karen E. Ferree And James D. Long, 2016, "Gifts, Threats, and Perceptions of Ballot Secrecy in African Elections", African Affairs, 115 (461):621-645

56. NRM-O, 2020. Securing Your Future: 2021-2026 Manifesto. Kampala: NRM (available from https://www.nrm.ug/NRM_Manifesto_2021-2026.pdf, 25 Jan 2021). Emphasis original.

our history. Through this time, NRM has been tried, tested and found worthy of continued leadership... Our resolve to the call of duty remains steadfast and this is our solemn promise."[57]

The manifesto's section on protecting life and property, specifically the chapter on security, claims that the country has transformed from a time a soldier or policeperson was a feared individual to a people's servant today. The manifesto conflates state processes, such as the UPDF's Luwero Industries and National Enterprise Corporation (NEC) (both of which have failed to evolve into highly productive ventures for three decades), with party activities. Government policies, party political strategies and tactics, and state evolution are conflated, thus signaling that without the NRM0O, both the state and government would be endangered. A photographic display of the police's traffic-monitoring Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras possibly sends threat signals to Ugandans that the state is seeing.

James C. Scott, in a famous book, *Seeing Like a State*, has argued that states craft schemes disguised as meant to improve human conditions but are in reality intended to make society more legible. Thus, legibility is "a central problem in statecraft", and creates incentives for states to undertake attempts "to make a society legible, to arrange the population in ways that simplified the classic state functions of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion."[58] This effort entails administrative rearrangement of nature and society or "transformative state simplifications"; a high-modernist ideology, such government's failed promise to transform Uganda to a middle-income status by 2020 (as seen in the second National Development Plan, NDP II), that foregrounds interests and faith; "an authoritarian state that is willing and able to use the full weight of its coercive power to bring these high-modernist designs into being"[59]; and "a prostrate civil society that lacks the capacity to resist these plans."[60] From these elements, the politics of fear is intended to acquire high-ground domination over societal forces and to place the ruling regime in a position of relative

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57. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, 2020. "Foreword" to the NRM Manifesto, 2021-2026. My emphasis.

58. James C. Scott, 1999. Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 11
59. Ibid, p. 13
60. Ibid, p. 14

vantage point vis-à-vis opposition groups, civil society, and the citizenry. The NRM-O manifesto is clear in these goals.

Unexpectedly, the manifesto does not mention a "way forward" about the persistent security threats like high-level crimes and murders, the resilience of armed groups (of the Allied Democratic Forces and Lord's Resistance Army) despite many years of government militarily holding them at bay, and the bilateral (Rwanda-Uganda, Uganda-South Sudan) and regional security threats of our time. In other word, while the NRM-O manifesto tries unsuccessfully to veil the politics of fear which the party plays, it does not provide credible solutions about actual threats to Uganda's future, such threats of war and entanglement in regional conflicts. Instead, what is masked in manifestos becomes obvious in campaign speeches and rhetoric.

Politics of Fear in Campaign Speeches and Pledges

Propaganda, the language of repression, and mass threats can feature in campaign speeches. A key aspect of such language is what Ugandans call "hate speech", public speeches at rallies and in media outlets that indicate hatred for opponents and their supporters. Mention has been made of shoot-to-kill threats made by political leaders during campaigns. Hate speech was rampant during NRM-O primaries, and in some areas elections were rendered impossible due to accusations and counter-accusations of electoral fraud and political malice. The opposition shared their hatred of what they viewed as a failed political system.

Elements of fear are traceable from Museveni's speech during the launch of the NRM-O manifesto on 2nd November 2020. While traceable to previous statements about the country' and region's strategic survival, this repetition indicates the proclivity for fearful response to the problems at hand:

> "How can we guarantee the strategic security, the long-term security, the
> eternal security, of the Ugandan people and the other African peoples against
> all possible threats of whatever capacity?" "Can economic development alone,

through economic integration, guarantee this strategic security?" The answer is: "No." [61]

Museveni insisted that Uganda needs East Africa, Africa, and the world, for its strategic security – and that only the NRM-O has a diagnostic understanding of these strategic threats and how to solve them. If Ugandans do not vote the NRM-O, therefore, these strategic threats may remain, even worsen. A corollary of these speeches is to convince listeners that only the NRM-O has a proper diagnosis of (and thus solutions to) such problems the persistence of which would endanger their strategic survival.

The NUP candidate, Kyagulanyi Ssentamu indicated, during the launch of his party manifesto, that "if there is no will for the leaders to better the lives of the people that they lead everything will be just a talk."[62] The threat in this claim is double-pronged. First, it reveals that previous political leaders have not been willing to better the lives of their peoples, hence the threat of continued failures if no change is embraced. Second, leaders can thrive on lies or unfulfilled promises, which renders masses neglected. The resulting failure in service delivery threatens mass wellbeing and development, which ought to be changed through an election.

Politics of Fear in Actions of Candidates/Parties and their Supporters

As conceptualised, propagandist and repressive actions, and mass threats, can indicate politics of fear. Propagandist actions are those activities intended to hoodwink target audience and win their support when little transformation is intended or can be expected from such actions. The government's crafting of a money-distribution program called *Emyooga* (translated: "vocations") toward elections, was propagandist for two reasons. First, while government presented this program as an element of

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61. Republic of Uganda, 2020 (2nd Nov.), "Speech at the launch of the NRM manifesto- 2021-2026", Entebbe: State House (from https://statehouse.go.ug/media/speeches/2020/11/02/speech-launch-nrm-manifesto-2021-2026, 19 Jan 2021)
62. The Independent, 2020 (November 8), "Kyagulanyi vows to fulfill all NUP manifesto pledges", Kampala: The Independent (form https://www.independent.co.ug/kyagulanyi-vows-to-fulfill-all-nup-manifesto-pledges/, 19 Jan. 2020)

wealth-creation and employment-generation programs, and invested an estimated nationwide budget of UGX 260 billion.[63]

There is little to show that it was designed following in-depth understanding of the trajectory and effectiveness of pre-existing programs like Operation Wealth Creation (OWC), youth livelihood programs, and other interventions in the agriculture and trade sectors. For example, an estimated UGX 4.240 billion is said to have been distributed to 140 suddenly-crafted Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs) in Kampala under the *Emyooga* initiative by January 2021[64], possibly to win political support from the metropole's voters in the forthcoming elections. Similarly, *Obusinga bwa Rwenzururu* (the Kingdom of Rwenzururu), headquartered in the western city of Kasese where the UPDF attacked the king's palace and killed many people (some reports say more than 150) in 2016[65], was reportedly "given special consideration under *Emyooga* program."[66] This was possibly intended to assuage and restore support from the hitherto angry Banya-Rwenzururu who have been suffering waves of violence since 1996 and had evolved to strong supporters for the opposition FDC since 2001.

Second, the *Emyoga* initiative appeared suddenly toward elections. It was launched in August 2019 as a "Presidential Initiative on Wealth and Job Creation"[67], two years after the reprehensible removal of presidential age limits from the constitution.[68] The

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63. A Kampala-based Magazine, The Independent, has archived reports about the initiative. This compilation can be accessed from [https://www.independent.co.ug/tag/emyooga/ - accessed 20 Jan 2021)

64. The Independent, 2021 (Jan. 12), "Government disburses UGX 4.24 billion for Emyooga in Kampala", Kampala: The Independent (from https://www.independent.co.ug/government-disburses-ugx-4-24-billion-for-emyooga-in-kampala/, 20 Jan 2021)

65. Anna Reuss & Kristof Titeca, 2017. "Beyond ethnicity: the violence in Western Uganda and Rwenzori's 99 problems", Review of African Political Economy, 44 (151):131-141; Anna Reuss and Kristof Titeca, 2016 (29 November), "There is new violence in Western Uganda. Here's why." Washington D.C.: The Monkey Cage, The Washington Post (from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/11/29/what-is-happening-in-uganda/, 20 Jan 2021)

66. The Independent, 2020 (December 7), "Obusinga bwa Rwenzururu given Special Consideration under the Emyooga Program", Kampala: The Independent (from https://www.independent.co.ug/obusinga-bwa-rwenzururu-given-special-consideration-under-emyooga-program/, 220 Jan 2021)

67. Republic of Uganda, 2020, FAQs – Presidential Initiative on Wealth and Job Creation (Emyooga). Kampala: Microfinance Support Centre (from https://www.msc.co.ug/faqs-emyooga-presidential-initiative, 20 Jan 2021). The Emyooga initiative is said to be financed by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development through the Department of Microfinance.

68. Kim Yi Dionne, 2017 (Sept. 29). "Ugandan lawmakers brawl over bill on presidential age limit. Here's what citizens think.", Washington D.C.: The Washington Post (from

Emyooga targeted mainly urban youth (and to some degree poor rural dwellers), indicating increasing awareness about youth frustrations over unemployment and poverty and potential translation of such exasperation into opposition electoral choices. Moreover, in central-southern region many youth had been deprived of livelihood since 2017. This mainly occurred during pacification processes on Lake Nalubaale (aka L. Victoria) in which the UPDF (its navy and Special Forces), and Police Marines, supported by other security and intelligence agencies, undertook a widespread campaign to destroy inappropriate and illegal fishing nets used on Lake Victoria.[69]

Voters interpreted this militarisation of fishing regulations as pursuit of private interests of fish-exporters. Many fishing communities were destroyed. Many fisher-people were displaced. Others were injured and/or killed. Fishing gear that would be allowed by the state, such as sizes of eligible boats, nets, safeguard paraphernalia, registration, licensing, and other requirements, became too expensive (one needed at least UGX 30 million, or approx. US$ 8,500 at the time) for poor fisher-people to afford.[70] Without providing alternative sources of livelihood to fishing communities, the abuses and human rights violations these people suffered might translate into opposition electoral support.[71] The *emyooga*, therefore, might serve to assuage some of these victims of fisher-evictions or turn around the urban poor into votes. This may explain the reported concentration of *Emyooga* funds around the Lake basin, where the targeted Ugandans from the 18 clusters–*boda-boda* riders, taxi drivers, restaurants, welders, market

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/09/29/ugandan-lawmakers-brawl-over-bill-on-presidential-age-limit-heres-what-citizens-think/, 20 Jan 2021)

69. National Geographic, 2019 (May 3), "Fishermen fight to survive on the world's second largest lake: Lake Victoria supports hundreds of thousands of people, but overuse caused fish populations to collapse. Uganda sent in soldiers—but has it worked?", Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society (from https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/05/uganda-military-cracks-down-illegal-fishing-lake-victoria/, 20 Jan 2021)

70. These observations are based on personal observations and interactions with fishing communities around the Lake since 2017.

71. Anne J. Kantel, 2019. "Fishing for Power: Incursions of the Ugandan Authoritarian State", Annals of the American Association of Geographers, 109 (2):443-455; Edwin Karuhanga, 2018. An Assessment of the Outcome of Military Enforcement of Lake Victoria Fisheries: A Case Study of Kasenyi Landing Site. BSc Dissertation, Kampala: Makerere University; Pranietha Mudliar, 2020. "Polycentric to monocentric governance: Power dynamics in Lake Victoria's fisheries", Environmental Policy and Governance, (Online, from https://doi.org/10.1002/eet.1917, 20th Jan 2020)

vendors, and women entrepreneurs–are mainly concentrated despite protests from Parliament.[72]

Beyond propagandist policy actions, some of the campaign actions were propagandist and served to send signals of fear. Museveni's insistence on small meetings displayed not just personal fear of contracting Covid-19 but also utilisation of politics of fear to signal to Ugandans the extent to which the pandemic threatens the country and requires threat-responsive leadership. Kyagulanyi and his supporters, much like Katumba and Amuriat, repeatedly clashed with police and security forces. Some of these clashes were deliberate efforts to attract media attention after resisting police guidance and/or campaigning beyond stipulated times. Many of them displayed candidates' total disregard for Covid-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).[73] During campaigns, independent candidate, John Katumba, clashed with police in Wakiso, Mubende, Fort Portal, Jinja and Buikwe, Iganga, Kayunga, and other areas.[74] FDC presidential candidate, Patrick Oboi Amuriat, clashed with police in Nakawa, Kasese, Bukedi, and other areas.[75] NUP's Kyagulanyi's clashes are numerous. His arrests led to deadly clashes between his supporters and security forces, and sent fear signals among the political and civilian circles alike. These selected episodes

72. The Independent, 2020 (Oct. 6), "MPs criticize extra funds allocated to Emyooga in Kampala and Wakiso", Kampala: The Independent (from https://www.independent.co.ug/mps-criticize-extra-funds-allocated-to-emyooga-in-kampala-and-wakiso/, 25 Jan 2021); The Independent, 2020 (Oct. 20), "MPs query UGX160bn supplementary budget for presidential initiative on job and wealth creation", Kampala: The Independent (from https://www.independent.co.ug/mps-criticize-extra-funds-allocated-to-emyooga-in-kampala-and-wakiso/, 20 Jan 2021)
73. Republic of Uganda, 2020. Press Statement on Observations on the Conduct of Candidates During Campaigns for 2021 General Elections. Kampala: Electoral Commission; United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2020. "COVID-19: Elections stakeholders resolve to promote safe participation in the 2020/2021 elections", Kampala: UNDP (from https://www.ug.undp.org/content/uganda/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2020/covid-19--elections-stakeholders-resolve-to-promote-safe-partici.html, 25 Jan 2021); Republic of Uganda, 2020 (26th De.). Suspension of General Election Campaign Meetings in Specified Areas of the Country. Kampala: EC (from https://wakiso.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Press-Statement-on-Suspension-of-General-Election-Campaign-Meetings-in-Specified-Areas.pdf, 25 Jan. 2021)
74. NTV, 2020 (Dec. 10). "John Katumba Rallies Wakiso but Clashes with Police", Kampala: NTV (from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iynpu3pfbIA, 25 Jan 2021); The Independent, 2020 (Dec 25), "Gen Lokech blames Katumba's bodyguards for Fort Portal scuffle", Kampala: The Independent (from https://www.independent.co.ug/gen-lokech-blames-katumbas-bodyguards-for-fort-portal-scuffle/, 25 Jan 2021); Africa News, "Repression & Violence", Op Cit
75. The Independent, 2020 (Dec. 17), "Police battles FDC's Amuriat as he campaigns in Nakawa", Kampala: The Independent (https://www.independent.co.ug/amuriat-battles-security-as-he-campaigns-in-nakawa/, 25 Jan 2021); Franklin Draku, 2021 (Jan 7), "FDC's Amuriat arrested, charged with careless driving", Kampala: Daily Monitor (form https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/fdc-s-amuriat-arrested-charged-with-careless-driving-3250392, 25 Jan 2021)

indicate that while some of the clashes were born of security forces' unprofessional and high-handed conduct, some of them were publicity-seeking actions. In other word, actions of resistance or seeming clashes with security forces enabled candidates to attract media attention, win public sympathy, and send signals that the security forces were anti-people, anti-opposition.

Toward and during elections, propagandist actions were used to lure voters in the period toward elections. For instance, Amuriat, campaigned without shoes partly in protest to the Electoral Commission nominating him without shoes after he had been stripped of his shoes in a scuffle with security forces: "Mr Museveni deployed his police to frustrate my nomination by taking my shoes but they have not taken my feet."[76] This "barefoot campaign" would have attracted both sympathy and fame were it not for the repressive actions and mass threats analysed under the next sub-section on fear and violence.

From the Politics of Fear to Election Violence

Electoral violence can be a hallmark of a faltering democratic dispensation. In the first instance, it may signal high-level political mobilisation amidst struggling political institutions that lack the capacity and resources to process political demands and channel them into processes of peaceful contestation for power.[77] Second, it may signal, and often results from, an incumbent's fear of losing power through an election, indicating unreadiness to relinquish power through peaceful political processes. It may also be rooted in lack of "institutionalized constraints on the incumbent's decision-making powers", particularly the decision to resort to violence using state-security institutions like police, the military and intelligence services.[78] Finally, it may be an expression of political anger, frustrations, and discontent against ruling groups that may have marginalised other groups for much too long or are perceived to marginalise

76. Geofrey Okot and Stephen Okello, 2020 (Dec. 8), "Amuriat launches barefoot campaign", Kampala: Daily Monitor (from https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/-amuriat-launches-barefoot-campaign-3015456, 20 Jan 2021); Damalie Mukhaye, 2020 (Dec. 4), "Amuriat sticks to barefoot campaigns", Kampala: Daily Monitor (from https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/amuriat-sticks-to-barefoot-campaigns-3218660, accessed 20 Jan 2021)
77. Samuel P. Huntington, 1968, Political Order in Changing Societies, Belknap: Harvard University Press
78. Hafner-Burton, Hyde & Jabłoński, "When Do Governments Resort to Election Violence?", p. 149

or threaten to marginalise such groups. In this case, opposition's fear of further marginalisation may create incentives for resorting to election violence as a means to exposing the regime's poor governance record that may be manifest in non-inclusivity; the blurring of lines between the state, the ruling party, and the government; and entrenched interests whose motives and interests may be antithetical to democratic change of power. In such a scenario, normative political arguments which consider multi-party electoral politics as central to entrenching democratic practices through regular elections can be disproved when considerations made by political actors involved in elections differ from the ideal logics of electoral political competition.

This section brings home the progression from politics of fear to election violence, and lays emphasis on the combination of repression and mass threats during these elections. Mention needs to be made that much of the repression and mass threats came from the ruling party, although opposition rhetoric seems to have also sent fear waves among sections of Ugandans that victory for some candidates and/or parties might prove dangerous to some Ugandans. Ugandans threatened by opposition electoral victory include those who have previously benefited from the Museveni regime; those who have had reservations about apparent linkages between Kyagulanyi Ssentamu and foreign forces like the LGBT community which has been demanding free reign in Uganda; and Ugandans who feel that while Museveni runs short of democratic credentials he still speaks more for Ugandan and African interests than for foreign interests when one considers his strong stance against the International Criminal Court (ICC), protracted negotiations with multinational oil companies seeking to invest in the country's nascent oil and gas sector, and his regional-integration efforts. At the same time Museveni's fears created incentives for intensifying repression and mass threats, which led to violence.

Uganda witnessed three levels of election violence during 2020/2021: violence during party primaries, pre-polling/campaign violence, and post-election psycho-violence. The 2020 NRM-O primaries were the most violent in Uganda's history of party primaries, the worst in the NRM-O's record of intra-party competition.[79] Some

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79. Tracy Teddy Naiga, 2020 (Sept. 6), "Tanga Odoi: Western Uganda was most violent in NRM primaries", Kampala: PLM Daily (from https://www.pmldaily.com/news/politics/2020/09/tanga-odoi-western-uganda-was-most-violent-in-nrm-primaries.html, 20 Jan 2021)

controversies, judicial struggles, and violence typified the 2015 NRM-O primaries.[80] Commercialisation and gift giving[81], police counter-violence, beating of supporters, burning of properties, dissenting "independents", fist-fights between candidates and supporters, were "the scenes in the" 2015 primaries in which the NRM-O sought to elect flag-bearers for the 2016 parliamentary and local government elections. Interestingly, Museveni was also the party's "sole candidate" for presidency in 2015 and again in 2021. The 2015 violence also occurred in lower primaries at village and parish levels, as the NRM-O undertook a huge effort to hold primaries at all levels, countrywide, involving "over 10,000 candidates, vying for over 2,700 positions in over 400 constituencies with over 10 million voters and over 60,000 polling stations. It required over 500, 000 million officials and consumed a whopping Shs5.5 billion."[82]

The 2020 violence showed worsening intra-party politics from 2015, underlining a more insidious fear factor. Instead, it signalled a ruling party unable to manage intra-party rivalries and political competition, and accordingly incapable of guaranteeing peaceable general elections without recourse to excessive militarisation. Protests, clashes, accusations and counter-accusations, and failed reconciliation talks typified these primaries.[83] In greater Kabaale area, for instance, losers reportedly boycotted a reconciliation meeting. They accused organisers of being self-seeking individuals.[84] In Serere, there were reports of fist-fights as was the case in Bukedea, Kaberamaido, and West Nile.[85]

In Sembabule district, the contest between Shartsi Musherure, daughter to foreign minister, Sam Kahamba Kuteesa, and Godfrey Aine Kaguta (alias Sodo), half-brother to president Yoweri T.K. Museveni, was possibly the most dramatic and violent. Voting

80. Republic of Uganda, 2015. Fox Odoi V NRM & Anor (Constitutional Application No. 32 of 2015) [2015] UGCC 7 (1 December 2015), Kampala: Constitutional Court
81. Richard Vokes, 2016. "Primaries, patronage, and political personalities in South-western Uganda", Journal of Eastern African Studies, 10 (4):660-676
82. Agather Atuhairwe, 2015, "Why NRM primaries were bloody", Kampala: The Independent, Nov. 2, 2015 (from https://www.independent.co.ug/nrm-primaries-bloody/, 20 Jan 2021)
83. Some of the details of these unfoldings are captured under different headings [here: https://www.independent.co.ug/?s=NRM+Primaries, accessed 20 Jan 2020)
84. The Independent, 2020 (Oct. 24), "Losers in NRM primaries boycott reconciliation talks in Kabale", Kampala: The Independent (from https://www.independent.co.ug/losers-in-nrm-primaries-boycott-reconciliation-talks-in-kabale/, 20 Jan. 2020)
85. Daily Monitor, 2020 (Sept. 3), "Violence persists as NRM party goes to elections", Kampala: Daily Monitor (from https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/violence-persists-as-nrm-party-goes-to-elections-1933044, 20 Jan 2021)

in NRM-O primaries in Mawogola North and Mawogola West Constituencies, Sembabule district, failed on 4 September 2020 and were cancelled following acts of violence and chaos. Many people were injured. Property were vandalized. The repeat elections were also marred with violence despite heavy security deployment.[86] The dramatic contest between relatives of high-ranking ruling-party officials had bred unprecedented violence, possibly indicating intra-party fears, rivalries, failures within party structures to reconcile competing opinions, and the do-or-die approach to politics within NRM-O circles.

Both state-controlled and private media is awash with reports of citizens being threatened or subjected to violence after being identified with certain political parties. The president is said to have transferred criminal investigators within police for failing to detect and apprehend masterminds of violence during NRM-O primaries.[87] The intent of sporadic and organised violence was to curtail mobilization activities of target candidates, pressure groups and political parties, or to lure voters to support different candidates or parties. Individuals in certain situations were forced to undress clothes associated with certain party colours in order to embarrass them and others into switching political sides: NRM-O supporters or those dressed in Yellow, the NRM-O party colour, were most victimised.[88] Some individuals who hold certain political views were subjected to ridicule, where possibility of winning them over looked slim. The print media cartooned and caricatured those who hold certain political beliefs in support of particular political parties and organizations. Some level-headed and non-prejudiced political actors, such as presidential candidate Mugisha-Muntu, who focused on clean politics devoid of intimidation, manipulations and threats, received less media attention. In other word, the media bought into the politics of fear by focusing on violent interfaces between Kyagulanyi-Ssentamu and Museveni's state machinery to the near neglect of other presidential candidates.

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86. The Independent, 2020 (Oct. 1), "Violence reported in Sembabule NRM primaries despite heavy security deployment", Kampala: The Independent (from https://www.independent.co.ug/violence-reported-in-sembabule-nrm-primaries-despite-heavy-security-deployment, 20 Jan. 2020)
87. The Independent, 2020 (Oct. 28), "CID deputy director transferred over mess in NRM primaries", Kampala: The Independent (from https://www.independent.co.ug/cid-deputy-director-ttransfered-over-mess-in-nrm-primaries/, 20 Jan 2021)
88. Halima Athumani, 2020. "Uganda President Quotes Bible in Ominous Message to Opposition", Washington DC: Voice of America News (Nov. 30, 2020) (from https://www.voanews.com/africa/uganda-president-quotes-bible-ominous-message-opposition, 20 Jan 2021)

State repression against Kyagulanyi and Amuriat was especially intense, possibly because the government feared the FDC/Amuriat given its legacy of hot contest in previous elections; and the NUP/Kyagulanyi possibly because of alleged links with western powers, homosexual groups, Buganda kingdom and sections of the Catholic Church. Couched under the guise of controls against Covid-19, a pandemic that allowed Museveni to dominate media appearance during Covid-19 national updates and his fear-laden insistence on restrictive "scientific election", the state targeted opposition politicians for holding large rallies, defying Ministry of Health guidelines, and gathering crowds in a manner that threatened Covid-19 spread. Museveni may have genuinely feared catching Covid-19, owing to his age and other reasons, or sought to utilise this excuse to appear unique from other candidates in his insistence on small campaign meetings. Ironically, Museveni had not prevailed on NRM-O candidates during party primaries and they were left to freely hold big rallies during which Covid-19 should have spread uncontrollably. It is curious that during presidential campaigns Museveni personally resorted to small rally-meetings, left other NRM-O candidates to campaign as they thought fit, but turned the state machinery against opposition parties' presidential candidates. Human Rights Watch reported that Ugandan authorities had weaponised Covid-19 for repression.[89]

The NUP candidate, Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, was arrested several times and campaign rallies banned in an election following NRM-O primaries in which rallies had not been banned.[90] In November 2020, following Kyagulanyi's arrest, more than 50 people, most of them below 50 years old, were killed by security forces as supporters protested his arrest and detention.[91] The security situation deteriorated. Museveni described campaigns that worsen the spread of Covid-19 "criminal to the extreme". In a lengthy speech on 30 November 2020, the president castigated "foreign elements",

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89. Human Rights Watch, 2020. "Uganda: Authorities Weaponize Covid-19 for Repression", Nairobi: Human Rights Watch (from https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/11/20/uganda-authorities-weaponize-covid-19-repression, 20 Jan 2021)
90. Pascale Davies, 2020 (Jan. 01), "Repression & Violence: The Challenges in Running for Uganda's Top Job", Pointe-Noire: AfricaNews (from https://www.africanews.com/2021/01/08/repression-violence-the-challenges-in-running-for-uganda-s-top-job//, 20 Jan 2021)
91. Andrew Bagala, 2020, "Death toll from riots rises to 50", Kampala: Daily Monitor, Nov. 24, 2020 (from https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/special-reports/death-toll-from-riots-rises-to-50--3208320, 20 Jan 2021); Michael Oduor, 2020 "Uganda police apologise for Bobi Wine arrest, mass shooting", Pointe-Noire: AfricaNews, Dec 4, 2020 (from https://www.africanews.com/2020/12/04/uganda-police-apologise-for-bobi-wine-arrest-mass-shooting//, 20 Jan 2021); BBC, "Bobi Wine Protests".

"criminals", "drug addicts" and "selfish politicians", whom he accused of threatening Uganda with Covid-19 and ungovernability:

… the added danger to the campaigns is that political groups from afar, encouraged by non-caring politicians, can now import added danger when they roam around claiming to be mobilizing… some of the political actors, working with anti-Ugandan elements from outside, have been promoting impunity and swearing that they will render Uganda ungovernable. We have been monitoring them through intelligence. Working with criminal gangs, whom they pay money and give drugs, taking advantage of serious weaknesses in the Police, some areas of Kampala were declared "No Go areas" for law enforcement by these conspirators. They have been saying that they will burn the petrol stations, etc. When, therefore, the Hon. Kyagulanyi, one of the Presidential aspirants and the Hon. Amuriat, another Presidential aspirant, were arrested on the 18th of November, 2020, those criminal gangs, sponsored by political opportunists and backed by some external elements, decided to execute their long-planned scheme… burning tyres on the roads, mounting illegal roadblocks, robbing Ugandans, beating People, attacking people with NRM uniforms, stoning cars, stoning security personnel, damaging Government cars, etc. In spite of the weaknesses of the Police that allow such impunity or lawlessness to persist in our Towns, the overall security posture of Uganda is robust. A multi-force response was immediately activated and 1,014 suspects were arrested, of whom 843 suspects were charged in the Courts of Law including Hon. Kyagulanyi. 699 were remanded, 93 released on Court bail, while 113 were released on Police bond, including Hon. Amuriat. 21 were cleared and released and 37 are still in Police custody pending Court, including those who burnt Wobulenzi Magistrate's Court that are facing the charges of terrorism. Unfortunately, 54 people died in this confusion. 32 victims were rioters, some were hit by stray-bullets and two victims were knocked by vehicle registration No. UAW-827N that lost control after the driver was hit by stones and another vehicle with Presidential Candidate Museveni pictures, where the driver was hit by stones, also lost control and killed another person... the 5 persons who died in Nansana, were part of the rioting group. They had, apparently, "over powered" the Police... It is criminal to attack Security Forces by throwing stones or attempting to disarm them. In that scenario, the Police will legitimately fire directly at the attackers if they fail to respond to the firing in the air... We should not have a Country of rioters. It is the duty of everybody to keep the peace. If Honourable Kyagulanyi was arrested, his supporters should have waited for him to go to Court as he, eventually, did. The idea that Hon. Kyagulanyi, or any politician, is untouchable because he is a politician and if the Police

legitimately arrests him, there will be riots, is not acceptable and must never be repeated. A very clear picture of impunity by the criminals comes out in 3 incidents that happened on the 20th, 21st and 22nd November, 2020. On these 3 dates, highly trained security personnel wearing the uniform of counter-terrorism Police, went out on patrols through the so called "no go areas" for law enforcement. On the 20th, the patrol went to Makerere-Kivulu, North of the Kissekka Market. They were attacked with *mitayimbwa* by thugs. Two criminals were shot dead there and then and the 3rd one died later on account of injuries. On the 21st, the patrols went to the Katwe area, where thugs started throwing stones at the Security personnel and injured one of them. The attacker was promptly shot dead. On the 22nd of November, the security personnel were patrolling the "No Go area" of Nakivubo. One thug started attacking them by throwing stones. He was shot dead…[92]

Museveni's remarks highlight glaring loopholes in state machinery which he has presided over for 35 years: weaknesses in a police force that is unable to secure Ugandans or contain protests without relying on other security forces untrained in policing in the form of "multi-force response"; failure to safeguard Uganda from the influence of "political groups from afar" and "anti-Ugandan elements from outside"; and the increasing breakdown of official channels of conflict resolution as seen in people's mistrust in judicial processes to which Bobi Wine had been subjected, which sparked off riots. Possibly, these institutional-structural malfunctions and deficiencies make Museveni worry about the opposition's electoral triumph.

Research has revealed that incumbent regimes, worried about political threats from the opposition, resort to the politics of fear. This includes overt intimidation of opponents and their supporters; public discrediting of regime critics, such as Museveni does when he refers to Bobi Wine as a working with "anti-Ugandan elements from outside"; selective persecution and open harassment of opposition activists and/or supporters, as the response to 'Free Bobi Wine' protests revealed; and killing of anti-regime activities as the shooting of unarmed rioters in November 2020, and defence of the same by high-ranking government officials, reveals.[93] We can reasonably

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92. Republic of Uganda, 2020. President Museveni's Speech on 'Free Bobi Wine' protests, COVID-19 response. Entebbe: State House (a version of the speech is available at the NilePost website: https://nilepost.co.ug/2020/11/30/full-speech-museveni-on-free-bobi-wine-protests-covid-19-response/, accessed 20 Jan 2021)
93. Gel'man, "The Politis of Fear"; BBC, "Wine Protests."

surmise that the politics of fear informed state repression as an approach to political control that has previously enabled the NRM-O to survive in power.

A corollary of the politics of fear during 2020/2021 was intensification of militarisation of state and society. Akin to Laswell's Garrison State, the Ugandan body politique has become increasingly militarised. Civilian spaces, such as police and intelligence services, civil registration, civil policing and crowd control, and wealth creation, have been militarised. The garrison regime has achieved penetration of civilian spaces by specialists in violence to levels hitherto un-attempted by previous regimes.[94] This serves two purposes: first, it assuages regime actors, including Museveni himself, who mistrust civilian structures in preference for military personnel. Second, it ensures that critical positions in police and civil service are filled with persons subjected to military rules and unquestioned obeisance to Museveni. This also feeds into logics of mass threats.

Mass threats take several forms. The first is the propagandist conveyance of information about threats–real or concocted–the masses face if they make certain choices. Museveni's reference to "anti-Ugandan elements from outside" possibly was intended to inculcate fear among Ugandan masses about possible foreign threats during these elections and the need to resist such "elements" by voting him and the NRM-O. The second is the politically-hackneyed "rally-round-the-flag", a trick in which political leaders appeal to threats from outside, such as enemy countries, pandemics, economic crises, war threats, and other fears, in order to enhance their domestic approval, specifically presidential support.[95] The weaponisation of Covid-19, for instance, involved imposing mass curfews against civilians and selective application of Covid-19 restrictions during election season. This served to provide the regime with high-ground legitimate control over the entire society, presenting the Covid-19

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94. Harold D. Laswell, 1941, "The Garrison State", The American Journal of Sociology 46 (4):455-468; Harold Lasswell, "The Universal Peril: Perpetual Crisis and the Garrison-Prison State," in Lyman Bryson, Louis Finkelstein, and R.M. Maclever, eds., Perspectives on a Troubled Decade: Science, Philosophy and Religion, 1939-1949 (New York: Harper, 1950), p. 325

95. J Tyson Chatagnier, 2012. "The effect of trust in government on rallies 'round the flag", Journal of Peace Research, 49 (5):631–645; William D. Baker and John R. Oneal, 2001. "Patriotism or Opinion Leadership?: The Nature and Origins of the "Rally 'Round the Flag" Effect", The Journal of Conflict Resolution, 45 (5):661-687; Alan J. Lambert, J. P. Schott, and Laura Scherer, 2011, "Threat, Politics, and Attitudes:Toward a Greater Understanding of Rally-'Round-the- Flag Effects", Current Directions in Psychological Science, 20(6):343–348

pandemic as an extraneous threat to the country even when NRM-O primary-campaigns witnessed total disregard for Covid-19 rules. Threats of war also fall in the same category, rally-round-the-flag: the Rwanda-Uganda conflict, which has become a normal feature of the Kampala-Kigali/Kaguta-Kagame political drama since the 1990s war in Congo, possibly served to remind Ugandans that they risk supporting candidates who are beholden to Rwandan interests.[96]

A more direct form of mass threats was militarisation of election policing. Besides the "multi-force response" Museveni mentions, Covid-19 curfews were enforced by military and paramilitary forces. Around November 2020 riots, which followed the arrest of Bobi Wine, a group of UPDF officials and personnel were trained in Nakasongola on election policing and urban combat operations in preparation for elections. Some of these security personnel seem to have been socialised to forget the rhetoric of human rights, Godliness, and sympathy with rioting civilians. Deployed to act with speed and accuracy, as revealed by the sharp-shooters Museveni mentions in the anti-riot efforts of November 2020, the armed forces' snippers were assigned to monitor civilians from high-rise buildings and trees in Kampala and surrounding areas. Rumors circulated, from sources hard to verify, that these snippers had shoot-to-kill orders. It remains hard to tell whether these rumours were circulated by the regime to inculcate public fear or threaten impending danger if election results turned out otherwise, or by the opposition to discredit government, or simply by fear-gripped civilians.

The researcher saw soldiers with uniform badged with South Sudan flag on 12th January 2021 at Nnebalamye Mayanja junction, Seguku, along Entebbe Road. An acquaintance of the author also revealed that he saw soldiers dressed in Central African Republic (CAR) military uniform in Kampala, but the author was not able to verify this claim considering the level of threat at the time. It remains unclear: (i) whether UPDF soldiers were the ones dressed in these uniforms because they have previously operated in these countries; (ii) whether government 'borrowed' military support from these countries (possibly out of fear that local forces may hesitate to effectively counter protesters in case of polling-day and post-election protests); (iii) or

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96. The Independent, "Museveni, Rwanda and 2021 Elections"; Isaac, "Study Shows 2021 Elections in Uganda Will Be Violent".

whether UPDF personnel have new uniforms yet unknown to Ugandans and with foreign-country peeps, flags and courts of arms. Any of these views is a possible conjecture. The nature of these dynamics renders it difficult, within the short time this analysis had to be completed, to interact with these soldiers and establish whether they were mercenaries, "borrowed fists", or some unique security arrangement Uganda has recently crafted.

On presidential and parliamentary polling day, and days thereafter, heavy military deployment remained. On not-so-few occasions the author was stopped driving at night by some of these soldiers claiming to enforce Covid-19 curfew on roadblocks manned by military forces. This militarisation threatened the would-be protesters and made other Ugandans seriously threatened and uncomfortable. Moreover, Kyagulanyi remained under House Arrest even after elections, being prevented from visiting his party offices to announce the next plan after announcement of presidential election results.[97] This engendered widespread psychological violence with intimidating impact upon Ugandans.

A final element of mass threats was the closure of social media, internet, and mobile money services on the eve of presidential and parliamentary polls. While the president had communicated about closure of Facebook, with which government seems to have had bitter exchanges, internet and mobile-money services were closed abruptly and without warning.[98] This indicates the possible fear that opposition supporters might use social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and chatting outlets to communicate with one another, mobilise for violence, and possible send money to one another. In the process, the whole of the Ugandan society, business community, and some state-government institutional processes were curtailed.

In a speech after announcement of presidential election results, on 16th January 2020, Museveni stated that the trials of a possible Covid-19 cure could not be carried out

97. BBC, 2021, "Bobi Wine", London: BBC (various stories from: https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/c7z5vlz5dggt/bobi-wine, 24 Jan 2021); Juliet Kigongo, 2021 (Jan. 21). "Court set to rule on Bobi Wine house arrest case", Kampala: Daily Monitor (from https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/court-set-to-rule-on-bobi-wine-house-arrest-case-3264774, 25 Jan 2021)
98. BBC, 2021, "Uganda election: Internet restored but social media blocked", London: BBC (from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55705404, 25 Jan 2021)

because of internet shutdown, and accused his health team of failure to use available means (absent internet) to proceed with the testing. Abrupt closure of internet, mobile money, and social media was both an element of mass threats and an indicator of electioneering turned violent for two reasons. First, the closures inflicted psychological violence and fear amongst Ugandans. Second, these closures curtailed would-be opposition supporters from communicating with one another, planning a way forward after declaration of Museveni's election win, and negatively affected business operations of ordinary Ugandans throughout the country.

From Election Violence to Election Outcomes

Scholarly research demonstrates that untamed *fear* can influence voting behaviour and people's actions during and after elections.[99] Historically, political actors have used fear as a political strategy, to deter progression by their political opponents, and as a tool to cultivate undivided loyalty among their proponents or supporters.[100] Political theorists, from Hobbes, to Montesquieu, to Tocqueville, and to Arendt, obscured the political dimensions of deploying fear by focusing on different aspects of power and authority. By doing so, they diverted attention from the public and private authorities who sponsored, benefitted from and thrived on fear.[101] To understand why Ugandans voted the way they did on 14th January 2021, and explain voter behaviour, the extent to which the 'Politics of Fear' motivated Ugandans' election choices during the 2020/2021 elections, we need to unravel the instrumental utilisation of fear during these elections.

From the slogans of the different political parties in the race, to statements attributed to key actors in political contention during campaigns, to some of the actions and performances associated with different candidates, groups, and security agencies, fear has become increasingly manifest. At present, political fear cannot be ignored in understandings of the unfolding uncertainty surrounding Uganda's electoral politics.

99. Johanna Söderström, 2018, "Fear of Electoral Violence and its Impact on Political Knowledge in Sub-Saharan Africa", Political Studies, 66 (4):869–886; Stillman, "Fear Factor"; Burchard, "The Contradictions of Preelection Violence."

100. Robin Corey, 2004. Fear: The History of a Political Idea. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press; Robin Corey, "Liberalism at Bay, Conservatism at Play"; Hannah Arendt, 1960. "Freedom and Politics: A Lecture." Chicago Review, 14(1): 28-46.

101. Corey, Fear

While the NRM-O espoused "Securing Your Future"; Kyagulanyi's NUP espoused "Freedom and Justice" as underlying its agenda.[102] Both were undergirded by politics of fear in ways that sought to coax voters into avoiding certain fears in their election choices. Since Kyagulanyi remains under house arrest at the time of writing (January 2020), it remains unclear whether he significantly threatened the regime with post-election protests or other plans or whether the regime is utilising fear to slowly erase him from public memory and media attention.

The possible role of the politics-of-fear-election-violence mechanism to the election outcomes can be seem through the relatively low turnup during the 2021 presidential and parliamentary polls: the Electoral Commission announced, on 16 January 2021, that only 57.8% of registered voters turned up to vote. This indicates that more than 40% of Ugandan voters either had lost trust in elections or feared possible violence on polling day. Facts remain difficult to grasp. NUP's riding on populist ideals of a disgruntled youth-bulge, the positioning of NUP as an alternative to prolonged stay in power by the NRM and the weakening opposition as demonstrated by the FDC's dismal performance in presidential and parliamentary elections, and the total silence of Ugandans after the polls. The defeat of NRM candidates and ministers, especially in the Buganda region, possibly signalled resilience against mass threats and violence, but also marked voters' submission to counter-violence rhetoric of the NUP.

The NUP was able to cultivate an environment in which they claimed to have left no chance to accommodate the possibility of a different election outcome. Indeed, Kyagulanyi protested the election results, Museveni's apparent 58% win. The NUP candidate cited election malpractices, intimidation during campaigns, and polling-day restrictions, as having curtailed his victory. The incumbent, on the other hand, left no room for error. While he geared up for a possibility of an unlikely landslide, he claimed readiness to accept results "if there are no mistakes". The regional distribution of presidential election results possibly also showed a Buganda poised against other regions of Uganda which apparently gave election victory to Museveni. It remains

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102. In the 2021 NRM presidential campaign slogan of 'securing your future' one can read an attempt to coax voters away from the insecurity likely to befall them if they chose an alternative they have not tested. And the NUP slogan on 'the future you can trust' may be intended to remind voters about inequities that they have associated with the government they seek to unseat from power by promising them a 'phantasmagoria of heavenly bliss'. Both appear to instrumentalize the 'politics of fear' to achieve diametrically opposed objectives.

unclear whether these regions felt threatened and whether ethno-regional considerations informed voters' choices in other regions.

Anxiety and fear ruled both sides of the political divide during campaigns. State operatives were worried about voters' silence in many areas. The emotive response to the arrest of the NUP candidate, Kyagulanyi, in November 2020, by youthful gangs of NUP supporters, culminated in two days of violent riots in many urban centres in Central Uganda. These riots prompted an equally violent repression by security forces, extending repression from the elites to masses. This, in turn, provided an inkling of what was feared to transpire after announcing election results, whether in favour of Museveni or Kuyagulanyi: excited youth can turn their celebrations into mass attacks and other forms of criminal activities as they can also turn their frustrations into violence. Thus, the election aftermath was relatively calm not so much as a consequence of civilian self-control as a result of heavy security deployment and suppression of mass interactions.

Taming the Politics of Fear to Prevent Post-Election Violence

Unapologetic and emotive political expressions by both government and the opposition, rooted in irrational political dispositions, have potential to engender catastrophic consequences: the 1980 experience of post-election civil war remains memorable in the history of Uganda and subsequently the Great Lakes Region. The political goings-on in the run-up to the 2021 polls were emblematic of both emotive political polarisation and potential for post-election violence and uncertainty. There were highly entrenched political interests by incumbent office bearers, as represented by the stance taken by senior government officials like Tumwine.

Potentially fanatic political contention, on the other hand, arose from determined regime-change proponents, whose resolve led to unbridled confrontations, such as the November 2020 violence. It remains unclear whether the country's regulatory regimes and conflict-resolution mechanisms are capable of instilling trust and confidence in post-election dispute resolution processes. The current inability to manage fear, as demonstrated in heavy military deployment and militarised enforcement of curfews, indicate that unachieved political objectives and targets in a now-contested electoral process can become as calamitous as a failure to manage

unexpected successes. How is the country to bridge the valley between both sides of the political divide, to transcend fear, and enable post-election continuity of governance and peaceful transformation?

This paper makes three prescriptions for possibly transcending fear and building post-election consensus between major contending groups and national peace thereafter: post-election dialogue between the major contending groups; transition measures within the NRM-O; and demilitarisation of the Ugandan society.

Post-Election Dialoguing

The notion of post-election dialoguing is based on the experienced degeneration during the past elections since 2001, when election petitions (presidential, parliamentary, as well as local government), residual elections, and by-elections, tend to increase political polarisation in the country. In 2001 and 2006, the main opposition presidential candidate, Dr. Kiiza Besigye, rejected the Supreme Court's decisions to uphold the election results on grounds that the malpractices and illegalities were not substantial enough to warrant overturning the presidential contest. In 2011 and 2016, he also rejected election outcomes, and the 2016 irregularities were reported by Commonwealth and European Union observers. In 2011, a pressure group, called "Walk to Work", which Besigye embraced and/or blessed, disrupted economic activities in and around Kampala and led to confrontational interactions between the state and the 'walkers'. In 2016, Besigye insisted that he had no more reason to appeal presidential election results in the Supreme Court, that he had lost trust in the judiciary infrastructure, and called upon Ugandans to protest against "gunmen." This indicates dwindling trust in, and legitimacy of, the judicial arm of government. The Supreme Court prescriptions of 2006 and 2011, especially on political and electoral reforms, such as timely passing of electoral laws and restrictions on armed forces in elections, together with demands of the opposition to reorganise the appointments and composition of the Electoral Commission, seem not to have been fully implemented to-date, indicating possible political intransigence on the part of the ruling NRM.[103]

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103. For details about these contentions in 2006 and 2016, see: Kiiza, Makara & Rakner, Electoral Democracy in Uganda; Oloka-Onyango & Ahikire, Controlling Consent.

These and similar experiences indicate that post-election Uganda is always riddled with political uncertainty. Trust in, and legitimacy of, state institutions, such as the armed forces and intelligence services, parliament and sub-national legislative structures (District, Sub-County, Municipal, and Town Councils), the judiciary and sub-national conflict-resolution mechanisms, continues to dwindle significantly as the NRM-O further stretches its longevity. Non-state institutions with potential to mediate between strong interests, such as Interreligious Council of Uganda (IRCUJ) or Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC), or even the Elders Forum of Uganda (TEFU), seem to have been rendered footnotes in the unfolding contentions for power during 2020/2021. It is left to the main political contenders to agree on the minimum consensus under which Uganda is to be governed. This indicates that political level-headedness, as opposed to state and non-state moderation, is the mainstay of Uganda's post-election stability.

Post-election dialoguing can take several dimensions. First, it may entail *negotiated consensus* between the main presidential candidates, specifically Museveni and Kyagulanyi. It is this interface which will tame the embers of a potentially inflamed electorate. The challenge with a two-men dialogue, though it may represent the main leaders in the strongest contending groups, NUP and NRM-O, is that it becomes too narrow to represent the multifarious interests of different sections of the Ugandan body politique. This requires the second aspect, namely, *mediated interactions between the ruling party and the opposition groups*. This rather difficult task involves intra-opposition consensus building, later consensual agreements between the opposition parties and the NRM-O. At this level, parties ought to be encouraged to hold internal conversations, come up with minimum interests and then meet among themselves to reach intra-opposition standpoints. The opposition standpoint should then be brought to face the NRM-O standpoint and a generally-agree-upon agenda set. Along this agenda, dialogue between the opposition and ruling party should be held and a common position reached. Such a position, whether or not it requires constitutional and/or legal reforms, ought to be expeditiously implemented with the view to bringing the core interests of both sides in the country's governance processes and practices.

The final aspect is the pursuit of *integrated exercise of power* in a post-election Uganda. Akin to, but different from, power-sharing[104], this approach involves parties agreeing to form multi-party executives at Cabinet, city, and local government levels irrespective of which party won in which are and at what level. This *consensual political integration* reduces the propensity of the national-ruling NRM-O from deliberately frustrating areas dominated by the opposition through resource and budget allocation, and other insidious methods of undermining the opposition in areas where the NUP, FDC or DP prevailed during elections. Multi-level political integration has potential to reduce the incentives for opposition leaders to deliberately sabotage central-government programs with the view to supplanting the NRM-O and/or eroding the minimum remains of state legitimacy via deliberate denial of service delivery and development in those areas. This process has potential to evolve in areas like Buganda where the trend toward opposition domination in post-2021 Uganda seems to be already set.

Previous experience has indicated a positive correlation between dwindling support in Buganda and loss of power: the 1964-1966 clashes between Uganda and Buganda partly contributed to the 1971 coup d'état; the decline of Amin's support in Buganda between 1975 and 1978 sped up his downfall; and Obote's fortunes after the controversial 1980 election were no better, which engendered Buganda's support for Museveni's People's Redemption Army (PRA), later National Resistance Army (NRA) rebellion and the 1985 coup d'état. The correlation is clear: leaderships and governments whose support in Buganda has significantly shrivelled are closer to their downfall than the reverse. This need not sound prognostic against the NRM-O. But the 2021 election results indicate that its heydays in central region, which has become increasingly urbanised, multi-ethnic, and politically astute, are waning. If neither of the proposed political-integration sub-aspects is pursued, there may be tendencies, even incentives, for pro-NRM-O government and state officials to deny resources and development support in opposition-dominated areas. Opposition leaders too, may deliberately frustrate service delivery and/or development in these areas in order to

104. Anna K. Jarstad, 2009. "The Prevalence of Power-Sharing: Exploring the Patterns of Post-Election Peace", Africa Spectrum, 44 (3):41-62; Nie Cheeseman and Blessing-Miles Tendi, 2010. "Power-sharing in comparative perspective: the dynamics of 'unity government' in Kenya and Zimbabwe", The Journal of Modern African Studies, 48 (2):203-229; cf Andreas Mehler, 2009, "Peace and Power Sharing in Africa: A Not So Obvious Relationship" African Affairs, 108 (432):453–473,

preclude political recovery of the NRM-O in these areas. Either scenario is counterproductive and corrosive of national transformation.

While previous efforts at promoting dialogue have always seemed futile, and the NRM-O has exhibited political rigidity in its relationship with opposition groups, the 2020/2021 elections have signalled that no party can claim a specific constituency. This sends signals that the NRM-O's political ground is equally shaky, while opposition groups now fully understand the critical importance of personalities in party politics: in Rukungiri, much like a large section of the Rwenzori region and northern Uganda, where the opposition FDC previously dominated, the NRM-O has won. In Buganda, where the NRM-O previously claimed stronghold, NUP has had resounding victory. These results indicate that no party has a consolidated political base. It is reasonable, therefore, to expect critical lessons for all parties from these outcomes and to suggest that parties need dialogue in order to ensure post-election political predictability.

Transition within the NRM-O

Alongside post-election dialoguing is the need for transition within the NRM-O itself. The organisation's primaries of 2015 and 2020 indicated a clear contest between old and young generations, highlighting the unwillingness of old members to transition to young members. Similarly, claims of historical importance and contribution to the NRM-O power politics seem to have dissuaded many would-be young Ugandans from joining the party, which furthers the interests of opposition groups in wining younger voters' support.

A more difficult and sensitive issue within the NRM-O is the transcendence of Museveni. The person, the party, and the politics seem to have become intricately woven to the extent of crowding out potential presidential candidates within the party. The increasing departures of historical members, both those who have served in cabinet, high-level security and military positions, and the ageing of founding members ought to create incentives for seeking an intra-party transition process in which party members see and hope for a free and fair contest while also building legitimacy before the Ugandan electorate. Proponents of political stability and continuity of peaceful governance had better openly and boldly engage the NRM-O on the touchy question

of transition, an issue that require direct dealing with Museveni and top NRM-O officials. Absent such a transition arrangement, three scenarios are likely to unfold.

First, more defections from within the NRM-O ranks may occur in much the same way as General David Tinyefuza (aka Sejusa), Gen Henry Tumukunde, and Brig. Amama Mbabazi did. While Besigye's defection in 1999 was then seen as "jumping the que", and was not generally appreciated within higher ranks, the NRM-O increasingly became beholden to corruption[105] which Besigye underlined. Post-2001 elections have failed to enhance democracy. More defections have occurred since NRM legislators under the Parliamentary Advocacy Forum (PAFO) opposed the removal of presidential term limits from the constitution during 2003-2005.[106] These defections reduced the historical commitment and loyalty to the party, leaving it beholden to Museveni's (neo)patrimonial laps. Second, public officials who may be strong NRM-O supporters, and who may have been using their positions to support the organisation's electoral politics through access to state resources and opportunities, may reduce their zeal. This will likely force the party to recruit untested but self-seeking supporters as demonstrated by the recent enlistment of musicians and other artists. Finally, the NRM-O, specifically Museveni, being bereft of historical comradeship, may resort to more repression. Previous methods, such as patronage appointments and monetisation of politics, are no longer reliable. Money-dishing opportunities do not extend to large sections of the electorate: the patronage opportunities given to Buganda region, including the recent return of some *Ebyaffe* like land, did not prevent opposition win in the region. The last recourse for Museveni will likely be further militarisation yet Uganda needs the opposite.

Demilitarisation

While the NRM-O has run a military government disguised as a post-1995 civilian constituted authority through regular elections, increasing militarisation gnaws at the

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105. Roger Tangri & Andrew M Mwenda, 2003. "Military Corruption & Ugandan Politics Since the Late 1990s", Review Of African Political Economy, 30 (98):539-552

106. Sabiti Makara, 2010. "Deepening Democracy Through Multipartyism: The Bumpy Road To Uganda's 2011 Elections", Africa Spectrum, 45 (2):81-94; Kiiza, Makara and Rakner, Electoral Democracy In Uganda; Sabiti Makara, Lise Rakner, and Lars Svåsand, 2009, "Turnaround: The National Resistance Movement and the Reintroduction of a Multiparty System in Uganda", International Political Science Review, 30 (2):185–204

marrow of the Ugandan polity and portends to post-2021 uncertainty for three reasons. First, the military has taken over civilian spaces in public service–policing, civil intelligence, customs control, revenue protection, civil registration, agriculture/OWC, fisheries management, and more. The Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) has, with the president's blessing and parliament's complicity, eroded civilian expertise. This military takeover, however, has not brought efficiency in public service as deficiencies in OWC, policing, the National Information and Registration Authority (NIRA), and other institutions, persist. Uganda's specialists in violence may soon become subjects of ridicule like other state officials, a problem the UPDF had avoided due to its hitherto disciplined conduct vis-à-vis civilians. Second, the UPDF is being forced to clash with civilians. Its role in quelling the November 2020 riots shows its increasing role in contending with an increasingly frustrated electorate. This threatens cordial relations between the military and the populace and potentially gnaws at the marrow of the UPDF's corporate interest and image. Finally, the more the UPDF is seen to be siding with the ruling government/party the more it loses legitimacy as a people's army. The increasing perception of a partisan military can endanger the UPDF's claim to democratic civil-military relations (CMRs). These and similar concerns raise important justifications for considering demilitarisation as the next step toward post-2021 stability in Uganda.

The proposed demilitarisation may take three forms: reduction of military role in civilian state structures and development processes; increasing the role and standing of Uganda Police Force (UPF) in law enforcement and public order management; and reducing the militaristic rhetoric. The appointment of UPDF officers in civilian institutions may progressively worsen unease within these institutions and the general public. The oft-hyped discipline of the armed forces has not translated in public-sector efficiency in institutions where military officers have been placed. This has exposed the inability of "specialists in violence" to handle civilian affairs. This naysays claims about the military's relative effectiveness in civilian affairs. The police institution is degenerating yet generals have led the same for two decades or so. It remains difficult to justify continued appointment of generals as Inspectors General of Police (IGP). These failures may also demoralise traditional police officers, leading to further institutional malfunctioning. Finally, the militaristic rhetoric, common with senior government and NRM-O officials – "We have the support of the *Majje*"; "the original

NRA"; "the military is justified to assist police …"; "we have a strong army" – has been sending signals that Uganda may slide back to autocratic militarism when the armed forces begin to view themselves as the only guarantors of peaceful and stable governance. In order to prevent armed forces acquiring an abnormal sense of self-importance, it is important to give non-military approaches more prominence in post-2021 Uganda.

Conclusion

Political anxiety and its resulting politics of fear, increases with increase in regime uncertainty. This engenders compounding dynamics of political behaviours and practices that undermine democratic processes and institutions. Elections degenerate from mechanisms of peaceful contestation for power to ritualistic guises of periodic self-renewal and do-or-die struggles. The resulting derogation of electoral processes comes less as a upshot of failure in election-management processes but more as a signal of political obstinacy. Contending groups resort to politics of fear as a means to securing electoral victory over opponents. Since 2006, Uganda has evolved dangerously toward politics of fear, which portends to post-2021 uncertainty, for various reasons.

In the main, the NRM-O's political base continues to dwindle due to demographic changes, increasing urbanisation, eroding historical memory, and governance failures. Intra-party amity and harmony, within the ruling movement and opposition parties, has given way to survival for the fittest amidst intense competition for individualised and selfish interests in which monetisation of primary and general elections has become the norm.[107] Inter-party relations have been reduced to bitter exchanges as the NRM-O presents opponents as anti-State and anti-Country; the opposition presents the ruling party as an evolving personalisation of power and dictatorship; government resorts to election violence against the opposition[108]; and state and political institutions (mainly parliament, the military, police, intelligence and other security forces) are being rendered footnotes in the decisional and operational domains of governance. Civil military relations have also failed to progress to civilian control over the military and

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107. Vokes, "Primaries, patronage, and political personalities in South-western Uganda".
108. Hafner-Burton, et. al., "When do Governments Resort to Election Violence?"

tended more toward coup proofing, garrisoning, and military corruption, the upshot of which has been militarisation of elections.[109] Finally, state-society relations have tended toward clashes and mistrust, as state institutions like the EC and Parliament can no longer be trusted with people's constitutional consent about their own governance.[110]

The foregoing synthesis indicates that it is important for analysts, researchers, and practitioners alike to acknowledge that the politics of fear which typified the 2020/2021 elections threatens Uganda's democratic future and stability. This regressive trajectory may have started with the 2005 constitutional amendments. Political regression evolved more ominously when the NRM-O itself showed little signs of building functional democratic ethos within its ranks and between itself and opposition parties. Unpredictable as the future may be, and as elusive as human political behaviour and actions can be, political uncertainty bedevils the NRM-O as it does the opposition – hence the whole country. Political institutions are losing their procedural and rules-based hold over political behaviour. Instead, the politics of the country has slewed toward more repressive controls, electoral-political intolerance, militarised management of society, mass threats, and disillusionment amongst citizens as seen in the low turnup (only 57%) during the 2020/2021 elections.

This paper proposes a three-pronged approach to building post-2021 peace and stability in Uganda. The strategy need not be acceptable to everyone. It is, however, a measured appreciation of what ought to be done to meaningfully ensure that the period after the 2021 polls guarantees legitimate political sanity. First, post-election dialoguing will ensure negotiated settlement of the most outstanding disputes within parties and between the ruling NRM-O and opposition groups, thereby shielding Uganda against political agitation. Second, intra-NRM-O transition will enable the organisation to renew itself, refresh and consolidate its own structures, and display relative political maturity vis-à-vis the opposition. This will give it more credibility and attract sympathies from more Ugandan voters. Finally, demilitarisation of both the

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109. Sabastiano Rwengabo, 2013. "Regime Stability in Post-1986 Uganda: Counting the Benefits of Coup Proofing", Armed Forces & Society, 39 (3):531–559; Laswell, "The Garrison State"; Gerald Bareebe, 2020, "Predators or Protectors? Military Corruption as a Pillar of Regime Survival in Uganda", Civil Wars, DOI: 10.1080/13698249.2020.1730640ityil
110. Oloka-Onyango and Ahikire, Controlling Consent

state and society will improve civil-military relations, prevent possible denting of the UPDF image, secure the military's corporate interests, and restore confidence in civilian structures of state governance. These fundamental adjustments in the country's body politique will reduce political trepidation, counter the unfolding politics of fear, and enable political actors to engage one another on the most important, political, constitutional, and electoral, reforms that have been pending or evaded since 2001. In the process, the politics of fear will give way to the politics of consensus building and state-institutional consolidation. [111]

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111. Andreja Zevnik, 2017, "From Fear to Anxiety: An Exploration into a New Socio-Political Temporality", Law Critique, 28:235–246.