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***Education and Democracy:
Can Education Foster Greater Democracy for Africa?***

DaNielle Katz

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**Master's Thesis
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Master of International Affairs at the City College of New York**

Advisor: Prof. J. Braveboy-Wagner

Abstract:

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the relationship between education and democracy. It argues that in order for education to have a meaningful impact on prospects for a sustainable democracy, educational systems must support democratic principles and ideals. The main focus of this study is Africa. In order to assess this hypothesis, the study uses a case study approach examining the education models of three Africa countries: Botswana, Ghana, and Uganda- to determine whether education has played a role in fostering democratic values in society. These three countries were chosen because each offers a variation on Africa's political development; Botswana has maintained its democracy since independence; Ghana has reverted to democracy after oscillations of civilian and military rule; and, Uganda has adopted formal democratization after 30 years of autocratic rule and civil war. Ever since the nationalist movements of the 1950s and 1960s, education has played an integral role in the development policies of many African countries. In recent decades, due in part to various constitutional reforms directed towards a revival of democracy, governments have implemented universal education programs and committed extensive budgets to educational development. Moreover, there has been special emphasis on promoting civic education as a means of improving democratic citizenship. The study finds that in Botswana, education has supported a fairly robust democracy but much remains to be done with respect to democratic rights. In Ghana, the education system is based on a model of inclusiveness but there remains rural to urban and gender disparity. Finally, in Uganda, the education system has helped to maintain stability but not democratic legitimacy. This study concludes that while African education models have to a certain degree promoted democratic ideals, it is not clear that they have yet been sufficient for fostering democratic values and behaviors.

Introduction: Rationale

If the next century is going to be characterized as a truly African century, for social and economic progress of the African people, the century of durable peace and sustained development in Africa, then the success of this project is dependent on the success of our education systems. For nowhere in the world has sustained development been attained without a well-functioning system of education, without universal and sound primary education, without an effective higher education and research sector, without equality of educational opportunity. – President Thabo Mbeki¹

It is very easy to tout the importance of education. However, it may not be as easy to define because education means a lot of different things to different people. Put simply education is “the totality of learning activities that occur in formal, non-formal, and informal contexts.”² It “exists in all societies in different forms and contents, as individuals and groups move through their life stages.”³ Taken a step further one may also suggest that a great part of what education is lies in what it does. Indeed, one has only to observe the transformative power of education in the life of an individual and on society as a whole to understand the depth of its purpose.

Education allows the mind of an individual to grasp ideas and concepts. It instills values and principles that aid in the development of one’s physical, mental, and social well-being. It is through the education process that individuals develop the ability to learn, to think, and to reason. Individuals are therefore, equipped with the tools to build self confidence, to become self-sufficient, and to develop critical perspectives. Furthermore, through education, citizens acquire the skills and competencies to become productive members of society and learn about their societies’ values and its political culture.

¹ President Thabo Mbeki, *Opening Speech, Conference on Education for African Renaissance in the Twenty-first Century*. Johannesburg, South Africa, December 6, 1999.

² S. Walters, “Adult education in lifelong learning in Southern Africa,” quoted in Tonic Maruatona. “Lifelong learning for facilitating democratic participation in Africa.” *International Journal of Lifelong Education*. 25 (2006): 548.

³ Ibid.

From the point of view of states and governments, this “transforming” effect of education “is premised on the idea that [formal] education will provide the catalyst for economic, social, and political development” of both the individual and society.⁴ The conventional thinking views literacy as being the basis of all education. It begins with reading and progresses through a continuum of learning in various stages of the education process. While education entails more than the ability to read and write, it is widely accepted that literacy is a fundamental prerequisite for modernization since the more literate the population of a country, the better the chances for the development of those institutions which are found in all advanced modern societies. “If we cannot say that a ‘high’ level of education is a significant condition for democracy, the available evidence does suggest that it comes close to being a necessary condition in the modern world.”⁵ While there are good examples of contemporary societies that remain non-democratic or lack strong democratic institutions in spite of very high literacy levels (Zimbabwe 89 percent, Libya 80 percent, China 93.3 percent, and Singapore 96.3 percent),⁶ the idea of education as a precondition for democracy has remained relatively strong and hard to debunk.

The relationship between education and democracy can be seen in many areas. In keeping with the “modernizing” concept education is seen to promote democracy “because it leads to prosperity, which in turn produces a middle class and fosters the development of middle class values such as self autonomy, independence of thought, and

⁴ Kingsley Banya and Juliet Elu. “The World Bank and Financing Higher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa.” *Higher Education*. 42 (2001): 3.

⁵ Lipset, 80.

⁶ Ibid

the right to self-determination.”⁷ Through this enlightened process the individual presumably gains a liberal outlook on life which “enables [him] to understand the need for norms of tolerance” and cooperation and the intelligence to resist “extremist and monistic doctrines.”⁸ Therefore, this educated class promotes a “culture of democracy”; they are more politically engaged and have the “confidence to resist oppressive rule and the skills for fighting repression, including the language for articulating opposition to repression and demanding self government.”⁹ Furthermore, it is through the “culture” of the politically informed that political institutions derive legitimacy, thereby sustaining democratic systems.

My research attempts to build on the idea that there is a relationship between education and democracy, that is, education enriches democratic principles. The idea is that education is a crucial element for democratization because it is within the education process that democratic habits are learned and cultivated. In the following pages I will review some of the ideas linking education to democracy. My objective is to demonstrate that changes in the education models adopted in Africa are essential to the democratic process. Specifically, my thesis seeks to assess whether education models can be restructured to be more democratic in practice and thus, foster democratic values and behaviors: political participation, civic competence, political tolerance, support for democracy, and institutional trust.¹⁰ I focus on Africa for a number of reasons, primarily because democratic transitions in Africa tend to contradict the well-known approaches

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Lipset, 79.

⁹ Boadi, 2.

¹⁰ Susan E. Finkel, “Can Democracy be taught?” *Journal of Democracy*. 14 (2003): 139.

that predict an elite-initiated transition for authoritarian regimes. The other reason is that in contrast to other regions democracy in Africa has not firmly taken hold.

I will argue that education in and of itself is not sufficient to foster democratic values and behaviors. My hypothesis is that in order for education to have a meaningful impact on prospects for a sustainable democracy, educational systems must support democratic principles and ideals. Especially for countries in Africa, where there has been a lack of democratic progress, I believe that deliberate efforts must be made to improve all levels of learning and the substance of education policies.

The basis for my argument is the evolution of the idea that development includes more than economic growth. The conventional view of development based largely on indicators expressed as national averages, has been superseded by a more integrated approach that grew out of the norms evolving at the end of the Cold War. This “new” concept was in response to a normative shift in which democracy and good governance became the focus of the new development discourse.¹¹ Having experienced the policy failures of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) of the 1980s, development specialists began to explore broader, more holistic definitions of development for developing countries.¹² Development came to mean a more integrated approach that amalgamated the narrowly defined economic with the broader more complex elements of political, civil, and human development. It is within this multipronged development strategy that the current debate is framed.

This study is important because in the view of most analysts, Africa’s development depends on the success of democracy. However, for this to be possible a culture of

¹¹ Rita Abrahamsen, *Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa*. London: Zed Books, 2000: 25.

¹² Peter Uvin, *Human Rights and Development*. Bloomfield CT: Kumarian Press, Inc, 2004: 49.

democracy is needed for both the consolidation and sustainability of democratic political systems. Since “democratic values and behaviors are socially learned and are not genetic,”¹³ governments, say scholars, through sustained efforts, should adopt education policies that build the capacity for citizens to learn about their rights and responsibilities and the democratic process.

¹³ Clive Harber, “Education, Democracy, and Poverty Reduction in Africa.” *Comparative Education*, 38 (2002): 267.

Chapter Two: Research Design

As I stated in my introduction this thesis seeks to assess whether education models can be restructured to be more democratic in practice and, in doing so, foster democratic values and behaviors. My hypothesis is that in order for education to have a meaningful impact on prospects for sustainable democracy, education systems must support democratic principles and ideals. I will develop first a review of the pertinent literature. This will be followed by an analysis and evaluation of the state of education in the context of Africa. In order to further investigate the relationship between education and democracy a case study approach will be used to determine the role of education in democracy in Africa. Here I will be using three education models as case studies: Botswana's Education for *Kagisano*, Ghana's Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), and Uganda's universal primary education (UPE) program. In my final analysis I hope to offer a set of democratic education recommendations that can contribute to Africa's democratic development.

Since independence in 1966, Botswana has strived to maintain its democratic institutions even as other authoritarian dictatorships prevailed in other African countries. Having experienced similar challenges and setbacks to its development, the government devised an educational model, "*Education for Kagisano*" to meet the needs of Botswana and to help build a democratic society. Ghana represents a country that is democratizing. After its independence, it embraced democracy, but later the country underwent successive military dictatorships. In spite of this, education has been foremost on the country's policy agenda. Having reverted to civilian rule in the late 1980s, the government has made deliberate efforts to develop universal primary education as a

means of enhancing democracy and development. Unlike Botswana and Ghana, Uganda has lacked both strong democratic institutions as well as a robust commitment to education. After decades of autocratic rule and civil war, Uganda returned to elective national government in 1996 and instituted a series of education reforms intended to enhance the equity of educational access. My analysis of its education model will focus however, on the efforts to promote civic education within a broader democratic framework.

In discussing each case I ask the following questions: First, how effective have the education models been at providing access to primary and secondary education? I ask this because an educated citizenry is considered to be a prerequisite for democracy, and a human right by many, as discussed in my literature section. Second, does the education provided specifically support democratic ideals? If so, how? By democratic “ideals” I mean the ideals that are commonly associated with free political systems. According to Robert Dahl, these systems allow for individual freedoms and rights such as the freedom of speech, the right to vote, and the freedom to compete for political support.¹ Yet democracy embodies more than just the formal manifestations of voting and competitive elections. It involves an equally substantive criterion of values that must be embedded within society for democracy to be consolidated. I will expand in greater detail on the definition of democracy and its application in the African context in the literature section below.

Review of the Literature

What is Democracy?

¹ Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven Ct: Yale University Press, 1971. p. 3.

Because democracy, or rather democratization has eluded the African region for decades, to the point where many scholars had doubted, with few exceptions (Botswana, Mauritius), Africa's ability to move towards democracy, a working definition is necessary for an ideological foundation.²

Defining democracy is no easy endeavor because a great part of how it is conceptualized is viewed in procedural terms. If, for example, we adopt Dahl's two-dimensional schema of "public contestation" and "inclusiveness" democracy is defined as a political system that focuses on institutions and freedoms.³ This is embodied in Joseph A. Schumpeter's ideal of a "free competition for a free vote"⁴ as well as Terry Lynn Karl's analysis which favors the more formal institutions of democracy.⁵ Procedural elements such as elections, voting, and political parties have dominated the democratic transition discourse of both traditional and contemporary scholars. Indeed, in the African context democratization was often judged by the regularity and presumed "freeness" of elections, as this was perceived as a rejection of authoritarian rule (single-party, military, and one-man) and the embrace of democracy. Proponents of the procedural perspective contend that this minimalist approach offers the potential benefit of broader comparability across space and time;⁶ they make the task of measurement easier. While this may indeed facilitate greater analysis of democratic systems, as indicated by M.D. Fails "the transformation from authoritarianism to... democracy necessitates more than

² Samuel Decalo, "The Process, Prospects, and Constraints of Democratization in Africa." *African Affairs*, 91 (1992): 7.

³ Dahl, 4.

⁴ Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1942. p.271.

⁵ Terry Lynn Karl, "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America," *Comparative Politics*. 23 (1990): 1-21.

⁶ Elke Zuern, "Democratization as liberation: competing African perspectives on democracy." *Democratization*. 16 (2009): 587.

the simple introduction of elections, political parties, and universal suffrage;”⁷ It requires a substantive definition of democracy that includes a normative criterion alongside electoral procedures and civil and political rights for a country to be deemed a democracy.⁸

This point is well taken by Elke Zuern in *Democratization as Liberation: competing African perspectives on democracy*, who argues that a procedural understanding of democracy robs democracy of its key content.⁹ Larry Diamond, for instance, notes that democratization is a developmental phenomenon and that the emergence of liberal democracies depends on the extension and deepening of procedural reforms to include substantive elements like government responsiveness and a strong rule of law.¹⁰ According to Michael Bratton and Eric Chang, the rule of law is “an irreducible component of democracy”;¹¹ however, a great part of the substantive component also includes accountability to the electorate and transparency within government. The inclusion of substantive conceptions to the present analysis, aids in our understandings of how citizens learn about, evaluate, and shape their attitudes on the legitimacy of democracy. In this context, citizens must support the principles of democracy but, at the same time, they develop certain expectations of what democracy should be.

⁷ Matthew D Fails, “Does substantive democratization create more committed democrats? Surprising evidence from Africa.” *Democratization*. 16 (2009): 844.

⁸ Zuern, 587.

⁹ Zuern, 586

¹⁰ Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1999:

¹¹ Michael Bratton and Eric Chang. “State Building and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Forwards, Backwards, or Together?” *Comparative Political Studies* 39 (2006): 1059-83.

Too often discussions and debates on what democracy is or ought to be tend to treat the concept as the exclusive “property” of the West.¹² As a result European and American understandings of democracy are often repackaged as universal. While this is understandable given the level of development of Western democratic systems, democracy “has long been in existence in many non-Western countries depending on the local definition of the concept.”¹³ This is to say that democracy cannot only be defined from the Western perspective but also from the perspective of other cultures. This is especially so for African countries where traditional values play a definitive role in their societies’ conception of democracy. For example, in Botswana and South Africa, the employment of locally derived concepts based on consensus through open discussion is central to the construction of democratic institutions and ideals; “such understandings are a product of historical practices as well as the successes and failures of local struggles for democracy, and it is from these experiences that substantive understandings are derived.”¹⁴

That a great part of democratic legitimacy was lacking in Africa is understandable given that many citizens were socialized into an authoritarian post-colonial system that did not promote substantive democratic ideals.¹⁵ Moreover, the nature of their colonial experience did not permit much in the way of democratic development; “most of the electoral regimes left behind by the departing imperialist powers [had] broken down... due to the boundaries drawn by the colonial powers, which created artificial countries out

¹² Michael Bamidele Adeyemi and Lewis Asimeng-Boahene. “Democracy and Social Studies Education at the Junior Secondary School Level in Botswana.” *Pastoral Care* (June 2001): 16.

¹³ Adeyemi and Asimeng-Boahene, 17.

¹⁴ Zuern, 591.

¹⁵ Fails, 843.

of diverse peoples.”¹⁶ As a consequence, “citizens... developed attitudes toward democracy in the context of weak, incomplete democracies whose substantive reforms [did not] match the scope and pace of procedural democratization.”¹⁷ For that reason, many democratizing African countries “[had] some attributes of democratic political life, including at least limited political space for opposition parties and independent civil society, as well as regular elections and democratic constitutions.”¹⁸ However, they suffered from a crisis of legitimacy, “often including poor representation of citizens’ interests, low levels of political participation beyond voting, frequent abuse of the law by government officials..., and very low levels of public trust in state institutions.”¹⁹ By bringing to the forefront questions of legitimacy and equality, a substantive approach to democratization has profound implications for both theoretical understanding, as well as the practicality of democracy. Especially for citizens coming of age during democratic transitions, substantive elements may help to address many of the “challenges that procedural understandings fail to capture.”²⁰

The concept of democratic legitimacy is developed further by Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba in their classic study *The Civic Culture*.²¹ In their analysis, the scholars emphasize the importance of “political attitudes and an underlying set of social attitudes that is supportive of a stable democratic process.”²² These attitudes are defined as the “civic culture” one that combines modernity with tradition and is “based on

¹⁶ Larry Diamond, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Juan Linz. “Building and Sustaining Democratic Government in Developing Countries: Some Tentative Findings.” *World Affairs*. 150 (1987): 6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 854.

¹⁸ Thomas Carothers, “The End of the Transition Paradigm.” *Journal of Democracy*. 13 (2002): 9.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Zuern, 587.

²¹ Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963.

²² x

communication and persuasion, a culture of consensus and diversity, a culture that permitted change but moderated it.”²³ The civic culture in the democratic context describes the actions, the attitudes, and the relationships of citizens with the political system and its various parts, as well as the role of the individual in the system. It is within this “culture” that the political system is “internalized in the cognitions, feelings, and evaluations of its population... as people are inducted into it just as they are socialized into nonpolitical roles and social systems.”²⁴ Hence, democracy is not only conceived as a political system but, by its very nature, is accepted by both elites and masses as an extension of associational living.

Democracy clearly requires a system of procedures, as well as a system of values to be consolidated into permanent, consistent, autonomous institutions.²⁵ Taken together both components are integral to the emergence of liberal democracy. Given that people associate democracy with many diverse meanings due to their experiences with the political system and their position in the social structure, their perception of the legitimacy of democracy is based on the regime’s success at providing a variety of goods. Effectiveness of democratic regimes heavily affects their stability. As asserted by Larry Diamond, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Juan Linz, “one of the primary reasons for the instability of democratic and non-democratic regimes in the Third World has been the combination and interaction of low legitimacy and low effectiveness.”²⁶ Thus for many ordinary African citizens, democracy was often shaped by the regime’s inability to

²³ 6

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²⁵ Robert Mattes and Michael Bratton. “Learning about Democracy in Africa: Awareness, Performance, and Experience.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 51(2007):192.

²⁶ Diamond, Lipset, and Linz. 7.

deliver political goods such as increased personal freedoms, as well as goods that affected their material well-being such as education and employment for all.

According to Evelyn Huber, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and John D. Stephens in their *Paradoxes of Contemporary Democracy: Formal, Participatory, and Social Dimension*, the promotion of democratic policies that include social and economic criteria enables more citizens to participate in the political process, which in turn contributes to the consolidation and deepening of democracy.²⁷ Although this may be conceived as bordering on a socialist approach, the African experience is such that pure mechanical elements may not be sufficient for viable progress; democracy must at once allow for free expression and the promotion of individual and collective interests, but it must also provide a forum for fighting social and economic inequality as this increases the promise of political equality. Furthermore, “because the legitimacy of a stable, consolidated regime rests on a more unqualified and enduring commitment to the political system,”²⁸ a democracy that engenders substantive elements is able to survive periods of crisis.

Variations notwithstanding, the unique context of Africa’s “neopatrimonialism”²⁹ had the effect of producing neither the economic development nor the nation building that was promised; in the decades after independence most of Africa was economically bankrupt and on the brink of political demise. When the pro-democracy movement came of age in 1990, according to Samuel Decalo, “the continent was already more than ripe

²⁷ Evelyn Huber, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and John D. Stephens, “The Paradoxes of Contemporary Democracy: Formal, Participatory and Social Dimensions.” *Comparative Politics*. 29 (1997): 324.

²⁸ Diamond, Lipset, and Linz, 6.

²⁹ Neo-patrimonialism refers to the authoritarian regimes in Africa that were characterized by individualized rule of ‘big men’, systematic ‘clientelism’ as the principal basis of political support, and blurred distinctions between public and private resources. They contrasted sharply with the bureaucratic authoritarian regimes that had ruled in Latin America and Southern Europe.

for upheaval.”³⁰ The call for democracy was not just for a political birthright, but for a total revision of the fundamental charter of the State.³¹ Before the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, 38 of Africa’s then 50 countries were governed by neopatrimonial regimes of varying hues.³² By 1991, “more than half... responded to domestic and international pressures by holding competitive presidential or legislative elections.”³³

Since then Africa has experienced a second independence, with all that implies for a revival of democracy.³⁴ Despite this, the transitions are far from being uniform. Some countries advanced to more elective forms of democracy (Ghana, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa). Others however, were less successful and relapsed into what some observers have described as a “gray zone”³⁵ either slowly advancing towards democratic transitions or are neither dictatorial nor clearly headed toward democracy (Sudan, Central African Republic, Ivory Coast). Nevertheless, there is an overwhelming outpouring of support for democracy; more and more citizens are rejecting the “old” systems of African rule and are demanding a greater role in the determination of their futures.

Theoretical Approaches to Education and Democracy

Having discussed democracy in the context of Africa’s political development, I will now turn my attention to several theoretical frameworks that may highlight our understanding of the relationship between education and democracy. Although much of the research on the effects of education on the support for democracy is limited in

³⁰ Decalo, 14.

³¹ Ibid.

³² J.R. Minis. “Adult education and the African state in the post- Cold War era.” *Convergence*. 26 (1993): 11.

³³ Michael Bratton and Nicolas Van de Walle. “Neopatrimonial Regimes and Political Transitions in Africa.” *World Politics*. 46 (1994): 453.

³⁴ Cyril K. Daddieh, “Beyond Governance and Democratization in Africa: Toward State Building for Sustainable Human Development.” *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*. 1 (1999).

³⁵ Carothers, 9.

applicability and scope with respect to African countries where democracy is a relatively new phenomenon, arguments in favor of the importance of schooling for democratic development remain relatively strong.

The theoretical frameworks most applicable to the adoption of education's role in democracy are *Modernization Theory* and *Human Capital Theory*. Both theories are consistent with the Liberalist school of thought. Having already defined education I wish here to focus on the more formal institutions of learning. As indicated earlier in Chapter 1, education provides broad exposure to new ideas and concepts that at once enlighten the individual and give him a liberal outlook on life. Through this "liberal" perspective the educated individual is able to develop his or her rational faculties by acquiring attitudes of tolerance and greater reliance upon the recognition of mutual interests as a factor of social control.³⁶ That liberalism, in the classic sense, is commonly associated with individual rights and freedoms, education presumably reinforces liberal conceptions of autonomous thought, free citizenship, and concomitant political rights.

This is in the same vein as John Dewey's classic *Democracy and Education*, where education is conceived as the process that transforms man from a creature of "instinct and appetite" into a "truly moral, rational, and free being."³⁷ Although Dewey does not explicitly say how education leads to democracy nor propose education as a means to a political end, he conceives of education as itself valuable and of great importance to the flourishing of democracy. For Dewey, education is primarily a social function "which centrally influences the variety we see in basic political understandings and conflicts."³⁸

³⁶ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*. The Mac Millian Company (1916): 91. Republished by Penn State University. Electronic Classic Series.

³⁷ Dewey, 100.

³⁸ E.T. Weber, "Dewey and Rawls on Education." *Human Studies*. 31 (2008): 362.

The quest for education therefore, should be the “formation of a society that can develop its own rich, fertile, and adaptable conceptions of justice.”³⁹ Thus education, in the ideal sense, facilitates inquiry, participation, plurality of ideas, and progress. This however, Dewey reasons, can only be conducted within a democratic society, “which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associational life.”⁴⁰

Modernization Theory and the role of Education in Democracy

Possibly one of the strongest arguments supporting the relationship between education and democracy is Seymour Martin Lipset’s Modernization Theory. In what is often referred to as Lipset’s hypothesis, the scholar conceives of democracy as emerging from a combination of social forces that, when taken together, leads to the transformation of a modern society. In Lipset’s analysis economic development and legitimacy of political institutions are considered the fundamental requisites of the modern society. However, higher levels of literacy and education, he argues, are key variables in economic development, which promotes political development in general and democracy in particular. According to Lipset

Education presumably broadens men’s outlooks, enables them to understand the need for norms of tolerance, restrains them from adhering to extremists and monistic doctrines, and increases their capacities to make rational electoral choices⁴¹

The premise of Lipset’s argument is that democracy must involve the functional interdependence of specific elements in order to be sustained. A high level of education

³⁹ 363.

⁴⁰ Dewey, 104.

⁴¹ Lipset, 79.

and literacy serve democracy by increasing the standard of living for citizens, especially those of the lower classes, while also providing resources to mitigate the tensions produced by political conflict as well as to inhibit anti-democratic forces.⁴²

Later analysts of Modernization Theory criticize Lipset's argument as overly deterministic and ethnocentric. For example, Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi have argued that the hypothesis does not consider exogenous factors and historical conditions in the democratic transition process. Indeed, the experience of late transitions in the 1980s and possibly the movements that we see today in the Middle East, may challenge the hypothetical association between wealth and democracy, as there may be no ideal set of preconditions that is sufficient to produce such an outcome.⁴³ Granted the preconditions outlined in earlier literature may be better conceived in the future as the outcomes of democracy, the basic fundamentals of Lipset's theory still hold. Modern societies cannot exist without an economically developed and highly educated population, which when taken together forecast a gradual rise in democracy.⁴⁴

Human Capital Theory and the Economics of Education

The belief in education as an engine of growth and development is also consistent with economic theories of capital and investment. The concept of education as human capital is derived from the idea that an investment in education and training is just as important as an investment in physical capital for economic growth. In short, the human capital theorists argue that an educated population is a productive population. The theory is consistent with the works of several classical economists who "drew attention to the importance of education as a form of national investment" and its effects on the

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Karl, 5.

⁴⁴ Robert J. Barro, "Determinants of Democracy." *The Journal of Political Economy*. 107(1999): 160.

distribution of wealth and income.⁴⁵ Adam Smith pointed out in *The Wealth of Nations* that “a man educated at the expense of much labour and time... may be compared to one of those expensive machines.”⁴⁶ During the mid-Twentieth century extensive investigation into the economics of education resulted from the need to explain modern economic growth that the traditional factors of production did not account for. For example, in *Investment in Human Capital: The Role of Education and of Research*, Theodore W. Schultz has noted that

These advances aside, the state of economic knowledge in general continues to be burdened by many obsolete views. There is the view that it is necessary for a country to be well endowed with natural resources if it is to develop a modern economy. But surely this view is no longer tenable...Japan has demonstrated, beyond any doubt, that a rich endowment of natural resources is not necessary in developing a modern economy. Nor is it necessary that a country be large for it to modernize, as is evident from the success of such countries as Denmark and Switzerland.⁴⁷

And he concludes

It is my contention that economic thinking has neglected two classes of investment that are of critical importance under modern circumstances. They are investment in man and research.⁴⁸

Analyses of the relationship between expenditure on education and development have focused on education’s role in poverty reduction and its future benefits for society as a whole. In line with human capital theory, governments and international agencies view increased and improved levels of education as central to both the fight against poverty as

⁴⁵ M. Woodhall, Economics of Education: A Review. In George Psacharopoulos (ed) *Economics of Education, Research, and Studies*. The World Bank, Washington D.C.: Pergamon Press, 1987: p.1

⁴⁶ Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) Cited in Woodhall M. “Economics of Education: A Review.” ed. George Psacharopoulos. *Economics of Education Research and Studies*. The World Bank, Washington D.C.: Pergamon Press, 1987: 1.

⁴⁷ Theodore W. Schultz, *Investment in Human Capital: The role of Education and Research*. New York.: The Free Press, 1971: p. 2

⁴⁸ 5.

well as an essential underpinning for economic growth.⁴⁹ Moreover, by enabling citizens to become more productive, education may be crucial to reducing shortages of skilled manpower, which represents one of the major constraints to economic growth in developing countries. Given that a great deal of economic theory is concerned with the vital issue of resource allocation, concepts such as investment in human capital and cost-benefit analysis⁵⁰ will obviously pose challenges to policy-making. However, an analysis of the returns on investment in education can undoubtedly shed light on the question of how best to allocate resources most efficiently so as to maximize the benefits of education.

Education as Human Rights

Within the development literature there is an emerging sentiment that investment in education is an effective recognition of international human rights. The basis of this approach is twofold. The first is based on a human rights approach to development in which education is conceived as a fundamental human right. The second rests on the notion that education is essential for the realization of other human rights. Although much of the literature on human rights was generated in the aftermath of the devastation of World War II (WWII), its intellectual origin lies in the concept of natural rights, “which provided some of the theoretical foundations for the French and American revolutions of the late eighteenth-century.”⁵¹ The central argument of this concept was that every individual possesses certain natural rights simply by the nature of being an individual. These rights are inalienable and must be respected by the state.⁵² In this

⁴⁹ The British Department for International Development (DFID). *Education for All*. London. (2000b).

⁵⁰ Psacharopoulos, 2.

⁵¹ Uvin, 9.

⁵² Ibid.

respect, the concept of human rights, while embodying the same premise as natural rights, goes a step further to accord those rights to all human beings on the basis of their humanity.

The right of all persons to an education is explicitly set out in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁵³ and is codified into international law in The United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ESC)⁵⁴ and The Convention on the Rights of the Child.⁵⁵ The impetus for these norms grew out of the “sudden and unexpected coming to independence of scores of colonies” in the decades after WWII. There was an intense desire to chart their destiny, as well as an urgency to formulate and accelerate economic and social development, which were perceived as necessary for a transformation to a modern society. Education therefore, embodied these aspirations and became instrumental to the development strategies promoted by the international community for these new countries. Often referred to as the “second generation” of rights, ESC rights differed from the “positive rights” embodied in The UN Convention on Civil and Political rights in that governments had to undertake deliberate efforts to promote ESC rights. Thus it was not only sufficient to abstain from certain actions that violate human dignity, but by extension, governments had a duty to ensure the full realization of rights. This entails provisions for universal education, as well as the removal of obstacles that may hinder educational access and achievement.

⁵³ The right to an education is established in Article 26 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

⁵⁴ The legal framework for education as a human right, often described as negative rights, is recognized in The UN Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966).

⁵⁵ The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) protects among other things, children’s rights by setting standards in healthcare; education; and legal, civil, and social services.

Emerging from the development paradigm is the notion that education is also essential for the exercise of all other human rights.⁵⁶ In this respect one cannot conceive of development if individuals are not equipped with the tools to realize these objectives. It is not enough to promote human rights when citizens lack access to health and education, economic opportunity, and live in a state of isolation, social inferiority, and powerlessness.⁵⁷ According to economist and Nobel Prize recipient, Amartya Sen, “widening the coverage and effectiveness of...education can have a powerfully preventative role in reducing human insecurity of nearly every kind.”⁵⁸ Indeed, on the most basic level the ability to read and write reduces individual insecurities by promoting empowerment and individual freedoms of expression and thought. However, the right to an education of good quality, without discrimination or exclusion, has greater implications for the realization of gender equity, the pursuit of an adequate standard of living, and greater participation in the decision-making processes which affect the lives of individuals. Taken together as a whole, human rights and the processes that reinforce those rights both become conceptually and operationally inseparable parts of the same processes of social change.

Education for All: The Dakar Framework for Action

The emphasis on education as a basic human right was further reaffirmed in the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA)⁵⁹ and later adopted in a Framework for Action at the World Education Forum in Dakar. The Dakar Framework for Action produced a

⁵⁶ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/right-to-education/browse/1/html>. 10/16/2011

⁵⁷ Uvin, 123.

⁵⁸ Amartya Sen, Speech to the Commonwealth Education Conference, Edinburgh, “The importance of basic education.” *The Guardian*, (2003) <http://people.cis.ksu.edu/~ab/Miscellany/basiced.html>. 10/16/2011

⁵⁹ The World Declaration on Education for All was adopted in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand.

detailed analysis of the state of basic education around the world with specific steps for the achievement of the goal of “Education for All” (EFA). The framework sets (6) major EFA goals that include: expanding and improving early childhood care and education; reducing inequalities of access and quality; achieving improvements in levels of adult literacy; ensuring equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs; free and compulsory primary education of good quality by 2015; and improving all aspects of the quality of education.⁶⁰ Under the guidelines of EFA the goals were to be achieved through broad based partnerships within countries, supported by co-operation with regional and international agencies and institutions. Moreover, participants pledged to develop national action plans and strategies that would promote Education for All, as well as policies designed to eliminate poverty and promote sustainable development.

At Dakar it was acknowledged that there still remain vast challenges and obstacles to the achievement of EFA. Of utmost concern were the growing educational disparities within and between countries, which are commonly affected by political will and a lack of financial resources. Moreover, it was recognized that although there has been significant progress in many countries, gains were adversely affected by multiple factors that “exclude children, young people, and adults from learning opportunities.”⁶¹ However, it was effectively established that the realization of EFA was “more likely to occur where there is a stronger and more vocal recognition of education as a fundamental human right and where representative democracy has taken root.”⁶²

⁶⁰ The World Education Forum (UNESCO). *The Dakar Framework for Action. Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments*. Senegal (2000): 8.

⁶¹ 26.

⁶² 14.

Within the African context, EFA goals were adopted under the theme of Education for African Renaissance in the Globalized Economy, Communication, and Culture.⁶³ Under this directive participants committed to a new vision for Africa based on democratic values, respect for the human rights of each individual, and a commitment to sustainable development. Instrumental to the realization of this “vision” was the reaffirmation that education is a basic right and as such, a basic need for the transformation of the “new” Africa. In this respect, participants acknowledged the necessity for improved and restructured education systems and the need for stronger policies and legislation to support these structures. Furthermore, there was an emphasis on closer co-operation between central and local government, schools, communities, and families to facilitate school ownership, sustainability, and accessibility. It is in this context of the importance of education as a democracy prerequisite, as a human right, and as a development priority that this study has been undertaken. In the following chapter, I provide some background on Africa’s political and educational development before going into detail of my case studies.

⁶³ 25.

Chapter Three: Background

One of the most outstanding features of post-colonial leadership in the newly independent states of Africa has been the overwhelming emphasis placed on education as a tool to promote development. Education has a “modernizing” effect, and based on the then widely held assumptions of modernization theory, these new states interpreted high levels of literacy as a critical foundation from which they hoped the economic revolution of Africa would be launched. Moreover, there was an international sentiment that “education... would produce people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that...were also a sine-qua-non for the process of national integration.”¹ Thus in their desire to be judged by a Western standard of development, these countries felt that education had both a practical and symbolic function of overwhelming importance.

Indeed, for many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa education played a pivotal role in forging their national aspirations. Education was, in many respects, central to the struggles of the post-colonial vanguard leadership in Africa and other countries in the developing world. Having been elected to a large extent upon promises to extend education to a wider proportion of the population, the leaders saw the quest for self-determination as an educational as well as a political one; education was one of the most tangible manifestations of progress.² In spite of the ambitious attempts to develop education systems, governments were hard-pressed to create a balance between quantity and quality of the education provided. Moreover, the education models were still to a great degree shaped and influenced by the institutions and culture of the colonial powers.

¹ L. Gray Cowan, James O’Connell and David G. Scanlon, eds. *Education and Nation-building in Africa*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc, (1965): 3.

² Philip Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (1965).

In light of this, the adopted models did not reflect much in terms of an African education. Furthermore, education as practiced in these societies did not foster democratic values.

The popular demand for education gathered speed after World War II (WWII) with the emergence of mass nationalist movements. From the West African states to Equatorial Africa to even Madagascar, there was an intense need for education as the school became the symbol of the new Africa. Historically, though many of the policies were established in the period before colonization, the curriculum and practices perpetuated during colonial rule were based on the teachings of missionaries and, later, European merchants who emphasized basic literacy for trade and teachings of the Bible.³ The education models therefore, were geared mostly to the primary level while technical education was not highly developed. This was beneficial to the European governments in that as “administration and commerce expanded, the colonial authorities and commercial firms sought indigenous auxiliaries to fill the lower posts,”⁴ which did not demand schooling beyond a primary education. The degree to which education was transferred inevitably varied from territory to territory and from colonial power to colonial power. In the French colonies education transfer was “characterized as essentially “assimilationist” in aim, involving the wholesome export of metropolitan culture and institutions to the colonial area.”⁵ On the other hand, the British policy was more adaptive in nature and educational development stressed cooperation between the government and traditional agencies.

Nevertheless, education became an important aspect of colonial policy and was crucial to the “development of an exchange economy which interpenetrated with traditional

³ Foster, 2.

⁴ Cowan et al, 4.

⁵ Foster, 3.

subsistence activities.”⁶ This resulted in a European- dominated occupational structure which had profound effects on educational development and the traditional patterns of affiliation.⁷ As a consequence, this socio-demographic change resulted in the growth of modern-type urban centers which stimulated further demand for formal education. For instance, in the West African colonies of Ghana (The British Gold Coast) and the Ivory Coast, the diffusion of formal schooling has been closely correlated with socio-economic change and urbanization.⁸ As the cash crop economies stimulated more revenues, investment in education grew, bringing with it more political influence and control. Especially in the period following WWI, “African agricultural products were earning a higher price on the international market, making additional funds available for education.”⁹ The period also reflected the changes taking place within the international system, which forced the European powers to review their past educational activities.¹⁰ This was reflected in the establishment of the first Phelps-Stokes Commission¹¹ and its subsequent report.

At the invitation of the British Colonial Office, the Phelps-Stokes Commission was dispatched to Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast (Ghana), Nigeria, British South Africa, Angola, the Belgian Congo, and Liberia. The central theme of the 1925 Commission’s report was the need for education for the social and economic development of Black Africa. It was based on earlier policy guidelines that promoted vocationally-oriented

⁶ Foster, 3.

⁷ Remi P. Clignet, and Philip J. Foster, “French and British Colonial Education in Africa.” *Comparative Education Review*. 8 (1964): 196.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Cowan, et al, 5.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ In 1919, The Phelps- Stokes Fund, based in New York, sent a commission to investigate educational conditions in West, South, and Equatorial Africa. Its subsequent report, published in 1925, was the foundation of interwar colonial education policy.

education for American “Blacks,” “which was then considered as a form of education suited for [their] socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.”¹² Moreover, the policies stressed the importance of an African education based, “not upon preconceived notions or types of schooling transmitted unmodified from Europe or America,”¹³ but upon the actual conditions on the ground and the fundamental needs that grow out of them.

Essentially, the Commission changed the education policy guidelines of the European dependencies; “Britain, France, and Belgium began issuing policy statements outlining in broad terms the education policy to be followed in the African territories.”¹⁴ Despite these declarations however, the implementation of the “new” policies varied considerably depending on the preferences of local administrations as well as budgetary limitations, but more so, as a result of the ideologies underlying colonial practice.

The Colonial Education Framework

An investigation into the formal educational systems in Sub-Saharan Africa reveals similarities and differences that were to a great extent shaped by their colonial history and the respective ideologies of the European powers. This much is evident from a review of the respective mechanisms of colonial administrations. As indicated earlier British and French policies differed in approach which, as we shall see, had profound effects on patterns of educational transfer. This was also consistent with the policies of other metropolitan powers such as Spain and Portugal, where Catholicism was the basis of

¹² Shoko Yamada, “The Discourse of the First Commissions on Education for Sub-Saharan Africa: Does History repeat itself?” 02/2010. <http://nrrag.org/issues/articles/1274/en/the-discourse-of-the-first-commissions-on-e-html>. (10/10/2011).

¹³ W. Carson Ryan Jr, “The Phelps-Stokes Fund and Educational Adaptation.” *Journal of Social Forces*. 1 (1923): 280.

¹⁴ Cowan, et al, 6.

education. However, for the sake of this research I will focus on the more prominent formal educational systems in the British, French, and Belgian African colonies.

British Education Policy

In the British dependencies the Advisory Committee on Native Education published a general policy memorandum (Education Policy in British Tropical Africa)¹⁵ in 1925 stipulating the guidelines for the future development of education in British Africa. The guidelines stressed, among other things, greater cooperation between the government and the local educational agencies, an education that reflected African traditions and improvement in the overall quality of the educational system. The vision of the new policy was to give greater relevance and scope to the role of education in the lives of Africans. Moreover, the general policy “corresponded to the laissez-faire policies [in Britain] and reflected the preference for a considerable devolution of political authority to local agencies.”¹⁶ As such, the “adaptive” approach, as promoted in the colonies, was in line with the political orientations of British indirect rule that “emphasized ‘cultural adaptation’ of metropolitan institutions to local political and social institutions and the creation of a group of educated Africans.”¹⁷

A general outgrowth of British policy was the adaptation of curricula to native life, “which emphasized the importance of integrating local traditions and local languages into the educational process.”¹⁸ This was implemented in the adoption of “practical,” “functional” subjects such as agriculture and simpler trades, which was promoted separately from academic institutions. In keeping with the theme of education within an

¹⁵ 6.

¹⁶ Clignet and Foster, 193.

¹⁷ 191.

¹⁸ Bob W. White, “Talk about School: Education and the Colonial Project in French and British Africa (1860-1960).” *Comparative Education*. 32 (1996): 21.

African setting, the use of vernacular languages in the first years of primary school was promoted. In later revisions of the general policy memorandum, education in the British colonies was strengthened by the development of select academic-type secondary schools that provided a proportion of students with the skills needed for professional or semiprofessional occupations. Moreover, later evaluations of the British education guidelines revealed that there had been a tendency to educate only segments of the population with little focus on adult education and limited emphasis on building relationships between school and community. Thus, if Africans were to be the chief agents in improving African life, the transformation required a single plan of mass education that included the young, the adolescent, and the adult with varied curricula. Perhaps as a result of “adaptive” policies the range of educational opportunities available to Africans was far greater in British than French territories, “and from an early period a few individuals were able to reach the highest rung of the educational ladder.”¹⁹

French Education Policy

The education system in the French colonies did not vary considerably from the practices instituted in the nineteenth century. The principle of assimilation was still very much the driver of instruction, as the aim was “the creation of an elite cherishing metropolitan values- Black Frenchmen, if you will.”²⁰ “Assimilationist” policies tended to emphasize direct political orientation and the French “preoccupation with the problem of ensuring the unqualified dominance of the central government.”²¹ In practice it allowed the French to exercise tighter, more centralized control over the affairs of their colonial dependencies. In contrast to the loose supervision of schools in the British

¹⁹ Clignet and Foster, 195.

²⁰ 191.

²¹ 193.

African colonies, the early education systems in French Africa were characterized by close government supervision and government-certified teaching.²² Moreover, a central tenet of French colonial education policy was the mandatory use of the French language as the idiom of instruction. This was consistent with France's view that its culture was superior and that it was its colonizing duty "to give birth to this French consciousness in Africans."²³

The French school system was to perform the dual function of educating the masses while at the same time creating an educated African minority, who could eventually serve in the lower ranks of the colonial civil service.²⁴ Maybe more explicitly so than the British system, the French educational system was highly selective and there was great emphasis on correlating education with economic development in as much it was the general policy to guarantee employment to those who had received post primary education. "By implementing this policy of educational supply and demand, the French government hoped to prevent the disillusion and disorientation experienced by youths who were educated but unemployed."²⁵ This approach however, had greater political implications in that there was great fear of producing an "educated elite" that would become a danger to the status quo. "As was the practice in the British dependencies, there was also a tendency to emphasize vocational and agricultural training to facilitate rural living but, more so, to avoid the danger of haphazard educational development."²⁶

Following the recommendations of later commissions,²⁷ it was concluded, among other

²² White, 12

²³ 15.

²⁴ 12.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Cowan et al, 10.

²⁷ The French-sponsored Brazzaville Conference (1944) resulted in the 1948 Report of the Commission for the Modernization of the Overseas Territories.

things, that education should be expanded to reach more people, and that more African teachers should be trained and recruited as part of the expansion. Furthermore, there was an increasing need for institutions of higher learning to train graduates in specialized fields to meet the economic development requirements of each territory.²⁸

Belgian Education Policy

Formal education systems in the Belgian Congo developed considerably later than those of the British and French colonies. Belgium's involvement in Africa began when the Congo Free State was created as a private empire of King Leopold of Belgium in the 1880s.²⁹ However, it was only after WWI when Belgium took over the Congo from Leopold that general colonial policies were developed and put in place.³⁰ Official Belgian recognition of education began in 1906 under a special agreement with the Vatican that gave Catholic schools the entire responsibility for mission work in the Congo.³¹ Like the other European powers, Belgian interest in the African territories was initially motivated by economic exploitation. Indeed, even before its official colonization the Congo had a booming rubber industry and by the 1920s mining (copper, tin, diamonds, and some gold) had expanded greatly. In education, the aim was to provide universal primary education with the most successful graduates prepared for minor positions in the government or in business.³² However, Belgium's education policies in the Congo contrasted in various ways with those of the British and the French.

²⁸ Cowan et al, 11.

²⁹ "Belgian Colonial Policy." http://stmarys.ca/~wmills/course317/5Belgian_Policies.html (10/23/2011).

³⁰ The broad outlines suggested in an official report in 1925 established a philosophy for the development of education in the Congo for the next twenty-three years.

³¹ However, Protestant missions were later granted permission to operate in the colony, albeit to limited financial support from the Belgium government until 1948.

³² Cowan et al, 13.

Unlike Britain and France, Belgium was not concerned about creating an African elite. From the onset it was emphasized that the Belgian system of education could not be transferred to the Congo and that a new school system would have to be devised instead. Thus, the idea underlying policies in the Congo was to change and transform the masses, as there was a presumption of African capabilities as being very limited. This is not to say that the Belgians were unique in their attitudes. But colonization affected Africans in the Belgian Congo more intensively and systematically than anywhere else. The ideology underpinning Belgium's colonial policy was that Belgium alone knew what was best for the Congo. In this regard development was based upon the idea of direct rule and paternalism of a very intense kind.³³ Before independence "there were 10,000 Belgian administrators, judicial officials, and military officers [in the Congo]; higher proportionately than anywhere else."³⁴ There was also a high degree of coordination between the three sectors of penetration, which came to be called the "Trinity": the colonial administration (Belgium), the Roman Catholic Church, and private companies. In essence, all sectors functioned to solidify Belgian objectives and its continued dominance over the model colony, which was especially evident in the extensive recruitments of labor for mining and agriculture.

To be certain the Congo had one of the most developed infrastructures in colonial Africa; before independence it had the highest literacy rate at the primary level³⁵ and many endemic diseases were all but eliminated through large-scale and persistent

³³ "Belgian Colonial Policy."

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Cowan et al, 13.

campaigns. Although later recommendations³⁶ emphasized the need for curriculum development that included industrial and agricultural subjects and the introduction of more academic-type schooling, little attention was given to the social and economic development of the Congolese. Until the 1950s, the Belgians had curbed any form of post-secondary education for the native Congolese and higher education was not developed until relatively later with the changes in international policy after WWII.

Towards Independence: Education in Post-Colonial Africa

Moving beyond the colonial analysis, I will turn my attention to the period after WWII until the 1960s, when there was intense growth in education and when many African colonies were transitioning to self-rule. For that matter I believe it is important to assess educational development against the socio-political changes that were at once transforming the international landscape while at the same time being conditioned by it. Until WWII, education in most of Sub-Saharan Africa was characterized by the establishment of mostly primary schools systems, which were the product of often unarticulated government and private initiatives.³⁷ Whatever secondary schools existed were highly selective and insufficient in number. Initially, the concept of promoting “community-oriented” schooling satisfied practical needs both for the colonizer and the colonized. It was believed that such a concept would at once prepare local inhabitants for social change without breaking with tradition.³⁸ On the other hand, it contributed towards the stabilization of the overall colonial system, in that the African was committed to the

³⁶ Establishment of Subsidized Private Education for Natives (1948) was the new basic policy guideline for boys in the Congo.

³⁷ Kingsley Banyu and Juliet Elu, “The World Bank and Financing Higher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa.” *Higher Education*. 42 (2001): 2.

³⁸ Udo Bude, “The Adaptation Concept in British Colonial Education.” *Comparative Education*. 19 (1983): 345.

land and was “available as a cheap source of [labor] for the white populations.”³⁹ Granted the European education systems did provide various opportunities to Africans. However, the adaptive and sometimes imported systems were not adequate and were soon met by growing resistance from the very people they sought to help.

To be certain many of the objectives recommended by the various commissions were not achieved. For instance, in Nigeria, early attempts to implement later recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes commission were abandoned due to the lack of administrative support and the general difficulty of transposing policy into practice.⁴⁰ Institutions of higher learning,⁴¹ while long existing in colonies such as Ghana (Achimota) and Senegal (the William Ponty School and the School of Pharmacy at Dakar), were not operating at their fullest potential due to a lack of skilled instructors and a scarcity of secondary school graduates. In turn, this resulted from the paucity of secondary schools, themselves incapable of accommodating the thousands that were finishing primary school. Overall there still existed a critical shortage of educational opportunity. Meanwhile, many Africans viewed the education system as a symbol of political and cultural domination,⁴² which can be attributed to the differing aspirations and expectations of the Europeans and the Africans. The former regarded Africans as incapable of grasping the well-intentioned plans of their “protectors.”⁴³ On the other hand, for many Africans, both the elite and the rural educated, education, as prescribed by

³⁹ Bude, 347.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone is an exception to the government founded institutions. It was established by the Church Missionary Society in 1827 and was the only institution in English-speaking Africa to offer a degree recognized by British universities.

⁴² White, 12.

⁴³ Bude, 349.

their Western masters, did not provide for any fundamental political emancipation or for placing the black population on an equal footing with Whites.⁴⁴

Criticisms were leveled against what were initially conceived as the “benevolent” and “humanistic” objectives of the colonial systems. Many Africans were soon recognizing the ideological element in the educational systems “and feared that they would receive a second-class education, which would further consolidate their dependence on and their exploitation by the white colonial masters.”⁴⁵ For that matter, the promotion of European formal education, despite the claims of favoring African development, did not foresee the conscious awakening it would facilitate in the African and the societal changes that were to come.

The post-WWII period saw the dissolution of the overseas European empires and the formation of the United Nations, which coincided with internal movements for greater educational and political rights. Moreover, the period was reflective of the changing world climate that supported self-determination and the national independence movements of all peoples. Within Sub-Saharan Africa these sentiments were demonstrated by an articulate, well-organized group of intellectuals who “were the products of the best schools in their own countries and often had been trained in European and American universities as well.”⁴⁶ Having been exposed to the liberal political philosophy of the West, these educated elite became the leaders of nationalist movements, and embraced the concepts upon which the nationalism of nineteenth-century Europe had been based to use for their own political ambitions.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Bude, 351.

⁴⁵ 353.

⁴⁶ Cowan et al, 14.

⁴⁷ 17.

Perhaps in anticipation for what was to come, both the British and the French began to reevaluate their respective education systems. In many British colonies where the practice of a “separate but equal” education was the basis of policy, the colonial administration increased primary schooling⁴⁸ and founded more colleges for academic instruction and teacher training.⁴⁹ The French moved to abandon their policy of assimilation for one of association, “whereby the educated elite could become the bridge between the mass of Africans and the colonial administration.”⁵⁰ But these measures, however extensive, could not prevent the inevitable development of nationalist movements that aimed at eventual independence and a complete break with the so-called mother countries.⁵¹ Just as the concept of self-determination originally conceived by the League of Nations protected the rights of Europeans, it was now extended under the United Nations and embraced by all peoples throughout the world.

Education since Independence

By the 1950s, the prospect for independence was clear and significantly intensifying the pace of change.⁵² By 1960 17 African countries had gained independence, and 13 others were to become independent states a few years later.⁵³ “The sudden collapse of the edifice of colonialism and emergence of an [African] political kingdom triggered even greater expectations and demands” from the masses for more educational opportunity.⁵⁴ As a result African governments invested heavily in educational expansion

⁴⁸ For example, in Ghana’s Gold Coast, the number of primary school pupils more than tripled in 1946-51.

⁴⁹ University College in Idaban, The University of Ghana, and the University College of East Africa were among the first ones established after World War II.

⁵⁰ Cowan et al, 16.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Milton Krieger, “African Policy linking Education and Development: Standard Criticisms and a new Departure.” *International Review of Education*. 34 (1988): 297.

⁵³ Banya and Elu, 3.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

and diversification. The political leaders of the new African countries saw in education not only the key to technological modernization⁵⁵ but also the crucial element for national development, which “encompassed the goals of ‘Africanization,’ national unity, and economic growth.”⁵⁶ For that matter, the development of education systems was supposed to create a new African mentality that would transform the coming generations into future intellectuals, experts, and leaders. Education policy was no longer the exclusive domain of Departments of Education and was inextricably linked to social and economic policy. In a relatively short time countries began to expand primary education and commit extensive budgets to manpower planning and higher education. Especially in those countries where the colonial system had created a well-trained group of Africans capable of operating the government, for example Ghana, there were plans to implement universal primary education (UPE) and greater spending for education development.

The need for greater initiative in African education and development was recognized at the United Nations Economic Social and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) Conference on education in Addis Ababa in 1961. The meeting was instrumental in that it brought together the ministers of education of independent countries to determine the state and direction of education in Africa. The central theme of the conference was education as a means of African development. “It...launched a new development philosophy based on the recognition that the educational systems, especially higher education, [should] play a pivotal role in the social, economic, and cultural transformation of nations.”⁵⁷ Thus, the new systems, especially at the higher levels,

⁵⁵ Cowan et al, 18.

⁵⁶ David C. Woolman, “Educational reconstruction and post-colonial curriculum development: A comparative study of four African countries.” *International Education Journal*. 2 (2001): 8.

⁵⁷ Banya and Elu, 4.

should promote African culture and African studies. In the new school curriculum, the Western systems of education developed under the colonial administrations were to be adapted to the needs and desires of contemporary African society. To this end, emphasis was to be placed “on the study of African history, ethnography, and vernacular languages, and, where it exists, vernacular literature.”⁵⁸ For the leaders and intellectuals alike, an effective African education was one that would integrate the values and strengths of traditional culture with the knowledge and skills required by the new African realities.

The gains since the 1960s were rather impressive. In many countries there were significant gains in enrollment, literacy, skilled human resources, and educational facilities.⁵⁹ However, despite these accomplishments there still existed problems that resulted from the implementation of the “new” education systems and from issues that were never resolved in the post-colonial transitions.

Notably, criticisms arose over the inherited educational models that were expanded and modified to serve the new socio-economic needs identified by African governments. There was relatively little departure from the European standards, as schools were highly centralized and reflected the will of the ruling elites. In some cases as in Guinea, where education had been designed to further political integration, the ideological views of the governing party were part of the curriculum;⁶⁰ students at the primary school level were taught the party’s history, policies and programs, and the interpretation of socialist doctrine by the leaders. Hence, many of the policies were a continuation of those carried out in the colonial period at the expense of curricular innovations. Education models to a

⁵⁸ Cowan et al, 18.

⁵⁹ 4.

⁶⁰ 18.

large extent still emphasized primary and middle-school systems, while secondary education was still limited. Overall there was general apprehension about restructuring curricula, as deviations from the colonial models were regarded often with suspicion.⁶¹ This was however, in stark contrast to the political leadership's professed commitment to the necessity for an education system which would reflect "African nature and substance."

Post-colonial education development also suffered from the same problems that had existed under European rule. These included the rural to urban disparities, ethnic and geographic inequality of access, poor teacher training, and differences between missionary and non-missionary based education.⁶² There was a pressing need to address the problem of education differences and disparities in those countries where the colonial system had failed to develop an "educated elite." This was especially so for the Congo where, in spite of high literacy, underdevelopment in manpower training and educational opportunities created vast disparities after independence. Moreover, many of the mounting problems were an extension of the economic policies pursued by governments, which had embraced the concept of "comprehensive development planning."⁶³ In many cases plans for education expansion were interwoven with economic policy-making which, according to Kingsley Banya and Juliet Elu, resulted in most planning models assuming strong, simple relationships between inputs and outputs to forecast development.⁶⁴ Educational planning therefore was based on similar perceptions and followed similar approaches. As a consequence, many of the investments in education did

⁶¹ Foster, 185.

⁶² Woolman, 30.

⁶³ Banya and Elu, 6.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

not transform into the expected outputs, while in other cases education expansion had placed an undue strain on financial capabilities.⁶⁵

In the decades to come economic hardship, coupled with poor political performance, became definitive factors in Africa's educational decline. According to Cyril K. Daddieh both conditions were symbolic of "the fragility of the captured post-colonial state, with its woefully limited administrative capacity for policy formulation and implementation due in part to the dearth of relevant socioeconomic data and...the scarcity of skilled manpower."⁶⁶ Even more vexing were the realities of the social pluralism of African societies, which created added problems for the process of nation-building. To that end, many of the democratic gains at independence were sacrificed to achieve the goal of maximum political and social unity, as well as economic development. What resulted however, were various forms of "neopatrimonial" authoritarian regimes that expanded governmental powers while at the same time shrinking the social and political arena. This was characterized by stringent prohibitions that limited constitutional guarantees on individual rights and freedoms while at the same time strengthening the hand of the state.

While the commitment to education remained relatively strong in many countries, the uniqueness of Africa's "neopatrimonialism" did not facilitate much in the way of developing a democratic consciousness in citizens. Furthermore, education as practiced in these countries was not directed towards democracy. Since the 1990s however, many African states have embraced various constitutional reforms directed toward a revival of democracy, with education playing a substantial role in overall development. In the following chapter I will analyze the extent to which education has contributed to Africa's

⁶⁵ Cowan et al, 17.

⁶⁶ Daddieh, 1.

democratic development. My hope is to recast education as part of the reformed political systems that promote justice, national unity, social equality, and democracy.

Chapter Four

My investigation into whether education can foster democratic values and behaviors for Africa will proceed with an examination of the education models of Botswana, Ghana, and Uganda. Given the unique structures and historical developmental paths of African societies my analysis will focus on the extent to which the models have fulfilled objectives of education access and equality, nation-building, and democracy seen in terms of political participation, the rule of law, social and economic equality, and human rights.

Botswana:

Political Background

Since gaining independence in 1966, Botswana has strived to maintain its democratic institutions, whereas in many other African countries authoritarian leadership has prevailed. In terms of the relationship between democracy and development, Botswana is “unique” and a model for success. On the one hand, Botswana has been one of the fastest growing countries in Africa, a country which has one of the longest records of democratic rule. On the other hand, it has been able to debunk conceptual expectations having embarked on its experiment in democracy at a time when the country was a low-income one. Botswana’s “uniqueness” is derived from the fact that it has consistently managed to maintain its democratic commitments even though the popular trend in Africa has seemed to be to undermine them; it has maintained high economic growth, sound fiscal policies, and regular elections.¹ By comparison to most other African countries, Botswana represents a successful example of a country which has remained focused on cherishing

¹ Amelia Cook and Jeremy Sarkin, “Is Botswana the Miracle of Africa? Democracy, the Rule of Law, and Human Rights versus Economic Development.” *Transnational Law and Contemporary Problems*. 19 (2010): 455.

its democratic ideals. After independence leaders in Botswana “prioritized the building of a democratic nation whose objectives were to give birth to the development of a socially, economically, and politically independent state.”² The hopes for the newly independent nation were undermined however, by the fact that at independence Botswana was one of the poorest countries in the world with a GDP per capita of about US\$80.³

As a natural consequence Botswana’s education system suffered from major setbacks. The rapid rate of population growth, coupled with the demands for education expansion, created an unprecedented challenge for the new government to make educational reform a first priority. The education system was then geared to meet the needs of a country with limited human resources. Thus, there was an emphasis on secondary and tertiary opportunities with special attention to the improvement in the quality of primary schooling.⁴ In the years following independence the number of primary schools increased by 33 percent, from 251 to 335, while enrolments increased by 76 percent.⁵ Likewise, the demand for teachers rose as that number expanded significantly from 1,673 to 3,921 or by 134 percent.⁶ Educational development continued steadily in terms of the primary school system and major progress was also made in teacher training. However, in terms of achievements, schools were not even meeting their narrow objectives as “evidenced by the very low [scores on] achievement tests and higher outputs of school leavers who could not read.”⁷

² Agreement Lathi Jotia, “The Quest for Deep Democracy Participation: Schools as Democratic Spaces in the Post-Colonial Botswana.” Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Ohio University, Education Administration (2006):1.

³ Ian Taylor, “As Good As it Gets? Botswana’s Democratic Development,” *Journal Contemporary Africa*. 21 (2003): 72.

⁴ Sheldon G. Weeks, “Reforming the Reform: Education in Botswana.” *Africa Today*. 40 (1993): 50.

⁵ 51.

⁶ 51

⁷ Jotia, 6.

Under the initiative of the then president, Sir Seretse Khama, the government came up with the model program Education for *Kagisano* in 1977, which was intended to remove existing inequalities and to build an education system that would meet the needs of a democratic society. It was believed that through this model, education would contribute to building a strong democracy by enabling individuals the opportunity to participate, either directly or through representation, in decisions affecting their lives. This approach was based on the notion that in order for democracy to function, citizens should be equipped with the skills and competence to take part in the affairs that affect them. Education for *Kagisano* can be interpreted as a political experiment as well as an “emancipatory” pedagogy.⁸ Situated both politically and geographically between Zambia, South Africa, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, Botswana was influenced by a tradition that discouraged the promotion of education along ethnic or linguistic lines.⁹ Thus, as in most of Sub-Saharan Africa, European traditions were ingrained in Botswana’s education system. The goal of Education for *Kagisano* was to design an education policy that would meet the goals of Botswana as a non-racial society in a unified nation. Therefore, nation-building was the primary aim and was based on the four national principles of democracy, development, self-reliance, and unity.¹⁰

Educational Reforms for Democracy

The vision of Education for *Kagisano* was that of a universal junior secondary education, which was essentially nine years of basic education. This was to be accomplished through community-based day high schools offering a three year program

⁸ Connie Scanlon, “Educating for Peace and Human Rights in Botswana.” PhD Candidate, Peace Studies Department, University of Bradford, U.K. (2002): 1.

⁹ 3.

¹⁰ 2.

following seven years of primary schooling.¹¹ Although this was to be accomplished within ten years, “the rapid economic development that occurred in Botswana as a result of the discovery of diamonds, made possible the creation of community junior secondary schools” earlier.¹² In the years between 1985 and 1992 education was granted more funding than had been anticipated, with development expenditure being 73 percent above targets, and receiving over 22 percent of the recurrent budget.¹³ Furthermore, this expansion was aided by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) initiatives linked to major international educational development projects. As a result, Botswana was able to develop projects to improve efficiency, teacher training, and curriculum development and implementation. The National Commission on Education (NCE)¹⁴ also recommended that Setswana, the national language, be taught in schools. Therefore, Education for *Kagisano* “resulted in the creation of a national education system that explicitly identified steps towards nationalization.”¹⁵

The notion of an education for democracy raises expectations of empowerment and full participation within the education system. The extent to which democracy is covered in Botswana’s education system is explicitly set out in the goals of the Junior Secondary School program and its Social Studies curriculum. According to the NCE, the Junior Secondary school system was to promote democracy through:

1. An understanding of society, appreciation of culture, and sense of citizenship; and

¹¹ Michael Bamidele Adeyemi and Lewis Asimeng-Boahene, “Democracy and Social Studies Education at the Junior Secondary School Level in Botswana.” *Pastoral Care* (June 2001): 15.

¹² Weeks, 53.

¹³ 58.

¹⁴ The National Commission on Education was set up in 1975 to review the education system in Botswana. A later report in 1992 identified problems and strategies for further development of *Kagisano*.

¹⁵ Weeks, 54.

2. Critical thinking, problem-solving ability, individual initiatives and interpersonal skills.¹⁶

Under the recommendation of the 1994 Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) a three year social studies syllabus was incorporated into the social studies curriculum as a means of encouraging democracy in the educational environment. The contents were meant to focus on the development of skills, values, and knowledge students were to demonstrate if they are to become informed and empowered Botswana citizens in the new millennium.”¹⁷

Among the stated aims of the program emphasis was placed on understanding the concept of governance and the structure of government, as well as the concept of justice, good citizenship, and participation in the growth and development of society.¹⁸

Moreover, topics were geared toward teaching the obligations of citizens, the constitution, basic human rights and responsibilities, and separation and limitations of powers among the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary. Of the various objectives set out in the syllabus the relationship between education and democracy is made specific in pupils’ visit to the “kgotla.”¹⁹ In keeping the tradition of consensus building, individuals converge at the kgotla, which is usually centrally located, to democratically resolve critical issues concerning the society. At the kgotla students can broaden their understandings of concepts such as conflict resolution and decision-making, as well as the role of citizens’ obligations to the democratic process.

¹⁶ National Commission on Education, (1993): 153-54.

¹⁷ Adeyemi and Asimeng-Boahene, 17.

¹⁸ 18.

¹⁹ The “kgotla” is a place for the democratic resolution of issues. It is traditionally a location where members of a community can voice local problems and concerns and resolve issues.

The extent that Botswana has been able to realize its goal of education for social harmony has been a matter of growing debate. In terms of quantitative expansion its education system is by far one of the most impressive as education expenditure is high at 26 percent of government spending.²⁰ In addition, the government is close to achieving universal and free education and literacy levels continue to increase on average for both male and female.²¹ One would also expect that the pursuit of a nationalist education agenda that promotes democracy would facilitate the development of strong democratic institutions within society. Botswana has exhibited a strong commitment to national development; it has provided extensive social services in addition to having a solid liberal economy. However, in terms of the nature and quality of its education, there exist obvious limitations that may challenge Botswana's celebrated status.

Concern has arisen over the relationship between the government and civil society, specifically minority groups, in the educational process. Of particular concern is whether education has promoted equality and national unity since one would expect, that in practice, the education system would advance strong democratic relationships within society. However, in spite of curricula innovations, the official policy is not designed to be inclusive since it has not fully integrated the indigenous minority into the education system. Furthermore, the ideal of a democratic, non-racial society has been criticized as being in actuality a guise for the submergence of indigenous cultural, political, economic, and social rights.

Botswana's leadership has favored the dominant ethnic group, the Tswana, who have long dominated the political realm. These outcomes however, can be traced to a colonial

²⁰ www.unicef.org/infobycountry/botswana.statistics.html#77. 10/12/2011.

²¹ Total adult literacy estimates for 2008 was 83%. Male (15-24) was 94% and female (15-24) was 96%. http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/botswana_statistics.html 11/06/2011.

context that promoted a chieftainship system²² that helped to facilitate the political dominance of a single ethnic group.²³ In this context education development favored the Tswana royalty while the Basarwa (San/Bushmen) and the Bakalagadi remained marginalized. Underlying this disparity was the belief that education would give subject people the same social status as the Tswana or give them ideas about social climbing. Although *Kagisano* was expected to transcend ethnic disparities in terms of access and the quality of education, government policy is perceived to be still restrictive. This much is reflected in the government's language policy that permits only Setswana and English in schools, thereby denying non-Setswana speaking minorities their basic right to an education as advocated in the Revised National Policy on Education.²⁴

That the Tswana have been able to maintain its dominance over Botswana society was the result of the country's political development, which followed a path that lacked any meaningful "struggle" and the concomitant absence of a tradition of questioning. As Kenneth Good notes, "a major reason for this smoothness was that the [transition to independence] took place collaboratively between an indigenous elite and a colonial elite, with little or no engagement by the people."²⁵ Consequently, political rights are curtailed by the dominance of the major Setswana-speaking tribes to whom leadership was granted

²² The institution of chieftainship was exercised by traditional leaders (Chiefs) who enjoyed unlimited and undefined powers over the tribe during the pre-colonial period. Under the Tribal Territories Act (1933), Botswana was divided into districts and named according to the seven dominant Tswana tribes. This practice was carried over into the Constitution after independence.

²³ Cook and Sarkin, 475.

²⁴ Scanlon, 4.

²⁵ Kenneth Good, "Bushmen and Diamonds: (Un) Civil Society in Botswana." *Discussion Paper 23* (2003): 1-39

in the Constitution.²⁶ This dynamic meant that minority groups not belonging to the ruling elite had very little means to affect political change.

The 2001 Balopi Commission Report represented an effort by which the government sought to address the “minority question” in terms of individual and collective rights. According to Jacqueline Solway, “the Balopi Commission represented a remarkable shift in public consciousness...of an issue that, only some years ago, was viewed as an insignificant ‘subversive’ undercurrent,” since the idea of minority rights was virtually unimaginable.²⁷ While the government published and accepted the findings of the Commission and there were constitutional amendments made in 2005,²⁸ many scholars have argued that not much was done to eliminate the discriminatory nature of the Constitution. As noted by Amelia Cook and Jeremy Sarkin specific references calling for changes to the Tribal Territories Act were simply replaced by measures that facilitated Tswana dominance.²⁹ Moreover, what appears to be communicated remains a policy of ethnic equality that is fine as long as the Tswana remain “more equal” than others.

Botswana’s ability to both avoid international criticism and defy conventional scenarios of ethnic strife can be understood by looking at the manner in which it has maintained its democracy. According to 2010 Freedom House estimates based on Botswana’s political rights, the country is considered “free” in democratic terms.³⁰ The

²⁶ The Constitution (Sections 77-79) gave eight Tswana-descended ethnic groups priority to serve in the House of Chiefs, a government advisory committee. The provision has been interpreted as discriminatory to specific groups.

²⁷ Jacqueline S. Solway, “Navigating the ‘Neutral’ State: Minority Rights in Botswana.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* (2002): 712.

²⁸ The government published a “White Paper” in 2002, in which it accepted the Commission’s findings and agreed that the language in this section should be changed. However, specific references calling for the chiefs from the eight dominant Tswana tribes were simply replaced by references calling for chiefs from districts controlled by these same tribes.

²⁹ Cook and Sarkin, 469.

³⁰ www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=05/16/2011.

regularity of Botswana's elections since independence is commendable; it has held free and fair elections every five years, and has maintained well-developed democratic institutions in comparison to its African neighbors. Since 1994 the voting age was decreased from 21 to 18 years and the country continues to promote "a universal civic identity that virtually all citizens embrace with pride."³¹ By African standards the country has been very effective at promoting citizens' welfare, delivering basic services, and containing internal competition and conflict. Yet despite these exceptional qualities and the state's desire to perpetuate its vision of ethnic homogeneity,³² the government, through implicit and explicit methods, continues to support exclusionary practices "that are increasingly seen as limiting if not perverting Botswana's democracy."³³

Having reviewed somewhat the extent to which the philosophy of *Kagisano* has affected or challenged social change in Botswana, my conclusion is that the relationship is difficult to assess. In terms of access and quality *Kagisano* has had commendable results. As pointed out earlier, the government continues to make education a priority and investment in education is seen as vital to the development of the country. Botswana continues to defy expectations resulting in many assessments that applaud the country while overlooking issues of great concern. While Kenneth Good praises Botswana's success, he nevertheless perceives its democracy as a "negative peace,"³⁴ it has "combined high growth rates and visible development, with a structural autocracy that belies its benign image internationally."³⁵ With regard to its limitations, critics have

³¹ Solway, 713.

³² 714.

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Good, 23.

³⁵ Taylor,

argued that Botswana has fallen short of its image as the “African Miracle” in many ways.

Aside from the lack of meaningful reforms to protect and promote minority rights, the government has not done enough to ameliorate socio-economic inequalities long existing in the country. According to United Nations Development Program Indicators, Botswana ranks third highest in the world in its GINI coefficient, a measure of the inequality of income distribution, behind Comoros and Namibia.³⁶ From 2000 to 2007, 31.2 percent of the population lived on less than \$1.25 per day, while 49.4 percent lived on less than \$2 per day.³⁷ The richest 10 percent of the population have access to a 51.2 percent share of income or expenditures. Aside from the provision of health and education services, it is quite clear that not everyone has benefitted meaningfully from raised incomes or higher standards of living. Compounding this problem is the rural to urban disparity in which economic differentiation is most exemplified between the elite and the indigenous communities, who have traditionally settled in remote regions. Not surprisingly, these regions have benefitted the least from development programs that were designed to improve both education access and job opportunities.

The fact that Botswana has been able to avoid or bypass substantial political struggle in its democratic development created what many describe as a lower level of political consciousness.³⁸ Unlike its neighbors (South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia) a culture of struggle did not shape Botswana’s political experience. The fact that it was able to fashion significant components of a liberal system without entirely discarding pre-

³⁶ UNDP, Human Development Report. 2009-HDI Rankings (2009). <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>. 10/03/2011.

³⁷ Cook and Sarkin, 479.

³⁸ Scanlon.

existing structures has enhanced its success.³⁹ However, at the same time, the continued capacity of Botswana's seemingly contradictory policy of non-racialism exposes the limited nature of its peaceful democracy. Especially on the issue of minority rights, the government has failed to provide equal rights to all Botswana citizens. While crafting an education model for peace and national unity may in the long run promote structural and institutional changes such as human rights laws, improvement of civil rights and freedoms, and greater political awareness, Botswana must first rethink its understanding of what exactly constitutes its democracy if education is to function effectively in the democratic process.

³⁹ Solway, 729.

Chapter Five: Ghana

Political Background

Ghana's post-colonial political development was animated by a nationalist movement that promoted democracy and self-rule. Led by Kwame Nkrumah, the former colony announced its independence in 1957 and was quickly heralded as a bastion and initiator of independence and democracy for Africa. "But the country's liberal democratic constitution was quickly sidelined as civil liberties were suspended," a one-party state was declared, and Nkrumah installed himself as lifelong leader.¹ Nkrumah was overthrown in 1966 by the military. However, subsequent attempts at democratization proved unsuccessful, as the country experienced oscillations of military and civilian rule. From 1982 to 1993, Ghana was ruled as a quasi-military dictatorship under Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings' Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC). Until the democratic transitions in the early 1990s, the political system of Ghana closely resembled the authoritarian regimes that were characteristic of Africa. With the establishment of the Fourth Republic in 1993 Ghana returned to civilian rule and embarked on a peaceful transition to democratic governance.

For many observers, Ghana's continued commitment to education can be closely linked to its commitment to democracy. Having been the first of the former British dependencies in Africa to achieve independence and a real measure of internal self-governance, Ghana has long been regarded as a leader in African political and educational development. Despite the tradition of military rule, Ghanaians have a deep sense of political consciousness to which the values and principles of democracy are very

¹ Michael Bratton, Peter Lewis, E. Gyimah-Boadi, "Constituencies for Reform in Ghana." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. 39 (2001): 233.

important. On balance, Ghanaians have overwhelmingly supported the democratic political reforms of the 1990s (72 percent according to one poll) with a clear majority preferring democracy to any other form of government (75 percent).² It is little wonder therefore that popular perceptions of democracy tend to subscribe to universal notions of civil and voting rights, and equality of participation and representation.³ This deliberative quality of democracy, expressed in terms of political rights, is regarded as an opportunity for empowerment that translates for most Ghanaians into a positive image of democracy.

The movement towards constitutional rule in late 1992, in addition to gradual structural and institutional reforms, is reflective of the political traditions that emerged during decolonization in the 1950s. According to Lindsay Whitfield, the traditions and ideologies long established by the two founding political parties- the Convention People's Party (with a base in the neo-traditionalist/educated elites) and United Gold Coast Convention (nationalist/broad-based)- have produced a credible competitive two-party system to which Ghanaians, both the elite and the masses, are mobilized.⁴ As a result, no one party or political leader dominates the political process. While some regions are seen as strongholds for one or the other main parties because they contain a large number of core voters and there is not much competition,⁵ most "are seen as swing regions where the two parties compete fairly evenly for votes."⁶ In essence, Ghanaian politics has been able to transcend, to a large degree, the ethnic and regional divisions that have characterized many other African countries.

² 240.

³ 239.

⁴ Lindsay Whitfield, "Change for a Better Ghana: Party Competition, Institutionalization and Alternation in Ghana's 2008 Elections." *African Affairs*. 108 (2009): 627.

⁵ Past analyses of Ghanaian elections considered the three northern regions (Northern, Upper West, and Upper East) to be NDC (National Democratic Congress) strongholds. While the Ashanti- southern and Eastern regions are the strongholds for the opposition NPP (New Patriotic Party).

⁶ Whitfield, 627

Evidence from Ghana's highly competitive 2008 elections where outcomes were based on cross-cutting social cleavages reveals that ethnicity plays only one role in party identification.⁷ Having reverted to constitutional civilian rule, Ghana has, over the past several decades, developed stabilizing mechanisms that have helped to further solidify its democratic political system. Among these mechanisms, Whitfield has identified Ghana's independent Electoral Commission and its transparent electoral processes as two of the most stabilizing characteristics that have worked to structure elite behavior, thereby institutionalizing the political process.⁸ Moreover, the transitions ushered in a considerable degree of political liberalization that created a political space for civil society. Accordingly, non-governmental associations proliferated, with many throwing themselves into civic and political activism.⁹ It is rather fitting therefore that within this political framework Ghana's expansive education system would also promote the cultivation of democratic values.

Educational Reforms for Democracy

A central objective of the constitutional reforms during Ghana's transition to civilian rule in the 1990s has been the Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education Program (FCUBE). Under Article 39 (2) of the 1992 Constitution of the Fourth Republic, FCUBE was conceived as a way to increase both the effectiveness of the teaching and learning tasks of the primary school system, as well as a response to the political changes initiated at the time. To be certain education development had always been a priority for the Ghanaian leadership. However, in spite of numerous attempts by successive governments to improve the overall education system, inputs were still not sufficient for improving

⁷ 621

⁸ 623

⁹ Bratton, Lewis, and Boadi. 233.

school quality and learning outcomes. Furthermore, many of the educational gains incurred since independence were not reflected in political performance and economic management. An evaluation of FCUBE however, will focus on the role education reforms have played in meeting constitutional obligations.

FCUBE was established as part of the new constitutional reforms to restore civilian rule and greater economic development and growth for Ghana. Moreover, it was undertaken in conjunction with greater initiatives with the international community¹⁰ in which the promotion of universal primary education (UPE) was a top priority among development goals. The reforms also coincided with Ghana's (re)democratization that took place in the early 1990s. Assuming Ghana was committed to her constitutional obligations FCUBE was heralded as a major step towards reconciling Ghanaian education with national objectives. FCUBE was not "new" in terms of themes and ideas. In fact, many of the objectives espoused under previous reforms¹¹ sought to make the curriculum more relevant to social and economic needs in spite of subsequent failures. The new framework was unique in the sense that its implementation was mandated in the new constitution and was based on the notion that democracy depends on good educational systems that promote inclusiveness.

The implementation of FCUBE demanded many changes to Ghana's education system. These included "different ways of knowledge, different ideas about the nature, purpose, and scope of school subjects, and the ways in which the needs of a diverse student population might be met."¹² "By requiring that all Ghanaians receive nine years

¹⁰ Education for All, the Millennium Development Goals, and the Declaration on the Rights of the Child.

¹¹ The 1987 New Education Reform Program.

¹² Stanislaus Kadingdi, "Policy Initiatives for Change and Innovation in Basic Education Programmes in Ghana." *Education Journal*. 4 (2004): 15.

of free schooling, the government wished to ensure that graduates of the basic education system were prepared for further education and skill training.”¹³ According to the Ministry of Education (MOE), this was to be achieved through the following objectives: (i) improve the quality of teaching and learning ;(ii) improve management efficiency and sustainability ;(iii) increase access and partnership; and (iv) decentralize the management of the education sector.¹⁴ Furthermore, through the establishment of a non-partisan National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE), the government, through various learning initiatives, has sought to foster a commitment to the principles and values as expressed in the Constitution.

According to estimates based on a comparative study of the implementation of UPE programs in Africa, enrollment rates have gradually increased for Ghana since the implementation of FCUBE in 1992.¹⁵ Gross enrollment rates for primary schools stood at 92.7 percent in the period 2005/06, while attainment rates were relatively high on average.¹⁶ In the past decade public expenditure on education has varied between 28 percent and 40 percent of Ghana’s annual budget.¹⁷ Furthermore, in terms of the quality of the education provided, the country continues to maintain a high standard of schooling and major steps have been taken to improve the quality of education delivery in the country. This is especially so for rural areas, which have historically been disadvantaged in the distribution of education benefits. While disparities remain in terms of the share of public education expenditure between rural and urban areas, since the adoption of

¹³ Kadingdi, 9.

¹⁴ MOE (1996) Basic Education Sector Improvement Programme Policy Document; Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education by the year 2005. Accra, Ghana: Ministry of Education: 15.

¹⁵ Kazuma Inoue and Moses Oketch. 50.

¹⁶ The World Bank, “From Pilot to National Scale: Ghana’s Experience with the Abolition of School Fees.” Abolishing School Fees in Africa: Lessons from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Mozambique. Washington D.C.: A Publication of the World Bank in collaboration with UNICEF, (2009): 107.

¹⁷ **

FCUBE total education subsidies for rural primary education have remained consistently high.¹⁸ Over the years a number of donor countries and aid agencies have been major supporters of FCUBE. Backers have focused on the promotion of in-service teacher training courses, national assessment systems, and the establishment of “model” schools. The approach was meant to establish effective teaching procedures that were pupil-centered with the goal of giving educators more direct influence in the classroom.

In an effort to promote democratic culture in schools the government encourages the setting up of civic and other social clubs to foster the principles of integrity, tolerance, and good-citizenship. Furthermore, it has allowed the school governing system to involve student body representatives in decision-making and deliberations of school and educational governance. Apart from these provisions, since the establishment of the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE), 850 civic education clubs have been created throughout Ghana with the specific aim of consolidating democracy through youth participation.¹⁹ This past year the Commission has sought to achieve these objectives through the reintroduction of civic studies in the school curriculum, and teacher training workshops in four regions (Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Eastern and the Greater Accra Region)²⁰ with the intention of expanding the project to other areas. This was in large part due to a perceived lack of initiative on the Ministry of Education in regards to effective civic education. Furthermore, with the assistance of the Center for Civic Education in the United States and other donors, the NCCE has promoted several

¹⁸ Mawull Caddah and Allstair Munro, “The Rich or Poor: Who Gains from Public Education Spending in Ghana?” *National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) Discussion Paper 11-12* (2010): 11

¹⁹ www.modernghana.com/news/376171/1/ncce-ban-on-politics=at-campuses-of-tertiary-school.html. 02/03/2012.

²⁰ www.ghananewsagency.org/details/Education/NCCE.October.10,2011. 02/24/2012.

regional showcases with the specific aim of identifying and solving problems in schools and communities.

Overall the evidence suggests that expanded educational opportunities would influence Ghanaians' attitudes to politics in general and democracy in particular. Results taken from a national survey sampling citizens' orientations to politics found that, on average, most Ghanaians (72 percent) were attentive to the political world around them.²¹ Moreover, regarding political knowledge, many knew their leaders and elected officials while some could impressively identify individuals who wield power. On average most Ghanaians support democracy and continue to have faith in representative politics, as this is evident from the very high proportions of citizens' participation in recent elections.²² While there is no meaningful difference in support for democracy between Ghana's urban and rural areas, the citizens more attuned to democratic politics (freedom of speech, rights of association, electoral choice) were overwhelmingly urban and had more than ten years of formal schooling.²³ Not surprisingly perhaps because of lesser educational opportunities, political apathy was higher among poor and less educated people, many of whom felt uncomfortable expressing their political opinions and lacked interest in politics or government.²⁴ For this group democracy is largely associated with the government's ability to deliver basic public goods such as education, healthcare, and employment opportunities.

While the government has indeed made important strides towards the improvement of the quality of both its political and educational systems, a significant disparity remains in

²¹ Whitfield, 235.

²² 244.

²³ 235.

²⁴ 236.

its ability to deliver socio-political goods. For instance, when Ghanaians were asked about living standards almost one-half (46 percent) said that things have worsened since the democratic transition.²⁵ The evidence is especially striking for populations in rural regions and among women, who are still faced with the traditional syndrome of barriers to educational opportunities.²⁶ Despite prioritized policy objectives that emphasize gender parity in access to education, illiteracy continues to be more prevalent among women than men.²⁷ Moreover, educational services are considerably lacking for females in Northern Ghana who, apart from being vulnerable to socio-economic factors, are also affected by societal and cultural beliefs about the subordinate role of women.²⁸

Beyond the achievements of the Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education, many rural communities continue to experience limited access to education. This point is made by many observers who contend that while free schooling has increased national enrollments on the primary level, full access to basic education in Northern Ghana remains elusive to the government, which is the main provider of education.²⁹ The facts on the ground suggest that while much progress has been made in recent years to bridge the gap between the north and south,³⁰ “state efforts at reaching the underserved through traditional formal systems are not reaching the most marginalized and deprived

²⁵ 243.

²⁶ The World Bank, “From Pilot to National Scale”, 96.

²⁷ 93.

²⁸ Esther Ofei-Aboagye, “Promoting the Participation of Women in Local Governance and Development: The Case of Ghana.” Institute of Local Government Studies, Legon, Ghana. 2002: 5.

²⁹ Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE), “Complementary Education and Access to Primary Schooling in Northern Ghana.” *CREATE Ghana Policy Brief 2* (Sept 2002).

³⁰ In the 2004/05 academic year, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sports (MoESS) and the Ghana Education Service (GES) introduced fee-free education at the basic level, which was initiated on a pilot basis through a Capitation Grant Scheme in the 40, and later 53, most deprived districts in Ghana.

communities.”³¹ Among the reasons given for this setback were high opportunity costs, traditional beliefs and values, and a lack of political will. Despite the elimination of tuition costs many rural communities are still faced with indirect costs such as the cost of uniforms and school supplies, which many cannot afford. And, although gross enrollment rates are high (92 percent) more than a third of those who are enrolled do not complete basic education.³² Socio-economic factors have also been cited as the main reason why many school-aged children drop out since they are often required to work to support their families.

Aside from socio-economic factors, the general lack of political will on the part of the Ghanaian government to implement a clear education strategy for the North has been regarded as a major obstacle. The criticism comes in spite of collaborative efforts with international NGOs to implement Complementary Education Programs (CEP) with the specific aim of providing education to deprived communities. In particular, since 1995, CEP initiatives such as The School for Life³³ has been effective at providing education to children ages 8-14 who otherwise would have no access to a formal education. Upon completion of the program many of the graduates transition into formal settings. The success of CEP has been the result of the application of learning models that cater to the linguistic and traditional/cultural diversity in the rural regions. While these programs do indeed fill an access gap, the number of children they benefit pales in comparison to the formal system. Far worse is the relative lack of initiatives to make CEP a priority in an effort to reach marginalized children who cannot attend formal schools. For instance,

³¹ “*CREATE Ghana Policy Brief 2*”

³² “*CREATE Ghana Policy Brief 2*”

³³ The School for Life complimentary education program is funded by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA).

there is no stated policy in the Ghana Education System (GES) to formally replicate or implement the learning strategies of CEPs. Thus, it has been highly recommended that in order for these initiatives to have any meaningful impact on overall rural education development, a more sustained and coherent effort is needed on the part of the Ghanaian government to integrate more effective learning processes.

Encouragingly, Ghana maintains, by regional and international standards, a reasonably high measure of support for democracy. As indicated earlier, a clear majority prefers democracy to any other form of government, and Ghanaians overwhelmingly continue to have faith in the deliberative quality of elections. A great part of this success is owed to the institutionalization of democratic systems, as evidenced by the 70 percent of Ghanaians who have expressed satisfaction with the way democracy works.³⁴ However, many have argued that just as important Ghanaians feel uncertain about democracy's capacity to represent the interests of ordinary people. Indeed, according to Bratton, Lewis, and Boadi, "the low frequency and poor quality of formal linkages between citizens and elected representatives" expose the defects of the new democratic system.³⁵ Since formal communication generally requires reading and writing, many ordinary Ghanaians often turn to informal channels (religious leader, businessman) and "clientelistic"³⁶ reflexes when seeking political representation. Especially for the poor and those in rural regions, where there is a larger propensity for informal ties, the lack of confidence in official state channels could erode the legitimacy of democracy itself.³⁷

³⁴ "Sustained Support for Democracy in Ghana," *AfroBarometer Briefing Paper No. 18* (2005): 6.

³⁵ Bratton et al, 244.

³⁶ "Clientelism" refers to the institutionalized relations of loyalty and dependence on one individual or the construction of patron-client networks.

³⁷ Bratton et al, 244.

In sum, if we are to assess the relationship between education and democracy in Ghana, we must consider at least two factors: (1) accessibility and universality; and (2) content in terms of inculcation of civic norms and responsibilities (teaching good citizenship). In terms of the first, my analysis shows that Ghana has indeed made strides in offering universal education (at least at the primary level). However, the issue of accessibility is still problematic in that there remains a significant rural to urban divide, a gender gap, and also a geographical and ethnic divide. As for point two Ghana has indeed included citizenship education in its curriculum. However, more effort is needed on the part of the government to integrate more effective learning processes to overcome challenges that threaten the access to and quality of Ghana's education. On balance the Ghanaian model seems to be working well enough and could be an example for others in Africa. Most important for my work, the relationship between democracy at the level of the government and democracy at the educational level is moderately strong.

Chapter Six: Uganda

Political Background

Unlike Botswana and Ghana, Uganda's post-colonial transition lacked the development of strong democratic institutions. The country was granted internal self-government from Britain in 1961, and the first national elections were held the same year. However, in succeeding years, politics was mostly contentious, as supporters of a centralized state vied with those in favor of a loose federation and strong role for tribally-based local kingdoms, which politicized ethnic, religious, and linguistic differences. Particularly, the political maneuvering included reconciling the role of kingdoms¹ that had traditionally held powerful positions in Uganda's colonial past. Tensions came to a head when Uganda's Prime Minister, Dr. Milton Apollo Obote, suspended the constitution in 1966 and took over all powers of the state, thus giving rise to what came to be known as the 1966 "crisis."² The "crisis" introduced a new constitution and among other things, abolished the constitutional status of kingdoms while Uganda officially became a one-party state.

In 1971, Obote's government was overthrown by a military coup led by armed forces commander Idi Amin Dada. As president, Amin dissolved the parliament and amended the constitution to give himself absolute power. Under his rule Uganda experienced economic decline, social disintegration, and massive human rights violations triggering nearly 20 years of civil war. Although Amin was removed by Tanzanian forces in 1979, the legacy of his misrule and violence continued from one regime to the next through

¹ The "kingdoms" comprised a federation of kingdoms and tribes. Most notably, the kingdom of Buganda, which had had a long history as an independent and well-organized kingdom and enjoyed privileged status during colonial time.

² J. Oloka-Onyango, "Constitutional Transitions in Museveni's Uganda: New Horizons or Another False Start?" *Journal of African Law*. 39 (1995): 158.

extra-constitutional usurpation and exercise of power.³ After the military takeover by the National Resistance Army in 1986 Uganda returned to civilian rule under the leadership of President Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM). The NRM was well aware of the country's constitutional history, and was minded not to follow in the footsteps of its predecessors.⁴ In particular, the NRM "was determined to break the cycle of violence and, like many Ugandans, it believed that the cause of the country's political, economic, and social problems was the lack of 'a good constitution'."⁵ Immediately upon its assumption of power the NRM, presided over by Museveni, embarked upon the promulgation of a new constitution that was to serve as the basis for the "new" Uganda.

To be certain, the Ugandan transition required a two-pronged approach that required the consolidation of peace and stability, as well as the creation of a new national identity based on norms of tolerance and democracy. To that end, Museveni initiated several reforms in an attempt to restore constitutionalism and the rule of law. The reforms "comprised of and addressed...citizenship, human rights, political parties, the forms of central and local government...and the safeguards for the new constitution."⁶ More specifically, the reforms sought to address the question of what form of government was most suitable for a democratic Uganda, "the position of traditional rulers, and the role of political parties in the post-NRM era."⁷ From the point of view of the NRM the challenges of ethnic strife and political turmoil were best met with a political system that could mobilize all Ugandans. The system was therefore guided by the NRM's "no-party" or

³ 159.

⁴ Oliver Furley and James Katalikawe, "Constitutional Reform in Uganda: The New Approach." *African Affairs*. 96 (1997): 244.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Furley and Katalikawe, 249.

⁷ 250.

“movement” philosophy⁸ that was intended to be all embracing, while at the same time overcoming the sectarian and divisive “ills” that was characteristic of Ugandan politics.

While it has been suggested that the “movement” philosophy was merely a ploy to sustain the NRM in power for as long as possible,⁹ its approach to constitutionalism was unprecedented in the country’s history and for that matter anywhere else in Africa. As Waliggo articulates, “never before has constitution-making dominated the life of Uganda...Never before have the Ugandan people been so actively involved at every level and placed so much hope for stability and democratization in the constitutional process.”¹⁰ Given the country’s recent political history the NRM was forced to delve into policy issues which were not normally “constitutionalized”.¹¹ In this respect the Ugandan constitution, as conceived by the NRM, became a model instrument that ushered in novel institutions of governance resulting in fundamental change in Ugandan politics. It is therefore a credit to the NRM that it was able to involve the people of Uganda in the constitution-making process, thus ensuring the document’s legitimacy, credibility, and permanence.

Given the nature of Uganda’s post-colonial political development and the subsequent constitutional reforms, it would be fitting to investigate the extent to which the transition has affected Ugandans’ understanding of democracy. Indeed, after 30 years of autocratic rule and civil war constitutional changes have led to the resumption of formal democratic institutions. However, this also requires a robust measure of political support and

⁸ As opposed to “multi-party” politics which was suspended until 2005, Article 94(2) of the Constitution stipulates that every Ugandan shall be entitled to participate in public affairs, but only through the “Movement”.

⁹ Furley and Katalikawe, 252.

¹⁰ J.M. Waliggo. “Constitution-making and Politics of Democratization in Uganda.” In H.B. Hansen and M. Twaddle (eds). *From Chaos to Order*. Kampala: Foundations Publishers Ltd., 1994: 22.

¹¹ Extraordinary efforts had been made to ensure that certain parts of the Constitution were virtually impossible to amend or repeal.

activism on the part of Ugandans. In general, Ugandans classify their country's political regime as a democracy. According to an Afro-barometer estimate on citizens' attitudes to democracy in Uganda,¹² the majority understand democracy in largely universal terms. Citizens perceived democracy in terms of "civil liberties" or "personal freedoms," elections, and voting. This much was reflected in the responses about the current state of political freedoms in which an estimated nine out of ten Ugandans said they were "somewhat" or "completely free" to join any political organization they wanted.¹³ Another "86 percent felt that people were free to 'choose who to vote for without feeling pressured'" and most felt they were similarly free to "say what they think."¹⁴

On a range of other questions assessing the quality of Uganda's democracy over half of Ugandans say the country is a democracy with just under half (48 percent) being "fairly" satisfied with the way democracy worked.¹⁵ While Ugandans strongly endorse the idea of elections as the source of political authority, surprisingly, just one-half felt that elections (based on 2006 results) were "completely free and fair."¹⁶ Despite an increase in electoral competitiveness, many Ugandans have also expressed doubts about the electoral process, with just 44 percent saying that elections "serve to ensure that the MPs reflect the views of the voters."¹⁷ This perceived lack of confidence in the electoral process is obvious when compared to the higher views expressed about the 1996 (79 percent) and 2001 (67 percent) presidential elections.

¹² Robert Mattes, Francis Kibirige, and Robert Sentamu, "Understanding Citizens Attitudes to Democracy in Uganda." *AfroBarometer Working Papers No.124* (2010): 12.

¹³ 4.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ 5

¹⁷ Ibid.

Notwithstanding Ugandans' popular support for democracy Mattes, Kibirige, and Sentamu have noted that overall levels of basic "democratic literacy" have not moved in any significant way over the past decade.¹⁸ Despite broad levels of political freedom and a strong constituency for democracy it has been noted that many adults are still not aware of their rights and duties as citizens.¹⁹ Needless to say, the NRM has promoted various initiatives to achieve unity and significant attitude change in support for democracy. However, on various aspects of democratic citizenship (popular sovereignty, political activism, pluralism) the actual state of progress has been slow.²⁰ Furthermore, it has been argued that democratic education has mostly been conducted to satisfy the current state of governance and the party in power.²¹ While the government has made substantial efforts to increase voter education to improve the electoral process, to influence real development of Uganda's democracy education needs to play a greater role in building civic competence and entrenching democratic culture. My investigation of Uganda's civic education will first proceed with its provision of primary education, since this will increase the probability for democratic development.

Educational Reforms for Democracy

Uganda's democratic transition and subsequent establishment of competitive elections in 1996 were also relevant to the establishment of free universal primary education (UPE). Like many other democratically elected governments in Africa the Ugandan initiative to remove primary school fees has been closely linked to democratic politics. According to David Stasavage it is possible to attribute a link between electoral

¹⁸ 13.

¹⁹ Deepening Democracy Programme in Uganda, "Encouraging more active participatory civic engagement." http://ddp.ug/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=718Itemid=96 04/25/2012.

²⁰ Mattes et al, 11.

²¹ 29.

competition and a new education initiative, since electoral democracy has prompted many African leaders to prioritize the delivery of public services and become more accountable to the electorate.²² The implementation of the UPE initiative therefore, became a central aspect of President Museveni's 1996 election campaign, which was the first presidential election since the democratic transition. As such the elections presented a plausible electoral challenge in that it emphasized the political nature of the provision of UPE. For instance, "during the weeks leading up to the 1996 vote opposition candidate Paul Ssemogerere declared that he would match Museveni's promise to provide free primary education."²³ Furthermore, education had been a salient political issue for large segments of the population,²⁴ for whom primary education is most frequently the only level of formal education they would receive. Upon his re-election Museveni announced the abolition of school fees for four children to every family²⁵ and the program came into effect in 1997.

Uganda's UPE initiative is arguably one of the more successful attempts of an African government to broaden education access.²⁶ Among the stated aims of the education initiative was to provide equitable access to quality and affordable education to all Ugandans, meet commitments to achieve Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and propel the nation towards achieving the goals of

²² David Stasavage, "The role of Democracy in Uganda's move to Universal Primary Education." *Journal of Modern African Studies*. 43 (2005): 54.

²³ Stasavage, 61.

²⁴ David Stasavage, "Democracy and Primary School Attendance: Aggregate and Individual Level Evidence from Africa." *AfroBarometer Working Paper No. 54* (2005):1.

²⁵ Museveni's initial statement about UPE stipulated that the Ugandan government would be responsible for the provision of tuition fees, textbooks, construction of classrooms, teacher salaries, and teacher training.

²⁶ Universal primary education has also been prominent in the election campaigns in Malawi (1994), Tanzania (2001), and Kenya (2002).

Poverty Eradication Action Plan.²⁷ Furthermore, through partnerships with the international community and donor agencies the government has been able to implement education programs in many rural regions, especially in the war-affected districts in the North. In essence, UPE provision was integral to the NRM's stated goals of transforming Uganda into an economically and politically developed country.

Since the implementation of UPE total primary school enrollments increased from 3.4 million in 1996 to 7.1 million by 2006, an increase of 149 percent over pre-UPE enrollments.²⁸ Since 1997, gross enrollment ratios have hovered at about 100 percent, suggesting that the program has been able to capture more individuals than those in the relevant school age group.²⁹ Due to the prior establishment of macroeconomic stability the government was able to make considerable investments into primary education provision. As a result, the share of education expenditure rose from an average of 20.2 percent to an average of 26.3 percent in the three years following the UPE announcement.³⁰ Public spending on education as a percentage of government expenditure was 15.04 percent as of 2009.³¹ Encouragingly, the increases in enrollment and education spending have also helped to reduce inequalities in primary school rates between regions, and between boys and girls.³² However, the government needs to make

²⁷ Government of Uganda, "Education for National Integration and Development". *Government White Paper on the Education Policy Review Commission Report*. Government Printer, Kampala, 1992.

²⁸ Joseph Wasswa-Matovu, "Environments of Disadvantage in Uganda's Universal Primary Education". *Children, Youth and Environments* 19 (2009): 275.

²⁹ 275.

³⁰ Stasavage, "The role of democracy." 61.

³¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Institute for Statistics* 2009.

http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=en&BR_Country=8000 04/25/2012.

³² Matovu, 275.

a very serious effort to improve education quality, while maintaining its impressive accomplishments with respect to coverage.

In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda the promotion of civic education was mandated under a national Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC). Among other things the Commission was to “formulate, implement, and oversee programs intended to inculcate in the citizens of Uganda awareness of their civic responsibilities and an appreciation of their rights and obligations as free people.”³³ For the purposes of carrying out UHRC’s mandate a committee was set up to bring together a number of constitutional bodies to carry out civic education. These constitutional bodies are the Electoral Commission, the Judicial Service Commission, and the Inspectorate of Government, as well as the two bodies representing civic groups involved in civic education (the Human Rights Network and the Uganda Women’s Network).³⁴ In 2008, the UHRC implemented a civic education program intended to build the capacity of existing institutions at district and grassroots levels to act as agents of civic education and human rights.³⁵

Early civic education programs within Uganda were undertaken as part of the NRM’s expansive efforts to achieve popular participation and support for constitutional reforms. Mostly, the initiatives sought to involve the ordinary citizen in the making of the constitution. Notable groups were the early Resistance Councils, now the Local Councils, which elected the representatives to the National Resistance Councils. Also notable were

³³ M. Katusiimeh, “Civic Education and the Promotion of Participatory Democracy in Uganda.” *Paper presented at a conference on Strengthening African Initiatives through Elections, Democracy, and Governance*. Organized by The Electoral Commission of South Africa and The Africa Union, South Africa (April 2003).

³⁴ *Ibid*

³⁵ Uganda Human Rights Commission, “UHRC implements EU-funded Civic Education project.” www.uhrc.org 04/49/2012.

the political education courses known as “Chaka Mchaka” cadre training.³⁶ It was hoped that through popular participation “the people would respect and uphold the new constitution and, in the long run, prevent its subversion.”³⁷ In later years, there had been deliberate attempts to teach civics at the primary school level; civics was already a part of the social studies curriculum as well as the political education subjects examined at Ordinary Level (O-Level).³⁸

Under the guidelines of the UHRC civic education has mostly been conducted through partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs).³⁹ This however, is not surprising given the role civil society plays in legitimating and promoting political values and institutions. Indeed, the groups accredited to carry out civic education programs have increased in both number and the issues they undertake. As a result, CSO involvement in the environment, women, population, and governance has been brought to the forefront. Especially on the issue of women’s rights, NGOs such as Uganda Women’s Network (UWONET) have overwhelmingly made advances for women on education, health, and politics. According to Matovu NGOs have played a major role in the field of education through the construction of schools, the promotion of basic education, and the development of new education initiatives in the war-affected districts in northern Uganda.⁴⁰

A review of Uganda’s UHRC initiative reveals that in spite of extensive efforts to fulfill its constitutional mandate, civic education is still fragmented and underdeveloped.

³⁶ “Chaka Mchaka” were the nationalist courses that formed the core of the NRM’s socio-political mobilization effort.

³⁷ Furley and Katalikawe, 247.

³⁸ Katusiimeh, 2.

³⁹ In 1996, organizations accredited to carry out civic education formally adopted CEJOCU (Civic Education Joint Co-ordination Unit) as an umbrella body to plan, oversee, and implement civic education activities in the whole country.

⁴⁰ Wasswa-Matovu, 19

As a result, CSOs tend to pursue individual agendas without consulting the UHRC, thereby emphasizing aspects of the civic education program considered important to them,⁴¹ which in many cases has undermined the goals of the UHRC. It has been suggested that many civic education programs, such as voter education, tend to emphasize issues that complement state activities.⁴² Moreover, since many CSOs depend on funding from the government critics argue that they are often used for political purposes and for that matter the political education of the NRM's "movement" politics.⁴³ Furthermore, because CSOs have traditionally played a more facilitative role in Ugandan society their ability to actively promote democratic awareness is reduced so much so that they lack the autonomy to challenge the government. In this respect, institutions of civil society (media, trade unions, cooperatives, business groups, religious groups) are weakened in their power relations with the government to the point where the line between civil society and government remains blurred.⁴⁴

As noted earlier, civic education programs were central to the socio-political efforts of the NRM's constitutional reforms. Later attempts to engage public participation were undertaken in subsequent referenda, most notably the 2005 proposal to reinstitute multi-party politics. Although multi-party politics have since resumed Uganda's democracy has remained relatively unchanged. In light of evidence reflecting Uganda's recent history, large majorities continue to prefer democracy to alternative forms of government.⁴⁵ Yet, many Ugandans continue to exhibit dissatisfaction with the quality of democracy as

⁴¹ Katusimeh, 13.

⁴² 5.

⁴³ David Kaiza, "Opposition Fears Another Ban on Parties." *The East African* (Nairobi), May 2005. www.mail-archive.com/ugandanet@kym.net/msg19696.html 04/20/2012.

⁴⁴ Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations (DENIVA) "Civil Society in Uganda: At the Crossroads?" *CIVICUS Civil Society Index Project* (June 2006): 48.

⁴⁵ Mattes et al, 6

provided by the government.⁴⁶ While Uganda is by no means considered a “full” democracy, its “movement” system raises important questions about the extent to which Ugandan politics can be described as democratic. Furthermore, observers have expressed doubt that the re-introduction of formal multi-party politics has done much to improve the legitimacy of the political system, since socio-political activities are still to a large degree controlled by the government.⁴⁷

Despite the government’s stated commitment to constitutionalism and democratic sustainability, evidence suggests that the increasing power of the state has been the most significant obstacle to the expansion of democracy and the rule of law in Uganda.⁴⁸ Since the era of political reform in the 1990s the NRM, through political and coercive means, has systematically stalled the expansion of political competition, thereby entrenching its power for the immediate future.⁴⁹ For example, following the 2005 referendum, Museveni persuaded parliament to lift the presidential term limits as laid down in the 1995 Constitution to allow for a third elected term. Nevertheless, there has been growing opposition to his presidency both from within the ruling party and from the electorate. According to Tangri and Mwenda rank-and-file NRM MPs have also clashed with Museveni regarding his overbearing style in government, particularly his control over the NRM parliamentary caucus, which has made them increasingly subservient to the executive.⁵⁰ In terms of official election results, “Museveni’s support had been falling: 75

⁴⁶ Mattes et al, 5.

⁴⁷ Roger Tangri and Andrew M. Mwenda, “President Museveni and the politics of presidential tenure in Uganda.” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 28 (2010): 31.

⁴⁸ FreedomHouse Countires at the Crossroads 2010. www.freedomhouse.org/report/countries-crossroads-2010/uganda. 04/20/2012.

⁴⁹ Tangri and Mwenda, 34.

⁵⁰ 36.

percent in 1996, 68 percent in 2001, and 59 percent in 2006.”⁵¹ And, while he was able to recapture the presidency in 2011 with 68.4 percent of the votes,⁵² the elections were not without controversy.

Still, Museveni continues to elicit support from many Ugandans, as well as with international donors, who credit Uganda’s stability and development to his rule. However, in his quest to be president for life Museveni has in essence, betrayed the very ideals he vowed to uphold; “institutions such as parliament, the judiciary, and the Electoral Commission have [constantly] had their independence eroded in the face of Museveni’s desire for untrammled power.”⁵³ In this vein, Museveni today is reminiscent of the early “founding fathers” who interpreted the legitimacy of their roles in the liberation struggle as a life-time endorsement of personal rule.⁵⁴ Much like his predecessors, Museveni’s mode of governance has elevated him into a “presidential monarch” with his movement politics no more than a “single-party” regime. Unfortunately, with Museveni’s tight grip on power it is highly doubtful that Ugandan politics can create a broader framework for participation and empowerment.

To conclude, the Ugandan case is an interesting variation on the African experience. Unlike Botswana, Uganda has experienced major political disruption and civil conflict. Unlike Ghana, this disruption has been deeply harmful to the development of democratic norms. In Ghana, democratic values were sufficiently embedded that after the military left the country was able to recover these values and work to continue to embed them into the educational system.

⁵¹ 34.

⁵² BBC News Africa, “Uganda’s Yoweri Museveni in Profile.” 05/02/2011
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12421747> 04/22/2012.

⁵³ Tangri and Mwenda, 36.

⁵⁴ Onyango, 172.

In Uganda's case, the severity of civil conflict engendered the prioritization of political stability over the inculcation of democratic values. In order to facilitate societal cohesion after the civil war, the educational system was geared toward nationalist values. Civic education was introduced but this was designed toward promoting a united society rather than democratic individualism. On the one hand, this promotion of societal cohesion is arguably, positive for the development of the country. After all, democratic values cannot be embedded in a divided society. Thus this stage of civic education can be viewed as a prerequisite for deeper development. On the other hand, the creeping authoritarianism of Museveni certainly hinders prospects for democracy. In the civic sector, Uganda can claim to have succeeded where even Botswana has not, that is, in reaching out to all sectors of society through its UPE and UHRC. However, CSOs have tended to be co-opted in the process. Overall, Uganda is a mixed bag: while it can be lauded for inclusion, its various attempts to foster democratic education still suffer from various deficiencies.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

In my thesis I set out to explore the relationship between education and democracy. I argued that in order for education to have a meaningful impact on prospects for a sustainable democracy, educational systems must support democratic principles and ideals. My objective was to investigate the extent to which education models promoted democratic ideals and in doing so, fostered democratic values and behaviors. To conduct my research I focused on the education models adopted in three African countries: Botswana, Ghana, and Uganda.

As one of the few African countries that has upheld democratic rule, Botswana devised an education model, *Education for Kagisano*, as a means for nation-building, development, and democracy. However, while it is lauded for its democratic commitments, its education system is influenced by a tradition that discourages the promotion of education along ethnic and linguistic lines. Ghana, having reverted to civilian rule in the late 1980s, has made deliberate efforts to design an expansive educational system that can enhance its democracy and development. Despite considerable gains in educational development and having one of the strongest democracies in Africa, the issue of education access is still problematic. Unlike Botswana and Ghana, Uganda's formal democratization came after 30 years of autocratic rule and civil war. As part of the transition the government implemented educational policies that prioritized national unity and political stability. While the government continues to make education a priority, the increasing power of the state has been shown to be the greatest obstacle to democratic development.

Based on my research I conclude that African education models have to a certain degree promoted democratic ideals. However, it is not clear that they have yet been sufficient for fostering democratic values and behaviors. Drawing from my case studies I conclude that the education models reflect among other things, the countries' political systems as well as their history, and understandably so. Overall the evidence supports the widely held view that higher education levels appear to correlate with democratic governance. Thus the transition to democracy appears to provide governments with an incentive to improve primary education, as evident from the case studies. Therefore, one can draw the conclusion that the relationship between education and democracy is mutually reinforcing. However, it needs to be recognized that various factors will undoubtedly affect this relationship and in turn, democratic sustainability

Given these unique variations in African democracy it is perhaps not surprising that the education models are somewhat different. Thus, it may be safe to say that no one education model is superior to the other. Taken together, each case offers a distinctive element (Botswana's education system supports a structured democracy; Ghana's education model is based on values of inclusiveness; Uganda's education system is meant to overcome challenges to political stability) that can provide the basis for a sound education model for other African states. However, in terms of the "effect of education on democratic attitudes (and thus regime type), such attitudes will depend upon the history of educational provision for all groups in a country's population."¹ Given Ghana's longer and more sustained educational experience, it is understandable that there is a strong correlation between education and democracy. Yet, while democratic traditions

¹ David Stasavage, "Democracy and Primary School Attendance: Aggregate and Individual Level Evidence from Africa." *AfroBarometer Working Paper No. 54* (2005): 8.

and institutions are firmly embedded in Ghanaian society one cannot say with certainty that this was the direct result of education. Clearly, broad access to education is necessary for mass literacy and economic and social development. But it takes a deliberate commitment to democratic principles for education to nurture and sustain a democracy.

Bearing in mind the variations in Africa's democratic experience, the principal task of civic education in advancing the cause of democracy should be to help citizens acquire and develop attitudes and competences required for democratic citizenship, as well as to help the society to effect a transition from authoritarianism to democracy.² According to Gyamih-Boadi such education must be broadly accessible, liberal, and endowed with a strong civic content.³ Therefore, in an effort to develop and sustain meaningful democratic citizenship civic education programs should promote the following: tolerance for opposing political beliefs and for social and cultural differences; civility in political discourse;⁴ social and institutional trust, though not without some degree of healthy skepticism and willingness to hold elite and the system as a whole to account;⁵ support and commitment to democracy as a form of government against alternative political systems; a sense of civic competence and political efficacy; and meaningful democratic participation.

While the formal education system is an essential agency for the delivery of civic education, it is not enough to have democracy education embedded into the everyday school curriculum, or in "stand-alone workshops."⁶ Further, as evidenced from the

² 4.

³ E. Gyamih-Boadi, "Reflections on Education and Democracy." *Briefing Paper: Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-GHANA)* 6 (2003): 5.

⁴ 4.

⁵ Steven E. Finkel, "Can Democracy be Taught? Adult Civic Education, Civil Society, and the Development of Democratic Political Culture." *Journal of Democracy*. 14 (2003): 140.

⁶ Mattes, Kibirige, and Sentamu, 29.

research, the school system and “parastatal” civic education bodies are often dogged by perceptions of pro-state bias, “especially in conditions and countries where there is weak separation between state, government, and even the ruling party.”⁷ For that reason the delivery of civic education should involve a combination of primary and secondary educational agencies, private sector, civil society, specialized state/public institutions, and the international community, as this would increase the plurality and delivery of democratic content.

Finally, while the development of effective democratic citizenship will require continuous and life-long learning on the part of individuals and society as a whole, no amount of democratic education will work without democracy. Thus, in the final analysis, the responsibility rests with African governments to do “simple things” such as increasing the quality of the electoral process, enabling people to participate without fear,⁸ and respecting the limitations of their own political power.

⁷ Gyimah-Boadi, 5.

⁸ Mattes, Kibirige, and Sentamu, 30.

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