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Title: Contextualizing citizenship in Uganda

Year: 2020

Version: Published version

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Please cite the original version:

Alava, H., Bananuka, T. H., Ahimbisibwe, K. F., & Kontinen, T. (2020). Contextualizing citizenship in Uganda. In K. Holma, & T. Kontinen (Eds.), *Practices of Citizenship in East Africa : Perspectives from Philosophical Pragmatism* (pp. 57-72). Routledge. Routledge Explorations in Development Studies. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429279171-5>

5 Contextualizing citizenship in Uganda

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Introduction

According to the pragmatist framework of this book, practices in which citizenship is constructed are embedded in certain environments and, accordingly, current citizenship habits have been formulated in the course of a continuity of experiences and in interaction with existing circumstances (Holma & Kontinen, this volume). In this chapter, we provide a short overview of Uganda in so far as it is relevant for understanding the experiences and practices of citizenship: both vocal political engagement and the everyday processes of addressing matters of local importance. In contemporary Uganda, citizenship is manifest, on the one hand, in the upfront contestation and mobilization of visible opposition figures with increased popular support, and, on the other, continuously in mundane everyday life where problems are solved and shared issues are addressed together. The chapter thus contextualizes subsequent empirical chapters on gendered citizenship (Ndidde et al.), localized citizenship (Ahimbisibwe et al.), subdued citizenship (Alava) and critical education (Bananuka & John) in Uganda, and provides inspiration for reflecting on prevalent liberal ideas of citizenship in light of lived experience of politics in the country. The chapter proceeds as follows: an overview of Ugandan history is followed by discussion of some of its contemporary characteristics, after which we conclude with reflection on the multiple spaces for citizenship learning in Uganda.

Historical positioning: From pre-colonial kingdoms to the contemporary hybrid state

In 1894, most parts of what is today known as Uganda was annexed as a British protectorate, and the emerging country remained under colonial rule until 1962. At independence, the subjects of the colonial government were transformed, by law, into citizens of the independent state of Uganda (Mamdani 1996/2004). Prior to the British annexation of Uganda as its protectorate, the area comprised numerous socially and politically heterogeneous groups. These ranged from the hierarchically ruled and centralized kingdoms of Buganda, Bunyoro, Ankole

and Toro, to communities in which leadership was dispersed among chiefs and lineage heads, as in the regions of Lango, Acholi, Madi, West Nile, and Karamoja (Babikwa 2005; Quinn 2014). In the pre-colonial kingdoms, leadership was largely autocratic, and power was bestowed upon certain individuals by right of birth. Local governance habits had emerged over long periods of time; the modern Kingdom of Buganda, for instance, was already established in the fourteenth century (Mutibwa 2008, 1). Accordingly, as Karlström (1996) shows, “customary” Baganda ideas of governance and politics continue to influence people’s interpretations of contemporary politics, transcending, for instance, liberal deliberative democracy when long-standing cultural norms may give priority to civility or good manners.

Moreover, colonial power had far-reaching implications for citizenship constellations in Uganda today. The subjection of peoples from different kingdoms and clans to colonial rule instituted a notable departure from the ways in which societies had been organized. Colonial rule also intensified ethnic divisions in the area. Different areas had a different stand on being annexed to the British protectorate. For instance, the Buganda kingdom collaborated with the British and became a springboard for the expansion of colonial rule into Eastern Uganda (Mutibwa 2008). Some areas which resisted British occupation, such as Bunyoro and Acholi, were violently subjugated while others were peaceably annexed. Moreover, different regions were favoured by the British in terms of provision of resources and appointment to leadership positions. Colonial rulers considered the different peoples of Uganda to be suitable for different jobs, hence, while the northern parts of the country, in particular, gained military employment, the central and southern regions were the recipients of investment in high-quality education and industrial development.

In many areas, traditional chiefs were replaced with colonially appointed rulers. The British administration also applied the Bugandan model – based on a hierarchy of chiefs under a king – to the rest of the country (Mutibwa 2008, 9). In order to empower chiefs to fulfil the tasks expected of them by the colonial government, such as tax collection, a system of “indirect rule” granted chiefs a breadth of power far beyond what they had previously had and effectively removed the checks and balances that had reigned in chiefly power in the pre-colonial era. In Mamdani’s (1996/2004) terms, the pre-colonial systems in which chiefs had acted not only as rulers but also as patrons and caretakers of their subjects were replaced with decentralized despotism. The bolstering of ethnic identities and the creation of formidable regional socioeconomic divisions during the colonial era had long-lasting effects once Uganda gained independence.

Post-independent Uganda: Struggles and changing regimes

The first few years after independence were characterized by hope, enthusiasm and a booming economy. The Constitution of 1962 included a

comprehensive Bill of Rights, and gave relative autonomy to the kingdoms, especially Buganda. However, by 1966, the socialist-leaning Prime Minister Milton Obote had suspended the Independence Constitution and, in 1967, instituted a new one that positioned him as executive president with immense powers (Halsteen 2004, 104). The Bugandan parliament resisted this act, whereupon the Buganda king was forced into exile in Britain following an attack on his palace by forces led by the army commander, Idi Amin. In 1971, Amin deposed Obote, and was initially welcomed with high expectations both in Uganda and Britain, a euphoria that swiftly vanished as Amin unleashed a reign of terror and dictatorship. A protracted struggle led by the combined forces of exiled Ugandans and Tanzanian forces overthrew Idi Amin in 1979 and, in a highly disputed election in 1981, Milton Obote regained power (Apter 1995).

The regimes of Obote I, Amin and Obote II were all criticized for favouring their own people and entrenching ethnic, regional and religious rivalries (Carbone 2003; Makara et al. 2009). Discontent with the increasing violence of Obote's second regime, most of which was perpetrated by his primarily northern Ugandan Acholi and Langi soldiers, culminated in the rise of resistance in what became known as the Bush War (1981–1986). At its core was the National Resistance Army (NRA; later renamed the National Resistance Movement, NRM) led by Yoweri Museveni. Initially, Museveni's troops consisted mainly of members of the Banyarwanda group, which has historically lived and migrated across the colonially established borders between Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and DR Congo. Their orderly conduct and respect for civilians in the areas they controlled led the rebels to gain support from local populations in central and southern Uganda. As the rebellion gained momentum, so did Obote's troops' violent retaliations, most heatedly so in the Luwero Triangle north of the capital, Kampala, which again spurred support for the NRA.

A peace deal eventually struck between Obote and a number of rebel groups was short-lived, and in 1986 the NRA took over Kampala and established Museveni as president, a position which he has retained to this day. After years of chaos and violence, the new regime started a process of consolidating peace and nation-building. Museveni's takeover was seen by many Ugandans as providing much needed respite from the chaos that had characterized the preceding years (Tripp 2010, 1), yet experiences across the country diverged widely. In areas where Obote's soldiers had subjected the population to a reign of terror, Museveni was hailed as a saviour. In those parts of the north where Museveni's troops rounded up former soldiers and inflicted brutal retributive violence on the civilian population, the NRA was seen as a reign of terror. While the north continued to be drenched in waves of violent warfare between Museveni and rebel groups opposed to him – the Lord's Resistance Army in the Acholi region among the most long lasting – the south set out on a path of stabilization, economic growth and human development. This split in experiences of state power created two distinctly different realities co-existing within Ugandan borders (Shaw & Mbabazi 2007).

A new constitution was promulgated in 1995 following country-wide citizen consultation and participation in seminars, workshops, written memoranda and public debates (Halsteen 2004, 104). The constitution of 1995 legalized “movement democracy” and a political “movement system”, thus diminishing hopes that some had held of introducing a multi-party system (Anderson & Fisher 2016, 69; Rubongoya 2018, 102). The “non-party system” was supported by arguments that after the decades of brutal violence and ethnic conflicts, the country was not ready for politics based on contestation (Carbone 2003; Makara et al. 2009). While the NRM’s stated claim has been that it is a movement of all citizens, without ethnic, regional or religious bias (Rubongoya 2018, 103), the top leaders of Museveni’s regime largely hail from his home region in western Uganda (Tripp 2010, 25). Many of the tensions laid down during the colonial era thus continue to influence the present. In place of blanket statements about “Ugandan” experiences of citizenship, there is a need for historical and contextual nuance.

Multi-party system and hybrid governance

During the colonial era, education was largely in the hands of Catholic and Protestant (Anglican) missionaries, which led to the emergence of a political elite divided along religious lines. Four years prior to independence, the country’s first political party, the Uganda National Congress (UNC), was formed with strong backing from the Protestant Church, whereas the majority of activists in the Democratic Party, formed shortly after the UNC, had Catholic backgrounds. Considering the violence of the first decades of Uganda’s independence, Museveni’s move to ban political parties on grounds of their perpetrating religious and ethnic sectarianism can thus be seen as an attempt to address a genuine problem. Political parties were only re-allowed in 2005, following donor pressure and an eventual public election (Rubongoya 2018, 106). What at first sight appeared a step towards democratization led, however, to new pressures on civic space. Many commentators agree that the old ideas of “divide and rule” on the basis of politicized identities such as religion and ethnicity have intensified during Museveni’s time in power (Rubongoya 2018, 106; Tripp 2010, 25), and although opposition parties are allowed, they are treated as “enemies” to be side-lined or destroyed, rather than as political contestants (Rubongoya, 2018).

The most recent changes in legislation in 2017, pushed through parliament by Museveni and his dominant NRM members of parliament, have removed presidential age limits, paving the way for Museveni – already nominated in 2019 as NRM’s sole candidate for the 2021 election – to remain in power without any constitutional restrictions. Contemporary Uganda is thus rightly characterized as a “hybrid regime”, in which democratic or liberal structures of governance co-exist with non-democratic or authoritarian governance methods such as patronage, violence and repression (Tripp 2010, 1–3). This kind of hybrid regime, and the many contradictions and tensions that

characterize it, provide the context for citizenship practices in Uganda today, especially when it comes to political participation and state-citizen relationships. Despite the multi-party system, in practice the NRM party retains such a tight hold on power that the state and the NRM are largely inseparable in the eyes of many Ugandan citizens (Alava & Ssentongo 2016). In the following section we turn to some elements that characterize contemporary discussions on the citizenship environment in Uganda, which provide lenses for understanding the contexts of different citizenship practices, both in the vocally contested political sphere and in everyday life.

Characteristics of citizenship environments

Our historical overview pointed to the specificities that characterize citizenship in Uganda to date. In this section, we discuss four elements that we consider of relevance for shaping current citizenship practices: belonging, patronage, religion and violence.

Belonging: Politicizing ethnicity

In a country of diverse ethnic groups and over 52 spoken languages, one's place of origin and mother tongue and the particular cultural practices attached to diverse ethnicities are common topics of everyday conversations. Questions of belonging are also central to debates about citizenship – both as a right (to vote, to own property, to claim land), and as an identity (Bøås & Dunn 2013). Claims to belonging can provide important arenas of participation and inclusion, but they also function as mechanisms of exclusion. While a universal notion of “Ugandan” citizenship has been hard to craft, the sphere in which “citizenship” has de facto taken place (Clarke et al. 2014) has been either the broader ethnic community, or closer membership in the community towards which one fulfils one's social responsibilities (Cheney 2008). In this vein, good citizenship can be understood as “residence” in a community (Ahimbisibwe et al., this volume; Ndidde et al., this volume). Therefore, while the rights-based discourse portrays citizens as individuals with rights to claim, lived experience can emphasize citizenship as good and responsible membership in a community. Yet, even when membership in the local community may be regarded as a privilege by that community's members, the question of who can stake claims on the state remains influential and has powerfully shaped Ugandan history.

The expulsion of Asians living in Uganda by Idi Amin in 1972 presents perhaps the most striking example of exclusions from citizenship. Yet less visible but equally striking disputes continue regarding, for instance, the question of when a migrant or refugee – and there are millions in Uganda – becomes a Ugandan. The question of who belongs has in recent years also been waged on sexual grounds, with queer Ugandans – often condemned as “un-African” (Tamale 2009, 58) – calling to be accepted as full citizens of the

country, with the same political rights and freedoms as everyone else (Valois 2015). Additionally, while Uganda has been at the forefront of women's movements in Africa (Tripp 2001; 2002), citizenship rights and experiences are gendered when it comes to the right to own land, to gain independent income, to fully participate in political decision-making or to have control of one's own sexuality (Tamale 2009, 53), especially in rural areas.

Patronage: Loyalties and obligations

The second element characterizing citizenship experiences in Uganda is the relationship between participation and patronage. The extent to which Ugandans have been able to participate in public affairs has historically fluctuated from violent subjection to colonial rule, to eras of dictatorship, to the current regime's initial (at least rhetorical) emphasis on broadened participation in decision-making at the grassroots level. Colonial administrators used small gifts and benefits to set subjects against each other in a manner that benefited the rulers, and post-independence leaders have continued to use patronage to stay in power and as a political bargaining tool (Green 2011; Rubongoya 2018, 108; Titeca 2018, 115). In Uganda, patronage is frequently used to gain support, using the provision of gifts and services in order to ensure personal support and loyalty. During electoral campaigning, candidates want to picture themselves as good patrons by offering gifts and money to potential voters. Although intensified in the run-up to elections, exercising patronage is an ongoing effort; members of parliament and the president himself are frequently shown visiting communities and providing money to fix an immediate problem such as the lack of a decent road or toilets in schools (Titeca 2018, 123).

Patronage implies citizenship experiences that revolve around showing loyalty to power holders, and expecting the "father of the nation", and other "big men" to provide something material in exchange; the NRM, for instance, is perceived by many people as a fountain of good things (Vokes & Wilkins 2016). Such citizens' experiences are quite different from the vision of citizenship as holding the government accountable, or as participation in deliberation on political issues. Therefore, Uganda's patrimonial politics and personalized rule can be seen as a contrast to liberal democracy (Halsteen 2004, 110), and, from such a perspective, patronage has been argued to be one of the main constraints on democratization (Hickey & King 2016).

Religion: Towards moral orders of citizenship

In Uganda, religion plays an important role both in national politics and in local mobilizing. The most enduring effect on the political sphere has come from the Catholic and the Protestant (Anglican) Churches, which have until recently been the largest in the country. While, on the one hand, they have created inter-ethnic allegiances, they have also functioned as sources of

division (Wasswa-Kintu 1995). Throughout the colonial and much of the post-colonial era, churches were the primary conduits between the state and citizens, and the primary provider of many social services, including education (Alava & Shroff, 2019). Despite its formal opposition to religion, Obote's reign entrenched the division between the Anglican Church, which functioned as a de facto state church, and the Catholic Church, which was pushed into opposition despite its majority status.

Museveni's disbanding of earlier political parties, the two biggest of which were closely connected with the Uganda's largest churches, transformed the public role of religion: the churches' direct ability to influence politics decreased, yet they maintained a notable capacity to mobilize people at the local and national levels, with religious leaders employing their highly visible positions to take part in and influence public debates (Alava & Ssentongo 2016). At the local level, alongside the activities of religious leaders, many of whom are respected as public authorities, a variety of local church groups exist to provide arenas for participation in parish decision-making and in various development initiatives – examples include parish councils, the Mother's Union of the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church's Small Christian Communities. In Kassimir's view, these groups have limited effect in promoting transformation in civil society, partly because they have largely been established by missionaries or by local clerics rather than by local initiative (Kassimir 1998). Yet, despite such limitations, other observers note that churches in general must be acknowledged as deeply meaningful arenas for organizing at the local level (Jones 2009).

Particularly since the 1980s, a key arena for collective mobilizing and organizing has developed around charismatic religious expression, both concerns over witchcraft and spirit possession, and over the apparent failure of the state and the moral corruption of society. This is an energy that the structures of mainline churches have largely been unable to capture for their own mobilization. Furthermore, it evidences understandings of "civility" that may be highly different to those implied by West-centric understandings of "civil society" (Kassimir 1998). Meanwhile, increasingly politicized Pentecostal/Charismatic forms of Christianity are articulating ideals of citizenship that are profoundly shaped by religious idioms and moral projects (Bompani & Valois 2017). The growth of these movements' public influence has spread a concern about morality to all segments of public debate, whereby notions of what constitutes a "good citizen" in Uganda have increasingly turned into questions of morality (Gusman 2009).

Violence: Militarization of the polity

Ugandan post-colonial history has been characterized by what Anderson and Fisher (2016, 68) refer to as a general "militarization of the polity": the fusion of military and political power centralized around the president. Ugandan military and security services played a key role in ensuring support for

Museveni's regime during the elections in 2001, which were characterized by outbursts of violence. Moreover, the police and army frequently harass and arrest assemblies of oppositional parties, as well as protesters addressing any issue in demonstrations or journalists covering such events (*ibid.*, 80). This activity is partly enabled by the Anti-Terrorist Act of 2002 that gave security agencies a lot of power. Museveni's hold on power owes much to the, at times, brutal violence meted out by the army and special forces under the command of his younger brother, and to networks of informants that are commonly believed to have infiltrated all institutions, from village councils and churches to universities (Tapscott 2017). It has been argued that international donors have (often indirectly) strengthened the Ugandan military, and, thus, supported the authoritarian and violent regime (Anderson & Fisher 2016, 68). Uganda's remarkable role in peacekeeping in the region has also enabled international military support to be flown into the country.

Moreover, during the first decade of NRM rule, it sought to secure full control all over the country in the face of protesting rebel groups. In that period, Local Defence Units (LDUs) were set up, and training schools of *mchakamcaka* were established under the NRM to train citizens in basic defence skills and inculcate political values in civilian participants in order to legitimate NRM power, with the argument that all citizens should be able to defend themselves against the future abuses of a tyrannical leader (Rubongoya 2018, 100). Such programs were compulsory for all citizens, and every morning "hundreds of thousands of Ugandans could be seen marching with wooden guns and chanting pro-NRM slogans" (Tripp 2010, 77). Clearly, a very specific kind of good citizenship is learned in militarized citizenship education of the type conducted by the NRM; loyalty to the party and to the nation, combined with the violent underpinnings of the training, come to shape understandings of what citizenship means (Verma 2013).

Spaces for learning citizenship

In any country, the formal education system plays an important role not only in provision of basic literacy and numeracy skills, but also in nation-building and the creation of a sense of citizenship. Moreover, civil society, both in the form of established civil society organizations (CSOs) and citizens' own associations cohering around shared issues, provide opportunities for learning citizenship.

Educational system

Uganda is an example of the current "crisis of learning" (World Bank 2018): while access to basic education has increased substantially, the learning outcomes in even the most basic skills have been low. The lack of skills such as literacy hampers the competence of citizens to participate actively and to hold the government accountable, thereby fulfilling the current ideals of citizenship

engagement (Gaventa & Barrett 2012). In Uganda, complexities in the education system partly result from its history. While in pre-colonial Uganda, ideals of “good citizenship” were passed from generation to generation through informal education, Christian missionaries and colonial administrators introduced a very different education system. At the time, the indigenous education was considered backward and incapable of transforming individuals into “good citizens”, suitable for a colonial society (Opio-Odongo 1993; Ssekamwa 1997; Nabayego 2013).

Becoming a “good citizen” of colonial Uganda was fundamentally about becoming “civilized” through conversion to Christianity and acquiring a colonial education. These “reformed” natives, who adopted the dress, language and religion of their colonial masters, were considered a rank above other natives, and were encouraged to adopt an attitude of condescension towards their “uncivilized” fellow citizens (see p’Bitek 1972). The division between what emerged as a “civilized” and increasingly urban middle class and the less-educated rural population remains a profound characteristic of the landscape of Ugandan citizenry today. Moreover, Uganda’s current education system has remained largely a copy of the British system, which partly decreases its relevance in the Ugandan societal context (Nabayego 2013; Datzberger 2018).

In post-independent Uganda, Obote’s regimes espoused a formally leftist ideology, in line with which he nationalized schools, effectively pushing churches out of their most important arena for training what they considered “good citizens”. In Amin’s era, education was seriously disturbed by the chaos and violence. Against this backdrop, the new regime focused on stability immediately after 1986; education was not their first priority and it was not until 1997 that Uganda adopted Universal Primary Education (Oloka-Onyango 2009, 98). International donors have influenced the trends in education and, despite the kind of indigenization of education proposed in 1992 (Government of Uganda 1992), the content and structure of the education system have not changed much. With global neoliberalization, Uganda’s education sector has encountered commodification, and higher education in particular has been privatized (Opio-Odongo 1993; Mamdani 2007; Kasozi 2003).

In general, there are large quality differences at each level, while, although primary education is technically free, many hidden costs hinder the attendance of the poorest pupils (Datzberger 2018, 135). Moreover, even secondary education does not seem to provide competence in critical and active citizenship. For instance, a recent study by Datzberger and Le Mat (2019) on the politically empowering elements learned in secondary schools, such as critical reflection and participation in communal life, showed that almost half the respondents, from various parts of the country, felt that they do not have a clear understanding of Uganda’s political system (*ibid.*, 23). For a citizen, it is challenging to participate in or engage with a system that one does not understand. This was accompanied by accounts that while some social problems are discussed at school, there is not much critical reflection of the core

reasons for them nor of Uganda's own history (ibid., 24). In general, the approach to education is geared towards assimilation rather than transformation (Datzberger 2018, 135), and therefore, the "good" citizenship which is taught principally involves contributing to, and aligning with, the existing system rather than contesting it.

Civil society and everyday organizing

The local council system that structures local governance is intended to provide ordinary citizens with a meaningful participatory arena in which to accrue citizenship competence. Despite its challenges with patronage, the system has been vital in promoting women's political participation, among other things. Outside the government structures, citizens' participation and organizing around shared issues can take place in a range of CSOs from large national NGOs to local membership-based associations.

CSOs, having gained prominence since the 1970s (Deniva 2006; Fourie & Kakumba 2011), are involved in direct citizenship education that often increases shortly before elections, but then is cut off afterwards (Conroy-Krutz 2016), programs that strengthen the realization of rights and promote social accountability. Moreover, in Uganda, the environmental and women's movements have been especially successful in both mobilizing citizens and influencing legislation (Tripp 2010, 105). All the forms of association that can be identified in contemporary Uganda have roots in historical precedents of association, but changes in them have also been affected by broader dynamics beyond Uganda, such as the international human rights and women's movements, as well as donor funding (Tripp 2002).

Yet, from the very beginning, the ability to act of all civil society actors – from the women's movement to local councils – has been curtailed; citizens could secure the benevolence of the NRM regime only by moderating their claims and shifting their activities into the most apolitical and non-contentious arenas possible (Dicklitch & Lwanga 2003). A key component in this dynamic has been patronage: for instance, within the women's movement, presidential patronage strengthened the ability of individual women to voice their concerns in curtailed political arenas, yet simultaneously watered down the movement's efforts to create sustainable platforms for mobilizing (Goetz & Hassim 2002). The expansion of civic space was also short-lived. Soon after coming to power, Museveni reversed his position on the criteria for conferring citizenship and rights for those living in Uganda from an emphasis on residence back to one on descent (Mamdani 2002).

Local mobilization in membership organizations, such as village savings and loans groups (see Ndidde et al., this volume), produces a significant forum in which citizenship takes place (Clarke et al. 2014). Moreover, people organize around cultural festivities, and events such as marriages and funerals, to which everyone contributes according the agreed rules. The constellation of rights and responsibilities that revolve around such life span

activities differ from liberal ideas of citizenship, but are, nevertheless, highly appreciated. Moreover, from the point of view of grassroots citizenship, the intertwining of participation and livelihood concerns are important. As shown by Hickey and King (2016; King 2015) in their studies in the sub-region of Rwenzori, successfully initiating change should not be so much about promoting liberal democracy, as identifying and strengthening intermediate mechanisms, such as small-holder and producer groups where people engage in solidaristic networks in everyday efforts related to livelihoods.

Conclusions

The project of nation-building, so crucial in Western theories of citizenship, has unfolded in Uganda, as in other multi-ethnic post-colonial contexts, in ways hardly envisioned by those theories. In these contexts, even more than in apparently mono-ethnic “nation states”, the notion of “nation” is in its essence a product of the imagination – one created and constantly maintained through complex cultural production and through violence (Anderson 2006). The regional, ethnic and religious divisions, and the unequal structures of power that were built into Uganda during the colonial era continue to affect contemporary experiences of what it means to be a Ugandan.

The coming to power of the incumbent president, Yoweri Museveni, was greeted as a new start by many Ugandans, and by the country’s international donors, who for many years considered Uganda a “success story” of political and economic liberalization (Wiegatz et al. 2018; Anderson & Fisher 2016, 68). Yet, in recent years, the initial promise of Uganda’s transformation into a liberal success story has faded. Even though on many counts today’s Uganda is more stable than at the beginning of the present regime in 1986, the past decade has been characterized by increasing restrictions on political freedom, the expansion of executive power and limits on the independence of the judiciary (Tripp 2010, 36–37). While these restrictions have not stopped Ugandans from confronting the regime, they do constrain the manifestations of vocal citizenship, as demonstrations and opposition rallies are met with harsh police and military response, followed by arrests and court cases. Both longer-term histories and recent developments in the Ugandan state have created a different citizenship environment to that assumed in liberal notions of citizenship. However, the ideal of liberal democracy and a very particular type of active citizenship holds a strong place in donor policies and NGO interventions.

In the everyday lives of Ugandan citizens, identification with ethnic groups, one’s immediate community or religious organizations, can offer a much stronger sense of citizenship – both as belonging and as engaging with rights and responsibilities – than the sentiment of belonging to the nation. Consequently, as much of the joint organizing in the former sphere is geared towards solving local problems, arranging funerals and weddings and combining forces in agricultural production, active participation in politics or

lobbying the government for accountability might not attract much attention nor energy. Relations between citizens and the state continue to be characterized by the logics of patronage, wherein leaders enlist support and ensure the loyalty of participating citizens through personal gifts and services, thereby undercutting the chances for political deliberation and citizens' mobilization, especially in the vast rural population. There thus appears to be a tension between human rights-based discourses of citizenship in Uganda – which emphasize that individuals have rights based on their humanity – and certain culturally valued conceptualizations of the good life, which emphasize that human beings grow into their status as full members of the community by fulfilling their responsibilities towards that community (Cheney 2008).

In conclusion, when reading accounts of contemporary citizenship practices and habits, we should keep in mind that experiences of citizenship emerge out of particular histories in particular localities and are moulded by ethnicity, gender and other contextual issues. The practices of citizenship that thus ensue may differ noticeably from whatever ideal images we might have about active citizenship.

Box 5.1 Facts about Uganda

Population (projection, 2017): 42.9 million

Urban population (2017): 23.2%

Area: 241551 km²

Capital city: Kampala

Official languages: Kiswahili, English

Governance: Republic, executive president, multiparty system

Literacy rate (2012): 70.2% (15 years and older)

Life expectancy (at birth) (2018): 60.2 years. Female 62.4 years, Male 58.0 years

Infant mortality (2016): 37.7/1000 live births

Employment percentage (estimate, 2017): 69.2% (15 years and older)

Religions (2014): Christian (84.5%), Muslims (13.7%), Traditional religions (0.1%), Other religions (1.4%), Irreligion (0.2%).

Ethnic groups (2014): Baganda (16.5%), Banyankore (9.6%), Basoga (8.8%), Bakiga (7.1%), Iteso (7.0%), Langi (6.3%), Bagisu (4.9%), Acholi (4.4%), Lugbara (3.3%), Other (32.1%).

Human Development Index (2018): Value 0.516 (Rank 162)

Civic space: Repressed

Freedom house indicators (value 100 most free, value 1 most free, 7 least free):

Aggregate freedom score: 36/100

Freedom rating: 5.5/7

Political rights: 6/7

Civil liberties: 5/7

Governance indicators (2017) (100 is the highest rank):

Voice and accountability: 31/100

Political stability and absence of violence: 27/100

Government effectiveness: 32/100

Regulatory quality: 46/100

Rule of law: 42/100

Control of corruption: 14/100

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