

Abstract	
Title	Victims of Violence or Heroism? A Relational Historical Analysis of Revolutionary Regime Culture and Survival Apocalypse in Uganda.
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The euphoria that flared the entire political environment in Uganda over the change of history was unprecedented after the revolutionary struggle, led by Museveni, which started in 1981 and ended in 1986 with the complete defeat of the established state anarchy after 1962 Independence from the British colonial rule. This excitement was followed by a relatively controlled National Resistance Army-led transition to civilian rule (at least as compared to other military transitions that Uganda witnessed since the end of colonial rule) that managed the country from 1986 to 1995 when a new constitution was enacted. 1995 brought a new era in which a constitution would determine the course of political action and cause the state and the citizens to have reciprocal responsibilities and duties. A constitution looked like a vivid contract between the state and its people. The 1995 constitution provided safeguards against political power greed and restraints on any attempt by any person to personalize the political theatre. It promised that a president would rule for only two five-year terms after which power would voluntarily through a political process change ownership. It promised fair competition and fair electoral practices as opposed to the 1980 electoral process. However, far from this was yet to unfold. All the collective expectations turned into a dream as a myriad of political actions by the revolutionaries started to resist the constitutional path as evident from the period during and after president Museveni's election into the office for the second term in 2001.

In 2005, the 1995 Uganda constitution was amended to remove the first safeguard against power retention—the presidential term was lifted from the strict two five-term limits on tenure in office to allow a president to contest for the office as long as he wanted. The country adopted a multi-party system from the Movement Political System (single-

party system) but competition remained controlled through the constitutional practices, state function, and military intervention in politics. The presidential elections turned into the only avenue through which public/social services could reach the people. In any case, a constituency that continuously opposed the president was sure to have no priority for social services like water, electricity, and roads. The common phrase is “mwalonga bubi” (literally meaning you voted wrongly). Also, a competitive electoral process turned into a battlefield as the revolutionary regime (musevenism) encountered consistent opposition, especially from Dr. Kizza Besigye after the 2001 presidential elections. Common also was the use of lethal force to contain this emerging opposition player including arrests, torture, and detentions.

While a few nation-states in Sub-Saharan Africa have changed regimes successfully since independence from European colonialism, some countries have found this regime transfer rather impossible. I seek to investigate the dynamics around the cultivation of a culture that makes revolutionary regimes revitalized and further empowered in their sustenance projects. My relational approach seeks to address the structural-institutional cultural and agency’s constructive dynamics. I elucidate how the memory of past wars and a collective fear of the future as well as a national political ideology, state corruption and patriarchy, the unintended outcomes of protracted protest projects, and state repressive apparatuses entangle to produce a cultural-political system in which the political regime dominance thrives. In such an analysis, the individual personification of power accounts, as well as structural relevancy of a revolutionary system are entangled and construed as self-reinforcing.

The context of this study is the “paradox of the regime change” and “political power transition” as an indicator for the concomitant difficulty in the articulation of the fundamental political processes that constrain dissent from taking steps towards changing the existing ordering of politics. Through the following objectives, mechanisms of causal entanglement are explained. First, I seek to demonstrate how the memories of the tragic past (both at individual, generational, and collective/national level) influence the making and sustenance of revolutionary regimes. Second, to explain the role of militarism and/or military rule in a revolutionary regime consolidation matrix. Third, to demonstrate how neo-patrimonial-based state corruption contributes to the stability mechanisms of a revolutionary regime. Forth, to account for how protests/riots/wars gain and sustain new meanings in the consolidation of the political status quo. From these objectives, the

following questions arise. How does politics in these entangled objectives construct particular political cultures? And, how does culture construct politics (power and regimes)? What constitutes political culture in political regimes and power studies? From these questions, a central theme reflected on is the crisis and intricate issues around “political power”, “regimes” and “regime change” in the configurations of memory of war/history/national ideology, repression, state corruption, protests, and their roles as “embedded and interactive things”.

I shall also interrogate the assumption that formal institutions such as states, governments, or regimes (even schools, churches, and families) are incubation grounds for the birth of civic-political cultural entities—norms, rituals, and beliefs—associated with political power influencing regime stability. The justifications and significations of such cultural entities greatly depend on their resonance with the predicaments of the previous regimes as well as the ideology of the current power holders, interest of individual actors, repression (and other forms of official impunity), and the prolonged civil strife (protests exemplified by university contestations).

The goal is to explain why, partly, the participatory electoral process (participatory politics for lack of a better term) may not necessarily guarantee fundamental regime change. The universal representation of modern state function, multi-party democracy, human rights, and freedoms is seemingly buried by the same process of misinterpretation and misrepresentation of political master narratives. I illustrate why and how unconventional sources of political change such as protests could instead work to legitimize the regime’s openness to opposition and contestation rather than a change of the political order (in much of retrospective analysis).

I problematize the context of power in Uganda’s revolutionary regime and its interaction with the histories of the earlier regimes which is a process amassed with meanings and metaphors. This context stimulates the political transitional issues emanating from attempts to change from pre-colonial patrimonialism to post-colonial warlord governments, and popular governance. This revolutionary regime-construction process involves access to power forcibly through guerrilla warfare but also civil consolidation mechanisms as discussed in the thesis.