



Bureaucracy in Uganda since Colonial Period to the Present

Bernard Muhangi Wakabi*

Mountains of the Moon University, P.O. Box 837, Fort Portal, Uganda

Email: bmuhangia@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper looks at the pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial bureaucracy of Uganda as a polity. It observes that there were many polities in the pre-colonial era which included kingdoms as in the case of Buganda, Bunyoro, Nkore and Tooro; and chiefdoms as in case of Acholi and other areas. The paper therefore analyzes the pre-colonial bureaucracy of Uganda taking into account the heterogeneity of different administration arrangements that existed at that time. The colonial and post-colonial Uganda was largely homogenous. The paper concludes that none of the three phases of administration (pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial) experienced a strict Weberian type of bureaucracy.

Keywords: Bureaucracy; Pre-colonial; Colonial; Post-colonial.

1. Introduction

Uganda like most other countries in the world has gone through many phases of administration. Each phase has been characterized by a peculiar arrangement and level of bureaucracy. There is a lot of literature about these administrative arrangements but it is all presented piecemeal.

* Corresponding author.

This paper therefore looks at Uganda's pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial bureaucracies. It concludes by observing that in all the phases, there has not been a bureaucracy as envisioned by Max Weber. However, looking at these phases together gives an insight of Uganda's bureaucratic trajectory over time.

The set-up of the paper is as follows. Section 1 is the introduction, section 2 explains the methodology, section 3 gives the pre-colonial arrangement; section 4 presents the colonial set up while section 5 gives the post-colonial bureaucracy. Section 6 gives the conclusion. The major milestones therein are the Buganda agreement of 1900, the independence in 1962, the republican constitution of 1966, the Amin's coup de tat of 1971 and the NRM takeover of 1986. These milestones always marked a change in the administrative arrangement.

1.1 Bureaucracy

A bureaucracy refers to professional corps of officials organized in a pyramidal hierarchy and functioning under impersonal, uniform rules and procedures [1]. Its characteristics were first formulated systematically by Max Weber, who saw in the bureaucratic organization a highly developed division of labour, authority based on administrative rules rather than personal allegiance or social custom, and a "rational" and impersonal institution whose members function more as "offices" than as individuals. For Weber, bureaucracy was a form of legalistic "domination" inevitable under capitalism. Later writers saw in bureaucracy a tendency to concentrate power at the top and become dictatorial [2] as occurred in the Soviet Union. Merton [3] emphasized its red tape and inefficiency due to blind conformity to procedures. More recent theories have stressed the role of managerial cliques, occupational interest groups, or individual power-seekers in creating politicized organizations characterized by internal conflict.

1.2 Uganda as a polity

A polity refers to a state or one of its subordinate civil authorities such as a province, prefecture, county, municipality, city or district. It is generally understood to mean a geographical area with a corresponding government [4].

Before the establishment and consolidation of effective colonial administration in Uganda, each nationality had its own system of local government ranging from monarchical centralized system of the kingdom of Buganda which was based on hierarchical chiefs to highly decentralized republican organizations in the non-kingdom areas of the North-East and South-West[4]. Kingdom areas like Buganda, Bunyoro, Nkore and Tooro were absolute monarchs and had powerful kings. The kings ruled over their areas mainly by the help of chiefs.

2. Methodology

This paper explores the bureaucratic arrangement of Uganda during the pre-colonial, colonial and the post-colonial times. Uganda having passed through many administrative stages overtime presents a very interesting case for scholars of administration. The paper, which is theoretical in nature basically draws its arguments from secondary data including existing legal frameworks and other related policies, text books, journals articles and other publications.

The paper is guided by assumptions derived from the weberian Model of Bureaucracy. The general purpose focuses on analyzing the bureaucratic trajectory Uganda has followed since colonial times to date.

3. Pre-colonial era

Before the advent of British colonialism, the different societies of Uganda had developed diverse political institutions. In southern Uganda, there had developed highly centralized systems of government based on a monarchical model [5]. Notable among such kingdoms were Buganda, Bunyoro, Nkore, and Tooro. Initially Bunyoro was the strongest kingdom only to be superseded by Buganda in the second half of the 18th century. Tooro broke away from Bunyoro as a separate kingdom in 1830 when Prince Kaboyo rebelled against his father Kyebambe Nyamutukura. Author in [6] points out that these kingdoms were monarchies with centralized form of state craft but by no means entirely based on Weberian bureaucratic criteria. For example, particularism rather than universalism was the dominant principle. The patron client principle was very important. To be known to the king one had to be introduced by a person who had a particularistic relationship with the king. This is in contrast to the principals of bureaucracy as envisioned by Weber.

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The pre-colonial era was characterized by diversity in terms of social scale and social organization. In terms of social scale, there were the powerful kingdoms of Buganda and Bunyoro-Kitara... Kingship was very core source of cohesion and ordering of government structure... The rest of Uganda's peoples were organized in small scale non-centralized societies. The principle of social organization varied.

3.1 Buganda and Bunyoro

In Buganda, the *Bataka* (clan heads) were an important link between their areas and the centre. Both in Buganda and Bunyoro clans had special duties to perform in the affairs of the state. The division of labour was based not on achievement criteria but on tradition and custom [6]. In both Buganda and Bunyoro authority from the centre to the periphery was facilitated by hierarchical structuring of political relations. The drum, the horn, the word of mouth was the means to congregate people and leadership was provided by a king's nominee in the event of war or any emergency [4].

The Banyoro and Buganda had a centralized system of Government. At the top of the political leadership was the King (Omukama in case of Bunyoro and Kabaka in case of Buganda). His position was hereditary. He was the most important person in the kingdom. The king was assisted in administrative matters by the provincial chiefs and a council of notables. He was the commander -in- chief of the armed forces and each provincial chief was the commander of a military detachment stationed in his province [8].

Socially, people were organized in strong clans with the royal clan of the Kings, princes and princesses. The

Kings held executive, judiciary and legislative powers. His word was highly respected and almost equated to the word from God. The King's subjects ensured that their King lacked nothing economically. Clans would bring food stuffs and livestock in turns and each clan had a specific duty to perform for the King [8]. Rules were enforced by chiefs at village level who were appointed by the King. They would collect taxes and mobilize the King's subjects for other activities like community service and village courts.

3.2 Other Parts of Uganda

Pre-colonial societies in Uganda had developed their own unique local government systems [9]. For instance in Ankole, the royal kraal of minority Bahima pastoralists controlled the majority Bairu (cultivators) and administration radiated to territorial administration of chiefs and collectors called Bakungu [10]. Most of the societies in the present Uganda had organized government services under kingdoms or chiefdoms [10, 11]. It was the existing structures that the British adopted and exploited to develop a local government structure that suited their own interest.

It is therefore evident that the modern state of Uganda was a colonial creation and had hitherto comprised of many polities. Author in [5] points out that before the declaration of a British protectorate over Uganda, there were well over thirty ethnic groups with divergent political systems.

In the eastern part of Uganda, the various peoples evolved varying chiefdoms of various sizes. In Bukedi, Bugisu and Teso, the people were organized in small polities which hardly existed beyond a village. This was also the case among the Samia-Bagwe where the Nalundiho was a little more than a village head.

Among the Iteso and the Karamajong, political and military activity revolved around the age set-system and all the political decisions were made by a council of elders.

In the North of Uganda, the people were organized in small chiefdoms. Among the Alur and the Jonam, the political head was known as the Rwoth or Ubino; among the Acholi, he was known as the Rwot. Among the Langi, the political head was known as Won-nyaci. These political leaders in Eastern and Northern Uganda were not absolute like the kings of the Southern kingdoms. They were essentially leaders among equals since their ultimate decisions were subject to scrutiny by the council of elders [12].

Political organization among the Kakwa, the Lugbara and the Madi were also on lineage basis. Among the Madi and the Kakwa, the political head was known as the Opi. It is clear that in all these polities, the ultimate function was to organize the society in some form of order which may be approximated to a bureaucracy. This is more apparent when one looks at the hierarchical nature and functionality of these chiefdoms. The hierarchy was in such a way that the chief was the head while being assisted in administration by either a council of elders or clan heads depending on the polity.

4. The colonial era

In 1900, Sir Harry Johnston signed the Buganda Agreement and shortly thereafter did the same with Ankole and

Tooro, while the one with Bunyoro was not signed until 1931. In a way, this indicated that Britain was acknowledging the existence of at least four nation-states with which she had to enter into formal agreements. Another agreement would later be signed between the Kabaka and Britain in 1955. According to [11], in the rest of Uganda, the colonialists found it expedient not to go into such niceties; they just divided the remaining areas into various districts. The colonialists, however, did not make any pretence about making Uganda into one united country, but I will argue that on the contrary, the emphasis was on highlighting the differences by making districts tribal enclaves which became fortresses of particularism and parochialism. People like James Miti Mulira and Jolly Joe Kiwanuka who tried to oppose the idea of creating districts were considered trouble makers and were deported to West Nile in 1940s and Gulu in 1950s respectively [11].

According to [10,11], the history of the British involvement in Uganda is traced in the Kingdom of Buganda because the British had initially wanted to assume responsibility of Buganda and they were intent on that being the territorial limit of their responsibility. However, they later went ahead to cover other areas further from Buganda for territorial security and economic interests.

In the early years of the protectorate, the District Commissioner (DC), the representative of the governor, was the most important official of each district. Before kingdoms were abolished in 1967, each one had a local government made up of chiefs who reported to the king, and the central government official who was an advisor to the king. The 1919 Native Authority Ordinance gave the DC responsibility for a hierarchy of appointed chiefs at village, parish, and Sub-county and county levels. Councils, originally consisting of these chiefs were created during 1930s at each level. After 1949, local administration in Uganda was shared by central and district officials. The Local Government Ordinance of 1949 established the district as a local government area and as a basis for a separate district administration. During the 1950s, elections to district councils were introduced and the councils were given responsibility for district administration. Nevertheless, the central government retained the power to control most district council decisions [7].

The protectorate government greatly admired the Kiganda system of local administration and used it to spread their influence and administer all parts of the colony on the basis of indirect rule by using Baganda chiefs [11, 13]. The Baganda chiefs, who were mainly tax collectors and law enforcers, were unpopular in Kigezi District because they were looked at as “British scouts” who mistreated the people [13].

The people viewed the Baganda chiefs as the beneficiaries of the colonial system. For instance, in the districts of Kigezi, Lango or Teso, the British yielded power to local chiefs selected from men of local standing, that is clan heads, and in the absence of pre-colonial hierarchy, these chiefs were directly subordinate to the colonial administration and were only allowed to exercise a good deal of unsupervised power [14]. The direct consequence of this situation in Uganda was that, the local chiefs who were only accountable to a distant colonial office got relative freedom to exploit their subjects hence increasing their unpopularity. And particularly, in Buganda Kingdom, the local chiefs were dismissed by the higher authority or Kabaka, if performance was poor [13, 14]. The administrative chiefs were the king’s appointees who could not stay in office without the king’s pleasure. Their power was not just circumscribed by the will and capacity of the king; it was constrained by tradition as embodied in traditional chiefs [8].

In 1949 the local government ordinance was promulgated and this was a new legal instrument that gave corporate powers and responsibilities to district councils of those areas where no agreement had been signed. These councils were to consider matters affecting their respective provinces; they were consultative bodies since they were empowered to pass laws or by-laws. For our purpose, it is sufficient to note that, for the first time, District councils were established by law and the districts were formally recognized as the basic unit of administration. Thus the 1949 Ordinance was the legal instrument by which tribally-oriented local governments were established in Uganda [11].

The 1949 local government ordinance was engendered by the African cry, among other things, to democratize the system; by enabling them to have more local participation. The ordinance therefore created districts and defined responsibilities of various officials. The pattern in which districts were created was to make sure that a particular district circumscribed each nationality. Save for Bukedi, West Nile and Kigezi, this pattern was successfully achieved [11].

In the process of determining districts, much care had therefore been taken to include one ethnic group in one district and to a large extent it was achieved in the rest of the districts in Uganda with exception of West Nile, Bukedi and Kigezi. This, therefore, meant that district councils were tribal councils concerned only with matters affecting their respective communities. Each local government was treated as an independent entity by the central authority, for instance, the district council say of Acholi hardly knew and cared about the problems of Kigezi District [11].

It is important to note that the local government administration during the colonial era was mainly constructed around kingdoms, districts, counties and sub-counties or *Gomborola*. Author in [8] had this to say:

...Ethnicity (tribalism) thus came to be simultaneously the form of colonial control over natives and the form of revolt against it. It defined the parameters of both the Native Authority in charge of the local state apparatus...Everywhere, the local apparatus of the colonial state was organized either on an ethnic or religious basis...

And it is this form of local administrative structure that the Uganda government inherited at independence. According to [8], the transition from tribal to state organization has often been conceptualized as one from kinship to a territorial based authority; tribes were organized under the domination of elders and in cases of Buganda and Bunyoro where the centralizing tendency had gone furthest, the king had supreme control, followed by traditional chiefs, administrative hierarchy or chiefs. The tension between administrative authority and kin groups gave rise to differentiation within the institution of *chiefship* that is between kin-based, hereditary traditional chiefs and state-appointed administrative chiefs but all these traditional institutions in Africa through village-based communities were to regulate social and economic affairs [8]. I therefore observe that the bureaucracy at this stage was some sort of matrix with several levels which included the colonial administration, the Kingdoms, chiefdoms and clans.

Uganda was declared a British protectorate in 1894. This confirmed the creation of Uganda as a nation but still

with its multiplicity of polities. At this time Bunyoro, under the kingship of Kabarega, was still resisting the colonial dominance. Author in [5] Writes;

...at this time, the situation was not yet calm. Colonel Colville who was sent as acting commissioner to Uganda in 1894, had a lot of problems to solve. He had to contain Kabalega who had chased away Kasagama from the Tooro throne for a second time.

It is clear that at this time Bunyoro was still maintaining its administrative structure as it fought the colonialists. One could argue that one of the reasons why Bunyoro was resisting the British occupation was the fear of losing their identity including their administrative structure. The King knew that with the coming of the British, he would lose his influence. His subjects on the other hand would not be sure of the new "master".

4.1 Indirect rule

After the Buganda agreement of 1900 was duly signed, the British moved quickly and established their rule over Tooro, Bunyoro, Ankole and Kigezi [11]. Because of the limited manpower at their disposal, the British preferred to use a system they called "indirect rule". By introducing this system they hoped to rule through the traditional chiefs and institutions as much as possible. Author in [5] adds;

However, in practice, the system involved transplanting the Kiganda model of administration to the rest of Uganda, even to areas where chiefly institutions of the Kiganda type had not yet evolved. Baganda chiefs and clerks were posted all over the country to man the colonial administration. These Baganda agents were highly resented wherever they were posted and, after 1920, the British started to withdraw them and replace them with the local people. The resentment of the Baganda agents was very high in Bunyoro where it caused the Nyangire rebellion in 1907 in which the Banyoro rose against the Baganda agents.

Author in [15] Stresses that this governance policy was effected between 1900 and the late 1940's. It involved the utilizing of local traditional rulers and institutions and cultural norms to legitimize colonialism by linking it to the past. It depended on a decentralized framework and created an alliance between the Colonial administration, British business and the traditional rulers. The emphasis was on maintaining these principles, while it was argued that their application "may and should vary with customs, the traditions, and the prejudices of each unit.

This implies that the choice of indirect rule by the British was not entirely based on the fact that they lacked enough man power but also to make sure that they used the indigenous people with a hope that administration would be easier. Author in [15] adds;

Uganda was colonized to serve the strategic and economic interests of Britain. Strategically this involved the hindering of French and German interests from gaining access to the River Nile, and the Indian Ocean. The fruition of the economic objective depended on the colonial administration's ability to enforce compliance, and its building of the required physical infrastructure. Indirect rule was the most expedient governance tool that existed at Britain's disposal, based on the paucity of human and

financial resources. It was conditioned by Gladstone's financial policies aimed towards minimum spending while hastening self sufficiency in the colonies.

Indirect rule relied on the cooption of legitimate indigenous elites and institutions for its efficacy. To enable this, the British employed coercion, exploited the differences between local competing elites, and marginalized those leaders who opposed colonial role [16].

Author in [6] quotes Apkan thus;

By indirect rule, I mean a system of administration which leaves in existence the administrative machinery which had been created by the natives themselves; which recognizes the existence of Emirs, chiefs and native councils, native courts of justice ...as real living forces, and not as curious and interesting pageantry ; by which European influence is brought to bear on the native indirectly through his chiefs, and not directly, through European officers – political policy etc., by which the European keeps himself a good deal in the background and leaves the mass of native individuals to understand that the orders which come to them emanate from their own chief than from the all-pervading white man.

The British colonial policy in Uganda was to maximize outcomes for the British people and her industries at minimum cost. Besides strategic interests related to the source of the Nile and Egypt, Britain colonized Uganda to obtain raw materials for her expanding industries, food for her growing population, a market for her surplus manufactured products and a home for her excess population [6].

After several years of agricultural experimentation with white farmers and informed debate between Entebbe and London colonial officials, it was decided that Uganda should be left in the hands of Uganda peasants and loyal chiefs – traditional or appointed – supervised by a few British officials at the central, provincial, district and local levels to ensure that law and order was maintained, taxes were collected and public projects such as roads were constructed [5]. The cost of governing Uganda would be met from local resources to reduce pressure on the British treasury. Using Buganda as an example of indirect rule model, [6] observed that “The kingdom of Buganda was a notable example of the colonial combination of economic calculation, missionary activity, and political strategizing. In this process, the African actors played as decisive a role as the European imperialists”.

Author [17] stresses, “The British administrative personnel never spread below the district commissioner and his assistants. Beneath them a purely African infrastructure was employed and reliance was placed almost entirely upon hierarchies of African chiefs”.

At country level Baganda agents were appointed in colonial and missionary administrations. At district and county levels traditional chiefs were screened for their loyalty and those who did not qualify were removed. For example, in Ankole Prince Igumira of Bahinda dynasty was removed and even exiled in Kenya to give room to Nuwa Mbaguta a Muhororo of Batutsi origin who was collaborative with the British to run the kingdom as Enganzi (prime minister) on behalf of the colonial masters [6].

In Bunyoro Omukama (king) Kitagwenda was replaced by Duhaga a former aide to a Protestant mission who

agreed to accept Miti's (a Muganda) permanent supervision of Bunyoro [12]. Chiefs were also screened at the county level. In Rujumbura for instance, Makobore a Muhororo of Batutsi ethnic group who had worked with Arab slave hunters to defeat the local clans in Rujumbura and parts of Kinkizi (now Kanungu district) was selected over other chiefs to be the British representative in Rujumbura. Where traditional chiefs did not exist they were appointed. Chiefs were provided with Baganda advisers who by and large turned out to be unpopular.

In Bunyoro kingdom a movement called Nyangire Abaganda (I refuse the Baganda) was established to protest against Baganda foreigners. Baganda were accused of monopolizing power, engaging in "funny" businesses as in Kigezi and above all displaying unacceptable level of arrogance. The ringleaders were arrested and some chiefs were dismissed. Although relations improved when Tito Winyi became Omukama, distrust persisted between the people of Bunyoro and Baganda chiefs in the area [12].

5. Post-colonial era

At independence, the boundaries of Uganda had been made. This meant that all individual polities were operating under same central Government administration. At this time, Uganda consisted of ten districts, four kingdoms and one special district of Karamoja [13]. In 1974 the number of districts were increased to 38 and grouped into ten provinces. In 1970s an attempt was made to name districts following certain criterion based on social, economic and political grounds. Each district was divided into counties, sub-counties, parishes and villages as was the case during the colonial period. Bunyoro for example, comprised of Hoima and Masindi Districts [18].

5.1 Local governments in Uganda since independence

The local government that evolved in Uganda was designed to serve the interests and convenience of the colonialists [19]. The local councils, therefore, could only provide a few services and maintain public order but they could not undertake development programs.

The 1962 independence constitution virtually maintained the system of the colonial period. By this constitution a substantial degree of autonomy was allowed to federal and semi-federal kingdoms and Busoga territory [20]. Buganda enjoyed a federal status with devolved powers while other kingdoms (Bunyoro inclusive) and Busoga had a semi-federal status. What is important to note is that these local governments enjoyed decentralized powers while the districts maintained a unitary relationship with the central Government. The decentralized local governments had powers to raise revenue through taxes, draw and implement budgets and provide services. The district councils continued to provide services as they had done before independence while relying on central Government for funding. Moreover, the central Government continued to interfere in matters of district councils to the detriment of democratic governance and accountability [11]. In a nutshell, the local government structure adopted after independence was a replica of the colonial arrangement. This implies that some ingredients of the indirect rule remained and underpinned the bureaucracy at the time.

5.2 The 1967 constitution

The 1962 constitutional [21] settlement which decentralized some powers and functions to the kingdoms remained in place until 1966 when the constitution was abrogated and subsequently replaced by the 1967 republican constitution [22] which centralized all powers. Under this constitution the kingdoms were subdivided into districts and all districts in the former kingdoms had the same relationship with the central Government as other districts in the country. In order to consolidate the constitutional changes, the 1967 local administration act was passed. This act made the district councils or local governments in general mere agents of the central Government. This was more emphasized by changing the name from local government to local administration reflecting their diminished power. Even their budgets and development plans had to be approved by the central Government [14]. At this point, it is clear that total uniformity in the administration of all areas of Uganda had been attained. One would therefore argue that from this time, Uganda could be looked at as one polity since there was no variance in the administration of the units (districts) that were created.

5.3 1971 coup de tat

In 1971 the UPC Government was overthrown by the Army led by the then army commander General Idd Amin Dada. The military regime suspended the constitution, abolished parliament, dissolved district councils and proceeded to rule by decree. In 1973, the military Government reorganized local administration into ten provinces headed by governors appointed by the president himself and largely from the army. The districts were headed by district commissioners largely drawn from traditional civil service. The counties, sub-counties, parishes and sub-parishes were headed by paramilitary chiefs who had undergone specific military training. During this period, directives flowed from military Government to all levels of local governance. The state was authoritarian that for practical purposes civil society ceased to exist [3]. It is therefore clear that during this period, there was no citizen participation in administration at all levels. Orders issued by the Government would be followed without question. In addition, office bearers were appointed not on merit but on the basis of loyalty to Government and connection or relation to the people in power. As such there existed no bureaucracy as suggested by Weber.

5.4 Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) Government

The military regime was overthrown in 1979 by combined effort of exiled Ugandans and the Tanzanian army. The local administration system that was instituted in the short lived governments of Yusufu Lule, Godfrey Binaisa and Paul Muwanga did not democratize local governments in Uganda [5]. A local administrative system known as mayumba kumi (ten house cells) was established at village level. This consisted of an elected chairman, secretary and treasurer. It was intended to mobilize communities to participate in self help activities. However, these village councils instead of mobilizing community participation in local activities, turned out to be avenues for distribution of scarce basic commodities like sugar, salt and soap. Besides commodity distribution, they also acted as security committees. Therefore people at village level used to gather not as a council to take decisions but as a rally to listen to central government directives.

5.5 1980 elections and second UPC Government

After the disputed 1980 general elections, the UPC government under Milton Obote regained power. On assumption of power, Obote started reorganizing the local government structure in accordance to the 1967 constitution and the 1967 local government administration act. Therefore, during the second UPC government (1981-1985), the local government structure reverted to the situation between 1967 and 1971 with a highly centralized administration. It is worth noting that the patronage in local government intensified and chiefs became mere party functionaries. Chiefs who subscribed to opposition parties were summarily dismissed [23].

Mean while the Government was fighting a guerilla force led by one Yoweri Museveni, a former defense minister. The government was later overthrown by the military led by the army commander General Tito Okello Lutwa in 1985.

The Okello military junta that replaced the UPC government in 1985 was too short-lived to institute any administrative changes in local governance. The Junta was mainly preoccupied with fighting the rebels of Yoweri Museveni that had gained considerable strength.

5.6 The National Resistance Movement (NRM) Government

The Okello regime was overthrown by National Resistance Army (NRA) with its political wing National resistance Movement (NRM) in January 1986 after spending barely six months in office. When the NRM government came to power, it was keen to extend popular participation which it had practiced in areas under its control during the guerilla war to the whole country [20]. This popular participation was practiced through resistance council system (RC). The RC system which was later in the 1995 constitution renamed local council (LC) system is a hierarchical structure of councils and committees that stretches from the village(LC1) up to the district(LC5). In this way, this kind of government structure presented a break with the past in that it significantly undermined the hitherto authoritarian tendencies of the chiefs. It introduced participation at village level though this diminished as the hierarchy progressed to the district council. It is to these councils that powers, functions and responsibilities of local government have been decentralized [26].

The Authors in [24] contend that the objectives of decentralization program were to build a more democratic government that is responsive and accountable to the public, to promote capacity building at local level, and to introduce local choice into the delivery of local services, thus fostering a sense of local ownership.

5.7 Decentralization and Operations of the Local councils

The author in [25] argues that the policy of decentralization was in response to the nature and form of post colonial politics and development strategies adopted by leaders who took power after independence. He adds;

The policy was part of deliberate efforts of the NRM to democratize Ugandan society and to transform the country into a modern state. The NRM evolved the policy of decentralization as part of a strategy to develop a no-party democratic system based on resistance councils which helped the NRM to fight and win the guerilla war

between 1981 and 1985. Also the NRM's stronger sense of commitment to the policy of decentralization was donor supported, especially in financing the implementation process.

Local councils particularly at district and sub-county levels were empowered after centralization. The powers of these councils are stipulated in the local Government statute of 1993, the 1995 constitution and the 1997 local Government act. With decentralization, the districts have a final say in local civil service matters, budgets and planning as well as tendering [26].

The district council is the supreme political organ in the district. It is presided over by the district chair person who is the political head of the district. The district council is the legislative arm of the local council while the executive committee and the local public service comprise the executive arm of the local government. The civil servants are headed by the Chief Administrative officer (CAO) who is the accounting officer and is responsible for the implementation of council decisions and overseeing the performance of local government officials. At the enactment of the local government act in 1997, the CAO was an employee of the district council. This clause was however amended and the CAO is currently an employee of the central Government [27]. The rest of the district employees are employees of the district and are recruited by the district service commission through a competitive process. After decentralization, the District councils were given powers to make by-laws which do not require central Government approval. District councils are required to conduct their business through the following council committees; Production and marketing committee, Health and Environment committee, Education and community development committee, General purpose committee, Finance committee and Works and transport committee.

The districts are linked to the central Government through two major departments; the ministry of local Government and the local Government finance commission [28]. The Resident district commissioner represents the interests of the president but is not supposed to interfere in the operations of the district councils.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that Weberian bureaucracy was not attained at all the phases of administration Uganda has gone through. It is also observable that the more recent the phase is, the closer it seems to the Weberian bureaucracy. For instance, I noted that the pre-colonial administration was characterized by more autocratic leadership as evidenced in absolute monarchs and powerful chiefs. The areas where kingdoms existed were organized into territorial divisions ruled over by chiefs appointed by the king [29]. These chiefs were not appointed on merit as stipulated in Weberian bureaucracy but rather considering loyalty and possibly the capacity to enforce the king's directives. The colonial period was not any better with the only improvement being an attempt to create structures independent of the king.

The post colonial period presents the best attempt to come closer to Weberian bureaucracy. The employees are recruited through a competitive process meant to come up with the most competent candidate. The constitution of the republic of Uganda, the Local Government act and Public service standing orders are meant to enforce professionalism and impersonality at work. However, this has not always been the case, it is not uncommon to

hear reports that people in certain Government offices are appointing their relatives and using their offices for self other than public interest.

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