

‘Can you really fail to support the one who feeds you?’
- An analysis of female representation in the Ugandan Parliament

Kari Nordstoga Hanssen

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the Cand. Polit. degree
Department of Comparative Politics
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Abstract

The Ugandan Parliament has seats reserved for women. According to the 1995 Constitution one woman shall be elected from each district. Hence, the 56 District Women Representatives are elected *in addition* to the 214 regular MPs creating a ‘double’ representation in Parliament. Given the ‘double’ representation, the District Women Representatives have often by the voters been regarded as representatives of women in particular. This thesis takes advantage of Hanna Pitkin’s work on the concept of representation, and her dichotomy between “Standing For” representatives and “Acting For” representatives. If women in Uganda represent the district they would be “Standing For” descriptive representatives; they are elected to Parliament based of their characteristics as women. If the affirmative action women feel an obligation to represent women in particular, they would be “Acting For” representatives.

Furthermore, for two reasons the District Women Representatives have particularly close ties to the Government: First, the affirmative action seats in Uganda are interpreted as a ‘gift’ given to Ugandan women from the NRM regime. Second, the District Women Representatives are elected to Parliament through Electoral Colleges consisting of officials with close ties to the Government. It can be argued that because of these close ties the District Women Representatives are expected to “Act As” Movementist in Parliament, hence increasing governmental support. In this they come close to what Pitkin refers to as “Standing For” *symbolic* representatives.

The findings of this thesis indicate that some of the District Women Representatives “Act For” women, while there are some women who merely “Stand For” them. Generally, most of the affirmative action women support the NRM. This has made it hard for them to challenge the Government is issues they find important. Moreover, this thesis also shows that although the female representation in Parliament is quite high, this does not necessarily strengthen the idea that women can be as capable politicians as men – as the affirmative action measures are intended to do.

Table of contents

Abbreviations	7
Chapter 1: Affirmative action - consolidation or manipulation?	9
1.0 Introduction	9
1.1 Presenting the case	9
1.2 Theoretical framework.....	10
1.3 The Ugandan context.....	12
1.4 Affirmative action measures used in Uganda	16
1.5 Arguments.....	19
1.6 Methodological considerations	20
1.7 Outline of thesis	22
Chapter 2: Women’s participation in Ugandan politics - a recent historical perspective.....	25
2.0 Introduction	25
2.1 Women’s participation in politics from colonial times to 1986.....	25
2.2 Women in the NRA guerrilla	30
2.3 NRM and the women organisations.....	32
2.4 Summary.....	33
Chapter 3: Conceptualising representation	35
3.0 Introduction	35
3.1 “Standing for” representation.....	35
3.2 “Standing For” women.....	37
3.3 “Acting for” representation	41
3.4 A separate female identity?	43
3.5 “Acting For” women.....	45
3.6 Applying concepts of representation.....	47
Chapter 4: Women’s elections	51
4.0 Introduction	51
4.1 The all-inclusive Movement system.....	53
4.2 Standing For, Acting For, Acting As	58
4.3 Female legislators own interpretation	59
4.4 Alternative perceptions regarding who the women represent.....	65
4.5 Geographical differences	76
4.6 Women’s elections and regular elections	78
4.7 Summary	88
Chapter 5: Women in Parliament.....	91
5.0 Introduction	91
5.1 Female representation in committees.....	92
5.2 A united women’s caucus	102
5.3 Enhancing legislation for women	107
5.4 The “gender balance syndrome”	118
5.5 Summary	124
Chapter 6: A step towards symbolic representation?.....	127

6.1	Summary of findings	127
6.2	The Ugandan “Standing For” descriptive model revisited.....	132
6.3	The future of female representation in the all-inclusive Movement	134
	Appendix A: Female representation in parliament in Africa	136
	Appendix B: Gender friendly Articles in the Ugandan Constitution.....	138
	Appendix C: The ten-point program of the NRM.....	139
	Appendix D: The 7th Parliament	140
	Appendix E: Electoral College	141
	Appendix F: Committees in South Africa and Namibia	143
	Appendix G: Domestic Relations Bill	145
	Appendix H: Parliamentary procedure for enacting new laws	146
	Bibliography:.....	147
	List of Informants	157

Abbreviations

ACFODE	Action for Development
CA	Constituent Assembly
COPAW	Coalition for Political Accountability to Women
DRB	Domestic Relations Bill
FIDA- U	International Federation of Women Lawyers, Ugandan branch
FOWODE	Forum for Women in Democracy
LC	Local Councils
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NCW	National Council of Women
NEC	National Executive Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NRC	National Resistance Councils
RC	Resistance Councils
UAWO	Uganda Association of Women's Organisations
UCW	Uganda Council of Women
ULA	Uganda Land Alliance
UPC	Uganda People's Congress
UWOPA	Uganda Women Parliamentary Association
UWONET	Women of Uganda Network
WC	Women's Councils

Chapter 1: Affirmative action - consolidation or manipulation?

1.0 Introduction

An increasing concern among scholars, politicians and women activists today is the limited representation of women in different political bodies. This was also one of the main points during the 1985 UN conference in Nairobi, where it was stated that governments should effectively secure participation of women in the decision-making processes at the national level, as well as at the local level, through legislative and administrative measures¹. Thirteen years after the UN conference in Nairobi, the percentages of women in parliament are still quite low. The countries with the highest female participation in parliaments are the Nordic countries, with an average of 40%. The average for the rest of Europe is 18%, and for the Sub-Saharan countries 14%². Taking a look at various parliaments in Africa, there seems to be one small group of countries that contribute to the relatively high female representation³. One of these countries is Uganda, ranking as number 6. With 24% women in parliament, Uganda is not far behind countries like Mozambique and South Africa with 30%. This thesis looks into how Uganda has achieved its high level of female representation, and examines the consequences of the unique way in which this is implemented.

1.1 Presenting the case

Most women in the Ugandan Parliament are elected through separate women's elections. The Ugandan way of including women, through separate women's elections, is very much an "add-on" procedure. In addition to the 214 'regular' MPs who are elected on a 'first-past-the-post'⁴ basis by universal adult suffrage, each of the 56 districts in Uganda elects one District Woman Representative to Parliament. Each district consists of an average of three to four counties which the 'regular' MPs are elected from. Accordingly, the District Woman Representative⁵ has as much as three to four 'regular' MPs elected from constituencies within "her" district. This means that the district women representatives are

¹ Information found at: <http://www.earthsummit2002.org/toolkits/women/un-doku/un-conf/nairobi.htm>

² All information obtained from: Inter Parliamentary Union: <http://www.ipu.org>

³ See appendix A.

⁴ Each of the 214 counties elects one representative. The representative with the majority of votes is elected.

⁵ In this thesis the District Women Representatives will also be referred to as affirmative action women

elected *in addition* to the regular MPs creating a ‘double’ representation in Parliament. The ‘double’ representation acts as a foundation for the questions that shall be raised in this thesis, as it has created confusion regarding *who* the affirmative action women represent: The district in general, or women in particular?

Furthermore, this thesis will also provide alternative explanations regarding who the women represent. The seats reserved for women are by the NRM leadership regarded as a ‘gift’ they have given to the Ugandan women and NRM emphasis that it is an initiative from above, rather than below (Tamale, 1999:102). Accordingly, the role the women’s movement had fighting for female representation in Parliament, is ignored. A number of women in Parliament regard the NRM as the most important reason why they have been secured seats: They are where they are because the NRM gave them the opportunity. When the seats are interpreted as a ‘gift’ it is hard for the affirmative action women to challenge the NRM Government. Thus, the NRM may have ensured that most female legislators support the Government. The notion NRM is strengthened by looking at the way they are elected. The women are elected to Parliament in separate women’s elections through Electoral Colleges consisting mostly of officials (male and females) who are part of the NRM Government structure. When combining these two factors, it appears as if the NRM have developed mechanisms linking the affirmative action women close to the current regime. Hence, it can be argued that women’s presence in Parliament depends on the NRM. As one of my respondents put it: *“Can you really fail to support the one who feeds you?”* (Interview, Kampala, 06.08.2002). Then it is possibly to regard the affirmative action women not only as representatives of the district or as representatives of women in particular, but also as representatives expected to support the NRM in Parliament. Consequently, this thesis aims at answering the following question: *What kind of representatives are the affirmative action women?*

1.2 Theoretical framework

In order to answer this question I will take advantage of Hanna Pitkin’s theoretical framework on the concept of representation. Her theoretical framework is mainly based upon a dichotomy between “Standing For” and “Acting For” representation.

Officially the affirmative action women are elected to Parliament as representatives of the district. They are elected merely because there is a need to increase the number of women in Parliament and have no obligation to speak or act in favour of women. Accordingly, they are what Pitkin calls “Standing For” descriptive representatives as they merely “Stand For” women based on the descriptive characteristics they have as women. However, given that there is a ‘double’ representation in Parliament, i.e. that the district is already represented with at least one ‘regular’ MP, the affirmative action women have also been regarded as representatives of women in particular. Accordingly, they are what Pitkin would call “Acting For” representatives. They are elected to Parliament because they shall represent and “Act For” women in particular, not merely “Stand For” them.

The confusion as to who the District Women Representatives represent is a problem both for the voters and for women MPs themselves. For the voters, and perhaps especially for the male voters, this confusion can make it hard for them to know what to expect from the representatives. Can a man, residing in a certain district, look upon the District Woman Representative as a representative who represents him in matters he finds important? Furthermore, for the female legislators themselves it is a dilemma as it creates problems defining their role in Parliament. Should they focus on issues of importance for all people residing in the district or do they have an obligation to focus on issues considered to be of importance for women in particular? One of my respondents argued that she defined herself as a representative of the district. She found it problematic, however, that the voters claimed to regard her as a representative of women in particular. She was further confused when the voters, who considered her as a representative of women, continuously invited her to attend functions which was not related to women in particular (Interview, Kampala, 28.08.2002).

Furthermore, as the reserved seats are interpreted as a ‘gift’ from the NRM, women are elected because the NRM gave them an opportunity. It is possible that this might make it difficult for them to challenge the Government on issues they find important. Additionally, most women are elected to Parliament through Electoral Colleges consisting of officials who are part of the current Government structure. This can make it difficult for women critical of the regime to be elected. Thus, it may be argued that the District Women Representatives are neither “Standing For” descriptive representatives, nor “Acting For”

representatives, but rather representatives expected to “Act As” Movementists in Parliament. If this is the case, affirmative action measures used in Uganda does not consolidate female representation. Rather, the “Standing For” descriptive model as officially implemented in Uganda may have been manipulated into a representative model where women are elected to the reserved seats to increase the NRM support in Parliament.

1.3 The Ugandan context

With 24% women in Parliament Uganda has a high female representation. There is, however, something that distinguishes Uganda from other African countries with comparatively high female representation, and that is the manner in which the aspiring candidates are elected to parliament. In contrast to other African countries with high female representation, women (and men) in Uganda’s Parliament are elected to Parliament on individual merit. They are not elected as representatives of political parties.

1.3.1 The Ugandan political system and the inclusion of women

In 1986 the National Resistance Army (NRA) gained power after five years of fighting against the second regime of Milton Obote, NRA introduced a political system that prohibited the activities of political parties. The civil part of NRA is entitled the National Resistance Movement (NRM)⁶, and still holds power today.

NRM’s suspension of political parties is based upon the country’s brutal history after independence in 1962. The NRM leadership claim that the previous political parties’ foundations were built on a platform that had exclusively religious and ethnic foundations. They deliberately exploited the divisions within society (Ssenkumba, 1998:179). The NRM has introduced a no-party system which elects candidates on individual merit. Aspiring candidates are allowed to speak freely, and run for election on their own merit. They are, however, not allowed to stand as a member of a political party. In other words, they are elected to represent a certain geographical constituency and not a political party. NRM argues that suspension of political parties is necessary for the sake of national unity, stability and reconstruction (Mugaju and Oloka-Onyango, 2000:1). Furthermore, the NRM and President Museveni argue that a western democratic model cannot be applied to Uganda’s political culture. What is needed, according to NRM, is a social movement “that

⁶ The NRM will also in this thesis be referred to as merely the Movement

is able to champion the task of mobilising the people to be part and parcel of decision-making at the various levels where their livelihood is affected” (Ssenkumba, 1998:180). Consequently, and in order to maintain the Movement kind of political system, the NRM have created a broad-based and intentionally all-inclusive political system. The all-inclusive Movement system has turned out beneficiary for women. Taking a brief look at the Constitution, which includes articles that specifically concern women’s rights⁷, as well as other official documents in Uganda, it is noticeable that the Movement political system offers a formal gender sensitive political context.

When the NRM gained power in 1986, the ten-point program served as a political foundation for their policy. The ten-point program⁸ was formulated between 1981 and 1985, when the NRA guerrilla was fighting Obote II, and it covers the following areas: democracy, security, unity, independence, economy, social services, misuse of public office, displaced persons, regional co-operation and the strategy of mixed economies (Political Program of NRM: Two years of Action). Women are not specifically mentioned in the ten-point program. However, as a consequence of the first point, “The establishment of popular democracy”, the Resistance Councils (RC) were established. The RCs, a five-tier decentralised political structure stretching from village level, parish, sub-county, county to the district level, were introduced as part of NRMs decentralisation program (Nsibambi, 2000:15)⁹. In the RCs a woman representative was elected in each level to fill the “secretary for women’s affairs” position. On the top of the RC’s political structure was the National Resistance Council (NRC), acting as the parliament. It is worth mentioning that from 1986 until 1989, when the affirmative action was introduced, only four women sat in the NRC (Tamale, 1999:17). In 1999, the ten-point program was replaced by a fifteen-point program. In the Movement Fifteen Point Program one of the points refers specifically to women, and is called the “Consolidation of Programmes which are responsive to Gender and Marginalised Groups”. Under this point, it is stated that NRM, as a liberation Movement, has all along recognised the need to emancipate oppressed groups. Moreover, it is stipulated that “the Movement shall [...] ensure that the hitherto oppressed groups

⁷ The Ugandan constitution, see appendix B

⁸ The Movement Ten Point Program, see appendix C

⁹ In 1997, The Resistance Councils were renamed to Local Councils. The Resistance Councils had the same five-tier structure as the present Local Councils.

participate actively in political, social and economic activities. The affirmative action shall be maintained in as far as it is necessary” (Fifteen-point program, 1999:47).

Women are not the only group that has been secured representation in Parliament. In Article 78 in the 1995 Ugandan Constitution it is stipulated that besides the regular elected representatives, the Parliament shall consist of “one woman representative for every district, and such numbers of representatives of the army, youth, workers, person with disabilities and other groups as the Parliament may determine” (Article, 78 [c]). Additionally, the previous Vice-President as well as Ministers are ex-officio members¹⁰. Furthermore, in addition to the ‘regular’ MPs and the District Women Representatives, there are seats in Parliament reserved for special interest groups, namely the workers, youth, army, and persons with disabilities. Today, two women are elected to Parliament as Youth representatives, two women are elected as representatives of Person with Disability, while one woman are elected as a Worker’s representative. Furthermore, 13 women have been elected from the ‘regular’ seats, making the number of women in Parliament 74, of a total of 304 MPs. The District Women Representatives and the representatives from the special interests groups are elected indirectly through an electoral college in separate elections. In contrast to the special interest groups who are representatives *for* their group, the District Women Representatives are elected as representatives *of* the district and not *for* women. They are what Pitkin refers to as “Standing For” descriptive representatives, as opposed to “Acting For” representatives. This is in contrast to the special interests groups, whose representatives are elected to “Act For” the group they represent.

Before going into detail on my problem, I find it necessary to focus on *why* there is a need for female representation in Uganda, and on the mechanisms involved in securing this female representation. The latter serves as a background when presenting the purpose of the thesis.

1.3.2 The need for female representation in Uganda

Darcy et al. identifies several reasons why female representation is important, of which three is especially relevant to Uganda.

¹⁰ For an accurate composition of the 7th Parliament, see appendix D

First, it is argued that an increased female representation will increase gender sensitive legislation. It has been argued, especially by feminists (e.g. Sapiro, 1981), that in comparison with men, women are better in enhancing legislation important for women (Darcy et al. 1987:12). In chapter 5, I will focus on some legislative processes. Is it so that more women in parliament make it easier to enhance legislation considered important for women? Or to use the word of Pitkin, do female legislators “Act For” women in these matters?

Second, it is argued that there is a need for a stronger female representation in Parliament due to men and women’s different expertise. It has been argued by scholars like Irene Diamond and Nancy Hartsock (1981), and Virginia Sapiro (1981), that men and women have different interests due to the division of labour in society. For example, given that women in Uganda are the main care takers of children, men can experience difficulties in “Acting For” women in these issues. However, Diamond and Hartsock argues that:

“the ability of men to act for women varies considerably through the different phases of the policy process: only women can “Act For” women in identifying “invisible” problems affecting the lives of large numbers of women. At the same time, women’s ability to “Act For” women must be understood in the context of the survival strategies women have created in response to their powerlessness” (Diamond and Hartsock, 1981:720).

There is, however, one problem with this argument. If women enter into political institutions because of their expertise they can end up occupying limited functional areas. Nonetheless, it is a fact that women in decision-making bodies often occupy positions concerned with social welfare, children and education, while men have occupied positions considered typically male dominated areas, like war, economy and general public policy (Darcy et al.1987:12-13). Men and women’s different expertise will also be discussed when comparing female representation in parliamentary committees, aiming at revealing whether or not women are well represented in committees where women have the possibility to “Act For” women.

Third, it is argued that a political system is better legitimised with more women in political offices. Political decisions made by a pre-dominantly male government, or parliament, can face severe legitimacy problems (Darcy et al. 1987:13). When women are well represented

in parliament, it may be argued that the communication between the constituents and the representatives are better, and that women feel that their interests are being represented. Mansbridge has argued that: “This feeling of inclusion in turn makes the polity democratically more legitimate in one’s eye. Having had a voice in the making of a particular policy, even if that voice is through one’s representative and even when one’s view did not prevail, also makes that policy more legitimate in one’s eye” (Mansbridge, 1999:651). Anne Phillips (1995) argues that it is merely a principle of justice that both sexes should be represented: “it is patently and grotesquely unfair for men to monopolize representation” (Phillips, 1995:63). The increased legitimacy of having women in governments and parliament is perhaps the most important point. In Uganda women are well represented in Parliament and one would assume that women (and most likely some men as well) feel that the legitimacy of the government and the parliament has increased. The number of women in Parliament gives Ugandan women a possibility of being heard. However, it has been argued that the Movements’ system inclusion of women is merely used to increase its support among female voters, without really allowing women in parliament to enhance legislation important for women (Tamale, 2003). If this is the case, the “Standing For” descriptive representative model, as well as the “Acting For” representative model, is compromised by an expectation that the affirmative action women are supposed to “Act As” Movementists in the Parliament.

1.4 Affirmative action measures used in Uganda

Affirmative action measures are supposed to increase disadvantaged group’s access to various decision-making bodies. They are meant to compensate for a group’s under-representation in different political bodies and are often looked upon as temporally in nature. In other words, they will most likely cease to exist when a certain equality between the groups involved has been reached (Clayton and Crosby, 1992:15).

The most common affirmative action strategy used when wanting to increase female representation is *quotas*. This is used by political parties like African National Congress in South Africa and FRELIMO (the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique). In Uganda female representation in Parliament is secured by having *reserved seats* for women, both at the national level and at the local level. Yet another affirmative action strategy is *mandated representation*. Mandated representation ensures that female members are elected

representatives to serve certain additional structures. The women's caucus in Uganda is one such informal establishment where women are expected to attend. The caucus ensures women with a voice but it might come in addition to the other work. One major problem with women's caucuses is that it can lead to a sidelining of gender issues and prevent gender issues to be discussed in the entire organisation (Schreiner, 1996:87).

Affirmative action measures aim at compensating for discriminating factors preventing women from being elected into political decision-making bodies. Reynolds (1999) lists some important discriminating factors which are of relevance in a Ugandan context. First, a patriarchal social culture tends to be negative towards women in political offices. Furthermore, a patriarchal culture prevents girls and women from e.g. taking education. Consequently, women may be socialised into roles unrelated to political offices. In societies where women are disadvantaged due to poor childcare, poor health care, underemployment etc, they find it hard to enter into political offices. Their poor socio-economic status becomes an extra burden that hinders them to contest for political offices (Reynolds, 1999:551). The Ugandan society is mixed with a pre-dominantly patriarchal culture, where women find it hard to enter into political life. Have the reserved seats and the "Standing For" descriptive representation as implemented in Uganda challenged the patriarchal culture and created an opportunity for women to compete in the regular election? Second, also the nature of state regime may impact the female representation. Reynolds argues along a hypothesis that established democracies have an historical experience that leads to more women in political offices, and the more illiberal the state is, the fewer women in office. Non-democratic regimes with a more leftist ideology are more likely to place women in high offices compared to personalistic and military authoritarian regimes (Reynolds, 1999:554). The Movement system started out as a Marxist political system, but has later claimed to be an all-embracing political system. As Museveni stated:

"Uganda could not possibly be more democratic...There is a world of difference between a no-party system, which we have proclaimed, and the one-party state which used to exist in Africa...In our system we let all trends contend within the Movement: there are rightists, leftists, Marxists, feudalists, etc. No tendency is excluded" (Museveni quoted in Kjaer, 1999:108).

As I will argue in this thesis, the nature of the state regime, i.e. the all-inclusive political no-party system, is one important reason why women have been secured representation in Parliament. If women had not been given reserved seats, it might have been difficult for them to enter into the political life, due to the dominant patriarchal culture. But what kind of female representation is it that we see in Uganda? Is female representation in Parliament a powerful tool challenging the pre-dominantly patriarchal culture? Third, political institutions, especially electoral systems, also have an impact on female representation. It is widely considered that an electoral system which allows for only one candidate to be elected from a constituency, like Uganda's single-member majoritarian electoral system, discriminates against women. The most women-friendly electoral system is the list proportional system (Reynolds, 1999:555). As Matland (1998) notices: "in majoritarian systems, where the party has only one candidate, the party might have to deny re-nomination to an incumbent or to deny a slot to the male candidate of an internal faction which has traditionally received the nomination, in order to nominate a woman" (Matland, 1998: 79). Without the reserved seats, it is natural to expect that the number of women in Parliament would be lower than the case is today. But, do the reserved seats 'produce' strong women that again challenge the male incumbents in the 'regular' elections?

Affirmative action measures have been heavily debated and naturally there exist both advantages and disadvantages. One of the main consequences of affirmative action measures is that merit is no longer used as the only criterion when electing people for a political office. Opponents of affirmative action measures claim that they violate the principle of equality that exists among men and women. When women are given preferences over men in an election to political offices men do not have the same possibility as women to be elected. They are discriminated against. This critique has been answered by proponents of affirmative action, arguing that by implementing quotas or reserved seats in decision-making bodies, women are compensated for actual barriers that prevent women from having a fair share among the political seats (Dahlerup, 1998:94).

The separate elections for women in Uganda do not challenge the aspiring male candidates since women are not given any preferences in the regular elections. In the 'regular' elections both men and women are elected on equal terms. Nonetheless, one possible consequence with affirmative action measures as implemented in Uganda is that they may

act as a de facto upper limit on how many women are elected to Parliament. The separate women's elections may prevent women from being elected to Parliament from the 'regular' seats or even compete in the 'regular' election. (Dahlerup, 1998: 98). On the other hand, in a long-term perspective the reserved seats may help create a social perspective that women are as capable politicians as men.

1.5 Arguments

At the beginning of this chapter, I introduced the following question: What kind of representatives are the affirmative action women? I will focus both on the "Standing For" descriptive representation vs. "Acting For" representation, and on the "Act As" representation.

When aiming at revealing whether or not the affirmative action women "Stand For" women or "Act For" them, the focus will be on the perceptions they have of themselves. Do they feel obligated to "Act For" women in particular, or do they consider themselves elected merely because there is a need to increase the number of women in Parliament, thus with no obligation to "Act For" women in particular? When substantiating this, the focus will be female representations in parliamentary committees. Given that there is a 'double' representation, and some women have been considered to be "Acting for" women, it would be natural to assume that they would be in committees where they would serve the interests of women better (i.e. in committees that focuses on issues that are considered to be of importance for women – issues that reflects their division of labour in society). Is it so that most women in Uganda's Parliament tend to "Act For" women?

Additionally, I will as mentioned also argue that the affirmative action women can be regarded as representatives expected to "Act As" Movementists in Parliament, given the affirmative action women's close ties to the current regime. This will be substantiated by arguing that the reserved seats are by the NRM leadership, as well as a number of female legislators, looked upon as a 'gift' the current regime have given women. Additionally, I will focus on the Electoral Colleges which seem to consist mostly of Local Councils official supporting the Movement. Moreover, there will also be a section on the women's elections, and the effect it has on the regular elections. Today, most women are elected to

the women's seats, and they have a tendency to continue to stay on the women's seats, despite the fact that they are supposed to 'graduate' to the regular seats after a certain time. I will argue that the tendency to stay on the women's seats cannot be seen separately from the way the District Women Representatives are looked upon by the NRM Government. In order to really challenge and substantiate the "Act As" representation, it is necessary to focus on female legislators in Parliament. This will be done by focusing on three different factors. First, the focus is on the women's caucus, arguing that most of the affirmative action women actually do support the Movement. Second, the focus is on the possibilities women have to "Act For" women, arguing that women's close ties to the Government seem to make it difficult for them to enhance legislation important for women. This will be illustrated by looking at Land Act and the Domestic Relations Bill. These bills challenge the existing patriarchal structures in society, aiming at enhancing women's status in society. The executive branch has, however, been foot-dragging on these issues, and it is rather the women's organisations that have the necessary autonomy required to challenge the Government in these issues. Third, the focus is on the mechanism the Movement system use to uphold the belief that the affirmative action women are dependencies of NRM. It appears as if women are guaranteed representation in decision-making bodies in exchange for support.

1.6 *Methodological considerations*

This project is pre-dominantly a qualitative case study of Uganda's female representation in Parliament. The case study is a form of empirical inquiry that, as Yin (1994:13) argues, "[...] investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident". The case study is a comprehensive research strategy, where different qualitative and quantitative approaches may be used. Among qualitative researchers there are no standardised approaches on how to study a certain case, but rather different approaches like interview, observation, participation, written sources and so forth (Ryen, 2002:18).

1.6.1 Collecting data

When studying female representation in Uganda, different sources of data have been used. The main sources of data are official documents like the Constitution, primary and secondary written literature, statistical materials, newspapers and informant interviews.

A majority of my respondents were female parliamentarians, both District Women Representatives and women elected from the 'regular' seats. Additionally, I interviewed some male members of parliament, the chairperson in leading NGO, an official from the women's councils, as well as scholars at Makerere University. I used an interview guide where a number of the questions were "open" questions, in the sense that the answer the respondents gave enabled them to give her/his personal view on the matter (Ryen, 2002: 99). Topics included who they represented, how female representation is secured in Parliament, the launching of the reserved seats, and their work in Parliament. During my research in Uganda I interviewed 20 out of 74 female MPs, 26% of the female representatives. In order to make the answers as representative as possible, I chose candidates from different geographical areas. I contacted women from the northern part of Uganda, because I knew they are likely to be critical towards the Government. Likewise, I contacted women from the western part of the country, since I knew that they are likely to be strong supporters of the Government.

This case study has an elite perspective. By applying an elite perspective on my problems, I exclude some views that might have been important and valuable for my work. If I had a micro-perspective on this study, as well, I would have attained information on how the voters look upon their representatives in Parliament. Though a micro perspective on the study would most likely have required a survey among the voters, I was prevented from performing such a survey due to lack of time, as well as financial limitations.

1.6.2 The case study and the comparative method

Besides being a case study, this project can also be considered to be a comparative project comparing an empirical theory against theoretical criteria. As Ragin argues: "Comparison provides a basis for making statements about empirical regularities and for evaluating and interpreting cases relative to substantive and theoretical criteria" (Ragin, 1987:1).

I base my definition of comparative projects on Arendt Lijphart's article *Comparative Politics and Comparative Method*. In this article Lijphart defines six types of *ideal* case studies. The first one is the *A-theoretical case study* which is an a-theoretical case study, operating in a theoretical vacuum. The second one is the *Interpretative* case study, which is

a case study chosen because of an interest in the case, and not for the purpose of formulating a chosen theory. They explicitly use established theoretical propositions, but do not aim to contribute to empirical generalisations and are therefore almost useless in terms of theory building. The third case Lijphart mentions is the *hypothesis-generating case study*, with aims to formulate definite hypothesis to be tested among a large number of cases. The objective is to develop theoretical generalisations in areas where no theory yet exists. The fourth and fifth case is the *theory-confirming* or *theory-infirming case studies*, which are analyses of single cases within a framework of established generalisations. Prior knowledge is limited, and the case study is a test of a proposition which may be confirmed or infirmed. The last case Lijphart describes is the *deviant case analyses*. This is a study of single cases that are known to deviate from established generalisations. Consequently, they are elected in order to show why they deviate (Lijphart, 1971:683-692).

The study of female representation in Uganda is a single case study, which aims at further developing a theory. It is a comparison between a theoretical framework and an empirical case, and is what Lijphart defines as *theory confirming* or *theory infirming*. While interpretative case-studies have as a point of departure established concepts and theoretical generalisations, the purpose with this implicit comparative method is to modify and encourage further development of a new theory by applying an empirical case to a theoretical relevant framework. This can be done by developing new concepts, modifying existing concepts, or by confirming or infirming an existing theory (Andersen:1997: 73). One single case study cannot confirm or inform a theory, but it can contribute to revising a theory (Lijphart, 1971:692). Accordingly, this study will not confirm or infirm Hanna Pitkin's theory, but it will cast light on the "Standing For" descriptive model as used in Uganda today.

1.7 Outline of thesis

Chapter2 of this thesis is the historical chapter, where the focus is on women's participation in Ugandan politics. I shall look into the various historical political contexts and the possibilities women have had to partake in the political life. Given that there were rather few women who were members in official decision-making bodies, the main focus will be on women's participation in civil society organisations. Furthermore, the focus is on women's participation in the NRA guerrilla as their participation in the NRA guerrilla

appears to be one reason why women have been secured seats in Parliament. There will also be a section focusing on the expansion of women organisations after the NRM gained power in 1986.

Chapter 3 is a theoretical chapter which focuses on the concept of representation. The theoretical framework will be developed with a basis in Hanna Pitkin's dichotomy between "Standing for" and "Acting for" representation. I will also include other scholars who have criticised her work, and thereby contributed to the theory on representation.

Chapter 4 is the first empirical chapter where the focus is on the separate women's elections, and the consequences this has on representation, aiming at getting closer to an answer as to what kind of representatives the affirmative action women are: (i) representatives that "Stand For" women with no obligation to act for women, (ii) representatives that "Act For" women, or (iii) representatives that are expected to "Act As" Movementists. Second, this chapter will also be on the consequences the separate women's elections have on female participation in the 'regular' county elections.

Chapter 5 is the second empirical chapter, and the focus is on the women in Parliament. First, in order to substantiate the "Standing For" descriptive representation and "Acting For" representation, the focus is on female representation in the various parliamentary committees, aiming at finding out whether or not women are represented in committees that typically reflect women's concerns. The second part of this chapter aims at substantiating the "Act As" representation. By doing that the focus is on the unity of the women's caucus and female legislators' possibility of challenge the Government in issues important for the majority of Ugandan women. Finally, the focus is on the continuously granting of reserved seats as this seems to be one of the mechanisms used by the Movement system to ensure support from women.

Chapter 6 is the concluding chapter and contains a summary of findings. The focus will also be on the consequences the "Standing For" descriptive representation as officially used have had on female representation in Uganda.

Chapter 2: Women's participation in Ugandan politics - a recent historical perspective

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief background to Ugandan history and focuses on women's participation in political life, mainly from 1962 onwards. First, the focus will be on women's participation in formal political life, i.e. as members in National Assemblies. Furthermore, given that few women have served as MPs, I will also elaborate on the strong presence of women in civil society organisations since this is one reason why women currently are reserved seats in Parliament. Second, the chapter concentrates on women's participation in the NRA guerrilla war from 1981-1986. It has been claimed that women's participation in the guerrilla is an important factor when explaining why the NRM introduced affirmative action measures for women in 1989. Third, the chapter briefly examines the characteristics of the NRM regime, and the women's organisations expansion from 1986 until the present.

2.1 Women's participation in politics from colonial times to 1986

2.1.1 Colonial times and the deportation of the Kabaka

In the pre-colonial period Uganda consisted of different kingdoms like Bunyoro, Buganda, Toro and Nkore, as well as segmentary societies which followed an age-set clan system (Byanyima, 1992:130, Tamale, 1999:4). The most powerful kingdom, the Buganda kingdom¹¹, with the Baganda¹² constituting about one-fifth of the Ugandan population, was used by the British to extend its control outside Uganda (Tripp, 2000:29). When the British Government wanted to form an East African Federation the Kabaka¹³ in Buganda protested. He was opposed to this idea and demanded assurances that such a federation was not to be formed. Moreover, he also insisted that a timetable stipulating how and when Buganda should achieve its independence, should be created (Mutibwa, 1992:14). These demands were rejected by the British Government. When the Kabaka refused to sign a document,

¹¹ For the British, Ugandan politics equalled Bugandan politics. Buganda, a political important area located in the southern part of the country. This section will mainly focus on Buganda since this was the most powerful kingdom and acted as the administrative and commercial centre of the country (Tripp, 2000:29)

¹² The ethnic group from Buganda

¹³ Kabaka is the word used for king in Uganda

laid before him by the British, requiring his acceptance that the Buganda kingdom was, and still would, remain a province within Uganda, he was deported to Britain (Mutibwa, 1992:14).

When the Kabaka was sent into exile the women's movement in Uganda acted. Three busloads of women stormed the statehouse of the British Governor. The women, who were granted audience after they had threatening to stage a hunger strike, handed the Governor a memorandum reprimanding him for not consulting the 'mothers of the nation' before deporting the Kabaka. Women's protest against the deportation of the Kabaka, as well as other anti-colonial actions like participation in demonstrations and writing of protests letters represented the beginning of women's involvement in modern Bugandan politics (Tamale, 1999:10, Tripp, 2000:36-37).

2.1.2 Women in Parliaments, 1958 - 1986

In 1957, three women stood for the *Buganda Parliament* (Lukiiko) elections, and campaigned hard. Nonetheless, three days before the elections, the county chiefs started campaigning in the villages telling the voters not to vote for women as the Kabaka had proclaimed that it was not yet time for women to enter into political life. Consequently, no women were elected (Tamale, 1999:11). In 1958, elections to the colonial legislative council, *Legco*, took place. Three African women were nominated by the British Governor, and after being elected they ably contributed to the lawmaking process (Tamale, 1999:10). The nomination of three women to the Legco can be traced back to women's strong involvement in the Kabaka case. As the British Governor told one woman who participated in the protest against the deportation of the Kabaka: "From that day I respected you all the more because I saw that you behaved boldly as I never expected other leaders to do" (Governor Cohen, quoted in Tripp, 2000:37).

Nevertheless, from the 1962 independence to 1986 when the NRM gained power, female representation in parliament was poor. In 1962, the Bugandan Parliament sent two women to the national Parliament. No women sat in the national Parliament from 1967-1979. In the short period from 1979 to 1980 two women were elected to the national Parliament, while one woman sat in national Parliament from 1980-85. After NRM gained power in 1986, only four women sat in the National Assembly (the National Resistance Council) until the

first parliamentary election in 1989. In 1989, when affirmative action measures were introduced, women claimed 17% of the seats in the National Assembly (41 seats) (Tripp, 2000:39, 71).

The numbers above indicate that female representation in the National Assembly, as well as in the Bugandan Parliament, in the post-colonial period was scarce. It does not, however, enable us to draw the conclusion that women were excluded from political life since there are other arenas of mobilisations where political activities are performed. One such arena is within the civil society. Despite the fact that women were scarcely represented in the national assembly, they were active civil society participants. It is important to elaborate on the history of women's participation in civil society as this can give us some indication of whether or not Uganda has a strong women's movement. Subsequently, one question to be answered in my study is whether or not the reserved seats in Parliament are a result of a strong women's movement. A strong women's movement may also tell us something about the *nature* of the female representation. If Uganda has a strong women's movement, it is natural to assume that a number of female legislators have a background from various women's organisations, and thus have an interest in fighting for matters considered important for women. Moreover, by taking a brief look at women's participation in civil society, we do not only get an insight into the political history of Uganda, but also an overview of the political leaders' relationship and attitude towards women's organisations. Hence, it seems pertinent to ask whether the women's organisations in Uganda have had the necessary autonomy required to challenge the Government.

2.1.3 Women's participation in civil society

When studying women's participation in civil society, I will focus on civil society as a section of the society which "interacts with the state, influences the state, and yet is distinct from the state" (Chazan, 1992:281). The women's organisations in Uganda have engaged (and disengaged) with the state around a variety of issues¹⁴.

¹⁴ It is important to note that most Ugandan women organisations are local multi-purpose organisations. These organisations do not constantly engage the state, only when the need arises. They are nonetheless important for the welfare of their families and communities (Tripp, 1998:93).

In 1946, the Uganda Council of Women (UCW) was established as one of the leading organisations within the women's movement. The organisation aimed at being an all-inclusive organisation that should focus on issues of mutual concern for women. The UCW consisted of people from different ethnic groups: European women, Asian women, and African women, and thus also had great religious diversity; e.g. Anglicans, Catholics, Sunni Muslims and Hindus were all represented (Tripp, 2000:38). The UCW seem to have managed to challenge the Government on issues they found important for Ugandan women. In 1953, it pressured the Government in making the registration of marriages obligatory. Among other things, this was meant to limit polygamy and protect women's right to be in a monogamous marriage. Furthermore, the UCW fought for maternity leave for female civil servants. In 1968 women got a 120 days paid maternity leave, with a possibility of extending the maternity leave with 90 days on a half salary (Tripp, 2000:43-45).

However in 1964, the issue of autonomy was heavily debated within the UCW. Some were concerned that the financial support they received from the Ministry of Community Development actually meant that the Government had the right to influence their work. As time passed by the UCW and the Government became more and more polarized, and the Government started discrediting the UCW for being elitist and too dependent on foreign experts and funds. As a result of the differences between the Government and the UCW, a new national women's organisation was formed, the Uganda Association of Women's Organisations (UAWO). UAWO soon turned out to be a mass women's organisation within the ruling party the Uganda People's Congress (UPC). The organisation was led Miria Obote, the wife of President Milton Obote. The UCW soon collapsed due to the political situation and the establishment of the one-party state under the leadership of President Obote I (Tripp, 2000:47-49). Obote I ruled the country from 1962 until 1971 when Idi Amin gained power through a military coup. The political context the women's organisations operated within did not improve when Idi Amin came to power.

Amin used the army as an instrument to consolidate his own power. Amin, like Obote I, had an army dominated by the people from northern part of the country¹⁵. For the

¹⁵ In 1975, Amin transformed the army from being pre-dominantly Luo-speaking (Acholi and Langi dominated) to be a pre-dominantly Sudanic speaking army of West Nilers, his own region. For the people in the west and south, this was of little importance as it was merely a 'change of guards' since they were all from

southerners, the Baganda, everyday life was characterised by military harassment, torture and killings. The violence and killings lasted into the seventies and eighties – it had become institutionalised. (Mutibwa, 1992:108 – 112) As Mutibwa says “citizens lived in spite of, and not because of, the existence of the state, and individuals and communities found themselves without protection against humiliation, molestation and dispossession” (Mutibwa,1992:112). In 1979, the Tanzanian army and the Ugandan National Liberation Front overthrew Amin, and in 1980 Uganda held national parliamentary elections. The election, which was clearly rigged, was won by the UPC, and Obote became President for a second time (Mutibwa, 1992:139). The regime of Obote II had very much the same characteristics as Amin’s. However, in some respects it was even worse taken into consideration the activities of the uncontrollable army, the UPC youth wingers and the intelligence-seeking organisations. Many people, who lived in Uganda during the Amin period, were now forced to leave the country (Kanyehamba, 2002:202-203).

Under Amin and Obote II the women’s organisations lacked autonomy. This became indeed evident in 1978 when Amin established the National Council of Women (NCW), a semi-parastatal organisation which acted as a bureau under the insignificant Ministry of Community Development. When the NCW was established, all other women’s organisations were abolished (Tamale, 1999:15, Tripp, 2000:49). When Amin was ousted removed from power in 1979, the NCW attempted to help the previously banned women’s organisations, and aimed at being a forum where different organisations could make contact with each other. However, during Obote II, it was tried turned the NCW into a party organ of the ruling party, UPC. Although, this was not successful, the Governments’ continuous interference with in the activities of the NCW created problems for the organisation. This can be illustrated by an incidence which took place in 1984 when the NCW¹⁶ prepared for elections in order to change their leaders. It wanted to replace the Government appointed civil servants, who sat in the executive of the organisation, with its own members. The

the northern part of the country. People in the west and in the south of Uganda did not contribute to any large segments of the army. (Mutibwa, 1992:109)

¹⁶ The National Council of Women, which was started under the Amin era, continued to exist in the first years of the NRM regime. In 1993, however, the NCW was replaced by a hierarchy of a five-tier structure of Women’s Councils at the village level, parish, sub-county, county and district level, parallel to the present Local Councils. On the top is the new National Councils of Women. According to NRM, the new structure of Women’s Councils should reach out to all Uganda women since the independent women’s organisations do not mobilize the majority of women (Tripp, 2000:88).

preparations were immediately stopped by the Government which blocked the elections from taking place (Tamale, 1999:16, Tripp, 2000:50-51).

Conclusively, in the decades after independence, women's political activities were mostly carried out civil society since women were scarcely represented in decision-making bodies such as the national assembly. However, the organisations lacked autonomy, and this made it difficult for them to challenge the Government on issues they found important. Accordingly, when the NRA gained power in 1986, it was welcomed by the women's organisations. They believed the new regime would give them the long-wanted autonomy. The NRA gained power after five years of guerrilla activities, in which women were active participants.

2.2 Women in the NRA guerrilla

After years of dictatorships, the NRA guerrilla was launched in 1981 to fight the second regime of Milton Obote. The goal of the guerrilla was to eliminate an undemocratic political system heavily based on the army, and re-instate peace and stability. The National Resistance Army had its base in the Luwero Triangle¹⁷ and was mainly supported by the Baganda people in the south. The Baganda were particularly victimised during the regime of Amin and Obote II (Mutibwa, 1992: 157).

In the NRA guerrilla women were active participants and their involvement proved to be an important factor for further empowerment of women. There are various reasons why so many women joined the armed struggle. Winnie Byanyima, herself an active participant in the NRA guerrilla, argues that: "My impression has been that some men had sided with and benefited from dictatorship, while very few women had done so. Thus more women than men supported the guerrilla resistance" (Byanyima, 1992:136). Nevertheless, women seem to have joined the guerrilla for various reasons. Some women, mainly peasants, joined the guerrilla because the men they depended on had been killed by Government troops. Desperately and insecure they sought refuge in the guerrilla. As arranged marriages have been and still are common among some cultural groups, like the Bahima and the Banyarwanda, a number of young women ran to the NRA to escape these marriages. Others

¹⁷The Luwero Triangle is a geographical area in central and western Uganda where the NRA had most supporters.

were already married and joined the guerrilla to escape unhappy marriages. Furthermore, some women, mostly from urban areas, followed their relatives into the guerrilla, while others joined the guerrilla to find a husband. They wanted to marry a national hero, a man who participated in the NRA guerrilla (Byanyima, 1992:136-137). After numerous discussions with women on why they joined the guerrilla, Winnie Byanyima concludes that in addition to their desire to end years of dictatorship, younger women were seeking to resolve an unsatisfactory power relation between men and women. Older women, however, were mostly concerned with restoration of peace, stability and democracy (Byanyima, 1992:137).

In the first year of the guerrilla activities, women were 'only' involved in activities like fetching supplies from Kampala and taking them back to the Luwero Triangle. This was, however, considered to be a dangerous task and women wore traditional clothes so that they would not draw any attention (Tripp, 2000:110). Furthermore, they were active in encouraging Government soldiers to join the NRA guerrilla (Byanyima, 1992:138). At the end of the guerrilla war women became directly involved in the combat. Tripp argues that the sight of women carrying guns with babies on their back impressed many (Tripp, 2000:110). However, since the training of guerrilla fighters was not compulsory for women as it was for men, many women in the camps became involved in traditional tasks like cooking, health care and administrative tasks outside combat like intelligence work and administration work (Byanyima, 1992:138).

During the guerrilla war, women were not directly exposed to any feminist consciousness-raising, and there were differences between older and younger women on matters related to male-domination. Some of the older women strongly believed that a woman should submit to a man, while some younger women wanted to challenge this tradition. Nevertheless, as Ottemoeller (1991:91) argues: "Certainly women were crucial to the NRM's war effort, and respect for feminist issues penetrated the NRM during the war years from 1981 to 1986". Accordingly, it may very well be argued that women's participation in the guerrilla war is one reason why female representation in Parliament was promoted when the NRM gained power.

2.3 NRM and the women organisations

The rulers of the previous regimes had strategically manipulated ethnicity and religion to stay in power. In 1986 their rule was replaced by an all-inclusive no-party system. It has been claimed that the low development of social classes and a weak bourgeoisie, divided by social pluralism, make it difficult to initiate democratic forms of governance in most African countries. Democratic forms of governance are only possible where there has been a successful expansion of capitalism (Ssenkumba: 1998:176)¹⁸. This is also a part of the argument used by the NRM when explaining the no-party system in Uganda. Museveni has argued that hardly any African state has reached this level of capitalism since the African middleclass is not producers of wealth, but rather salesmen of other people's products. The African middleclass is not a capitalist middle class like the European middle class (Museveni, 1992:192). According to NRM and Museveni there is only one class in Uganda, namely the peasants. The peasantry does not have class conflicts and therefore there is no need for political parties to represent the different class interests (Kasfir: 2000:69)¹⁹

When the NRM gained power in 1986 the number of women's organisations increased for various reasons. The country stabilised and the availability of donor funds increased. The retreat of a state which proved to be unable to provide services to take care of orphans, elderly and the sick, also contributed to the growth of women's organisations. Especially the AIDS epidemic has placed new burdens on women as it has always been women's responsibility to care for children and sick people in a community. But, perhaps more importantly the NRM regime's commitment to empower women seems to have encouraged them to become members of NGOs (Tripp, 2000:115-122).

¹⁸ It is important to note that this is a classical argument among others claimed by Schumpeter, who drew on the work by Marx and Weber, argued that capitalism would eventually lead to socialism. Schumpeter was a moderate socialist who claimed that capitalism would lead to a political system where the growth of state control and central planning of civil society are in the hands of public administration and elected personnel (Held, 1997:183.184) Additionally, in the 20th century, many political theorists like for instance Lipset (1994:2) has emphasised the important relationship between market economy and democracy.

¹⁹ With regard to this I find it important to mention that Museveni is not the first politician who emphasised the distinctiveness of African society. The debate about class struggle in Africa is old. One of the prominent figures in this debate was Kwame Nkrumah. Nkrumah was the President of Ghana in the latter half of the 20th century, as well as a famous political scholar. In his early work he argued that there were no class struggles in the African societies. He later rejected this thought and considered the importance, gravity and irreducibility of class struggles. He then considered African society's struggle against imperialism as a class struggle on an international scale (Hountondji, 1983:143).

Women organisations in the no-party political system have recognised the need for a women's movement which is as 'broad' as possible, according to the NRM ideology. The women's movement shall build bridges between the different ethnic and religious groups, as well as class-interests. Tripp (2000) found that women members in NGOs were very persistent in emphasising the point that their group was not involved in politics, but rather involved in economic matters. This is largely because politics is associated with repression, civil war and sectarian fighting. In comparison with men, women oppose multi-party politics even more since multipartyism is seen as equivalent to sectarian politics. What Tripp found especially striking was that, despite the possibilities women had to form organisations along ethnic and religious lines, they were very persistent in avoiding this. Conclusively, most of the women's organisations she studied had members from different ethnic and religious groups (Tripp, 2000:129-130).

When NRM came to power in 1986, the women's organisations gained the autonomy they had struggled for in the past. Despite the fact that the NRM has tried to control the NGOs by introducing regulatory laws the regime can use if they feel sufficiently threatened by various activities, they experience a greater autonomy than before 1986 (Tripp, 2000:62). The women's movement in Uganda can now exert pressure on the state in issues they find important (Tripp, 2001:102).

2.4 Summary

In the colonial period, hardly any women were represented in decision-making bodies like the Legco (Colonial legislative council), Lukiiko (Parliament of Buganda) and the national Parliament. It was not until 1989, when the affirmative action measures were introduced, the number of women in Parliament increased significantly. Despite the fact that women were scarcely represented in National Assemblies, there were women who engaged in politics as active participants in civil society. Under Amin and Obote II, the women's organisations were co-opted by the regime and had difficulties in challenging the Government on issues they find important.

From 1981, when the NRA guerrilla launched its fights against Obote II women were active participants. As has been pointed out by scholars (e.g. Byanyima, 1992, Tamale,

1999, Boyd, 1999), their participation in the guerrilla was important for further involvement in both formal and informal political activities. As Boyd (1989:3) argues: “

During those years in the bush, from 1981-1986, gender questions began to be consciously addressed by the NRA/NRM. The words and actions of the leadership of the NRA/NRM continue to reflect a consciousness of gender-based inequality and a determination to alter it”.

Women’s participation in the NRA guerrilla seems to have been an important factor for securing their representation in Parliament. Women’s representation is also stipulated in the 1995 Constitution.

With regard to civil society organisations, the NRM regime has created a positive political environment for them to operate within. Furthermore, the NRM’s commitment towards women might indicate that they have recognised women’s strong participation in civil society, like Amin and Obote did when they took advantage of the leading women organisations. The NRM seems to have found it necessary to include women as a central part of their policy where one strategy has been to give them seats in Parliament. In the following chapter I will map and construct a theoretical framework for analysing female representation in the Ugandan Parliament.

Chapter 3: Conceptualising representation

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to map a theoretical framework which will be used when studying the affirmative action women in the Ugandan Parliament. My aim is to develop a consistent and more thorough insight into the female representation in Uganda. The theoretical framework will take advantage of Hanna Pitkin's dichotomy between "Standing For" and "Acting For" representation. These are general perspectives that focus on representatives' behaviour in Parliament. This dichotomy is of particular relevance in the Ugandan context as most women in Uganda's Parliament have been elected by separate elections for women. However, given that there are 214 'regular' county MPs, the 56 District Women Representatives are elected to Parliament *in addition* to others. Consequently, there is a 'double' representation, which has led to confusion as to who the affirmative action women represent: the district in general or women in particular.

The debate on representation is linked to the concept of legitimacy. In this project, where the focus is on parliamentary representation, the importance is the legitimacy between legislators and voters. In order to be elected, as well as re-elected, a representative in Parliament needs to be trusted by the constituency, that is, they need *legitimacy* from its constituency. With regard to the affirmative action women in Uganda, and the dichotomy between "Standing For" and "Acting For", the affirmative action women's legitimacy is either generated from their descriptive characteristics such as gender, or through the activities the representatives performs as legislators. This chapter raises some questions intended for the empirical chapters: Are the affirmative action women representatives who have their legitimacy founded in their descriptive characteristics as women, or is it in fact a representation where their legitimacy is founded in their activity? Are there alternative explanations as to who the affirmative action women represent?

3.1 "Standing for" representation

According to Hanna Pitkin (1967) in her classical book *The Concept of Representation*, "Standing For" *descriptive* representation, as opposed to "Standing For" *symbolic* representation, is a representation that is based on resemblance and reflection between the

representative and the ones being represented. In the “Standing For” descriptive model as described by Pitkin, the important factor is the composition of the legislature, rather than its performance. Due to the fact that the Parliament is supposed to mirror the nation, “Standing For” descriptive representation has also merely been labelled descriptive representation as it is the descriptive characteristics of the representative which are the most important factors (Pitkin, 1967: 61). Subsequently, descriptive representation is not about *acting*. Rather, the important thing is the representatives’ *characteristics*. It is about *being* someone, and not about *doing* something. The legislators do not act for others, but rather stands for them on a basis of reflection and resemblance (Pitkin, 1967:61). In the “Standing For” descriptive model, the representatives’ *legitimacy* rests mainly in the power of the representatives’ descriptive characteristics. Accordingly, descriptive representation does not say anything about how the representatives are to behave - the representatives are mainly represented to give a description of the ones being represented. Thus, “Standing For” descriptive representation only gives information about the public, and representation means being like you, not acting for you (Voet, 1992: 391).

Descriptive representation view has been developed by advocates supporting proportional representation. Among the different electoral systems, proportional representation represents the existing divisions in a society in a national assembly better. By some proportionalists, the idea of a *map* has been used when describing the best model for a representative body. For instance as Mirabeau has argued: “A representative body is for the nation what a map drawn to scale is for the physical configuration of its land; in part or in whole the copy must always have the same proportions as the original” (Mirabeau, quoted in Pitkin, 1967:62). However, electing a parliament that totally equals the populations’ given descriptive characteristics is impossible and most likely not even desirable. If the parliament were to mirror the population perfectly, this would for instance imply that also children should be elected.

The other kind of “Standing For” representation is *symbolic* representation. In contrast to the previously described descriptive representation, symbolic representation does not provide us with *any* source of information on who the representatives are supposed to represent. In political representation, symbolic representatives are represented to evoke or express feelings. In order to do so, the symbolic political representatives must be believed

in, as well as accepted by, the people. Accordingly, the crucial test in symbolic political representation is whether or not the representative is believed in and accepted as their leader by the people. Hence, the “Standing For” symbolic representation is based on less formal procedures than “Standing For” descriptive representation. In “Standing For” symbolic representation, no *rational* justification on why they are represented is given - the political leader is merely “Standing For” others symbolically (Pitkin, 1967:100-102). Accordingly, as Pitkin argues: “Hence, political representation will not be an activity but a state of affairs, not an acting for others but “Standing For”; so long as people accept or believe, the political leader represents them, by definition” (Pitkin, 1967:102). The political representative is considered to be a symbol-maker through his/her activities which (s)he performs aiming at turning himself/herself into an accepted leader the people believe in. This is as mentioned not an “Acting For” activity but an activity which aims at foster belief, loyalty and satisfaction among the leaders and the people itself (Pitkin, 1967:107).

3.2 “Standing For” women

Scholars, like Mansbridge and Voet, have based their views on the “Standing For” descriptive representation, as described by Pitkin, when arguing for higher female representation in decision-making bodies.

Jane Mansbridge (1999) makes a distinction between Pitkin’s micro-cosmic representation, and descriptive representation given as a preferential treatment of some groups. The micro-cosmic representation is the representation Pitkin describes as “Standing For” descriptive representation. This representation was the ideal of various eighteenth-century theorists like John Adams and Mirabeau (Mansbridge, 1999:631). In an attempt to ‘save’ descriptive representation, Mansbridge emphasises the use of selective descriptive representation which is based on an idea that certain groups are to have a higher representation in a political body than they would have achieved in an existing electoral system. The objective is to get the proportions of these groups in decision-making bodies closer to the percentages they have in the population. Accordingly, selective descriptive representation is considered important as it provides an opportunity for groups to get the different facts, insights and perspectives on the table (Mansbridge, 1999:636).

According to Mansbridge (1999) there are four contexts in which selective descriptive representation can be applied in order to make marginalised groups noticeable. First, in a context of *mistrust*, descriptive representation can lead to a better communication between representatives and the constituent. A representative can easily grasp the meaning of what the constituent mean as they have a shared experience of mistrust (Mansbridge: 1999:641). Second, in a context of *not yet fully articulated interests* selective descriptive representation can be used to visualise disadvantaged groups. Not fully articulated interests are interests that no political parties yet have organised around. When choosing a representative with some characteristics like yourselves, you can expect the representative to act almost the way you would have done in the same situation. One such example Mansbridge refers to is violence against women in the US. The two dominant parties have not developed a distinct position in regard to this problem. Not surprisingly, it is usually female legislators who have brought these issues on the legislative table (Mansbridge, 1999:647). Third, selective descriptive representation can be used in an historical context where members of specific groups *have not had the same opportunity* to rule. In this context, selective descriptive representation helps those groups by creating a social acceptance that women are as capable as men at being political leaders. This argument is built upon a social good, rather than rights. When women, who in many respect have been seen as a ‘second-class citizen’ in some societies like Uganda, only occupies a small percentage of the seats in a representative body, descriptive representation can help create an acceptance for female politicians. Finally, in the context of *past discrimination* selective descriptive representation may increase the policy’s legitimacy. A groups’ feeling of inclusion may help the policy look better in the previously discriminated person’s eye. Thus, selective descriptive representation has a psychological benefit (Mansbridge, 1999: 641- 651).

When Mansbridge lists these four contexts she goes beyond Pitkin’s micro-cosmic representation as there seem to be some implicit notions that the representative are expected to “Act For” the disadvantaged group involved. This becomes even clearer when we look at Mansbridge’s argumentation as to why disadvantaged groups need full representation, and not only one single representative. One of her arguments is that disadvantaged groups need a big mass to convince others that the perspectives and insights they are advocating are widely shared and genuinely felt (Mansbridge, 1999:636). Implicit in this notion rests an idea that groups who are represented on a basis of selective descriptive representation

represent a perspective or interest that others may have difficulties in representing. In other words, there seem to be an expectation that the representatives elected from selective descriptive representation are to “Act For” a specific group.

One cost of selective descriptive representation is the strengthening of tendencies towards essentialism. Essentialism is based upon an assumption that members of a certain group have a special identity others might have difficulties in representing. If women were to be defined as such a group, men would have difficulties representing their interests. Accordingly, this would also mean that women represent all women equally, as essentialism has difficulties recognising differences within a certain group. The common interest a certain group has does not allow interests of sub-dominant groups to be taken into consideration. Accordingly, the various sub-dominant groups are assimilated without their existence being recognised (Mansbridge, 1999: 637-638).

Rian Voet (1992) has written an article on Hanna Pitkin’s concept of descriptive representation within a context of feminist politics. Voet argues that there are two kinds of descriptive representation: the first version is Pitkin’s micro-cosmic descriptive representation, while the second version is satisfied with a rough description of the people. The second version rests on the idea that a quota system will guarantee an almost equal percentage women and men in decision-making bodies (Voet, 1992:392). In contrast to Mansbridge who wants to introduce selective descriptive representation for women, Rian Voet is more dubious as she fears that acceptability imply harmlessness. She argues that if women are accepted they may become pacified and less challenging to the male-dominated society.

In her article, Voet reviews and comments the arguments for descriptive representation as it has been offered in campaigns on quotas for women in decision-making bodies. One argument that has been presented in these campaigns is that women represent women interests better. However, as Voet argues, descriptive representation gives no clear guidelines on how a representative in Parliament will act. Thus, one can only hope that a female Member of Parliament acts in matters related to women. The political representative elected on a quota does not necessarily feel obliged to do so (Voet, 1992:393). A second argument used in campaign on quotas for women is that as the democratic ideal of

participation in a representative assembly is valuable, the exclusion of women is not acceptable. Here, democracy is linked to having a share in the political decisions. Voet is sceptic towards this argumentation as she fears that politics may turn into an “administration of interests” (Voet, 1992:394). When it is *required* that women always need a say in politics, the essence of politics is lost. The definition of politics used by Voet is based on Hannah Arendt’s argumentation that politics is all about action. The representatives are supposed to struggle for acceptance, to fight for a place in government, as well as persuade other people of your political opinion (Voet, 1992:394). The third argument used in campaigns on quotas is that increased female representation will have a symbolic effect: More women in politics will lead to a greater acceptability of women in politics. Voet argues that this is not necessarily bound to happen. She argues that if these women have entered through a quota system, there is a possibility that there will be resentment among men. Moreover, it is not certain that women in society would be satisfied with the way women work in parliament. She further argues that if women are accepted, women can be made ‘harmless’: they may become ‘institutionalised’ and pacified. Voet prefers having unacceptable women (i.e. women who challenge a male dominated society) in important political positions rather than acceptable women who are of little threat to a male dominated society (Voet, 1992:395).

Voet’s scepticism towards descriptive representation has made her develop a three dimensional view on representation. The three dimensions are at the individual level, group level and a common good (parliamentary) level. At the individual level she does not offer any new idea on the concept of representation. Merely an attitude is presented that the individuals are to inform the representatives of their political ideas. For my purpose the most important level is the level of group interests as this corresponds to Pitkin’s “Acting For” representation: Representatives of a group are to act in the interests of the ones being represented. What is required by the women’s representatives is that they try bridging the gap between what they think is women’s best interests and the actual wishes of the majority of women. At the parliamentary level, Voet wants to see representation of opinions about the ‘common good’. Representatives in this body should be dedicated to represent the public interests and include some of their ideas into the ‘common good’ (Voet, 1992: 398-400).

Conclusively, descriptive representation conceptualised by Pitkin is a representation that is leaning towards microcosmic representation. The representatives in Parliament are to resemble the population. Hence, this representation says more about the population they represent than about the representatives themselves. However, Jane Mansbridge argues that the criticism directed against “Standing For” descriptive representation is based on a confusion of two forms of descriptive representation, namely microcosmic representation and selective descriptive representation. When advocating selective representation, Mansbridge does so within a context of marginalised disadvantaged groups. Given that the Parliament of Uganda has certain seats reserved for various groups, it is this selective form of descriptive representation that is implemented in Uganda. Mansbridge, in her elaboration of selective descriptive representation, seems to be of the opinion that the representatives with backgrounds from disadvantaged groups represent different perspectives. Accordingly, this selective descriptive representation comes rather close to Pitkin’s “Acting For” representation as the representatives are expected to articulate different positions and thus act for others.

3.3 “Acting for” representation

Pitkin’s “Acting For” representation is linked to the classic debate on delegate vs. trustee representatives. Is the representative supposed to act as a delegate for his constituents, i.e. as a delegate representative? Or is the representative free to act according to his/her opinions as a trustee representative?

Political representation offers a mechanism where citizens indirectly have a say in the society they are a part of. In democracies this is mostly done through elections. However after the representatives are elected to parliament it is not clear what role the representatives have and how they ought to act. When a representative behaves as a *delegate* representative, (s)he has to act in a way that reflects the voters opinion. Thus, the representative is a delegate from the constituency. According to some philosophers (e.g. James Mill) representation is not a value in itself, it is merely a technical necessity forced through by the development of the democracy since the constituencies do not have the possibility to gather its entire population. The important thing is to reflect the electorate opinions rather than reaching an agreement and conclusion based on compromises. The

representative is bound by its voters (Østerud et al. 1997: 209). In contrast, the *trustee* representative is free to act according to his/her opinion. The trustee representative are elected because (s)he is considered to be better qualified than the voters, and shall thus act according to what he believes is in the constituencies' interest. (S)he is not bound by the voters, but is free to act in accordance with his own principles. In this tradition, representation is seen as a value in itself because it reaches conclusions made by more qualified persons. The debate is considered to be among more competent men and women (Østerud et al. 1997:209).

The delegate representative model and the trustee representative model have to be considered ideal types. They are rarely found in its true form as this is seldom preferred by the voters. Accordingly, the perceptions we have about representatives today will fall somewhere in between. As Pennock says: "It seems clear, then, that the proper role of political representatives today is generally believed to fall somewhere between these poles". (Pennock,1979:325).

With regard to Pitkin's "Acting For" concept, the debate concerning delegate vs. trustee representatives becomes interesting. The delegate representative will argue that in a situation where you can no longer see constituents present in the activity, there are no representation. The trustee representative will say that in a situation where the representative are no longer acting, but the constituents are acting for themselves, the representative are merely carrying out orders (Pitkin, 1967: 153). Pitkin does not try to solve the dispute among scholars advocating the delegate model or the trustee model. Nonetheless, she aims at saying something about the *activity* of the representatives, and like Pennock her study indicates that the reality falls somewhere in between the two concepts. As she says: "the represented must be both present and not present. The representative must really act, be independent; yet the represented must be in some sense acting through him" (Pitkin, 1967:154).

The "Acting for" representation, in contrast to the "Standing for" representation, focuses on the representative's activity. Pitkin argues that before political decisions are taken in parliament there is a need for a substantive activity as political questions do not provide us with one 'correct' answer. She argues that political questions are questions about what

actions are to be taken, and accordingly involve both facts, as well as value commitments. Political life is also about deliberation and reaching compromises. It is within this context the “Acting For” perspective is important (Pitkin, 1967:212). Accordingly, the representative is not merely to “Stand For” the voters on the basis of resemblance and reflection, but also to “Act For” them in a responsible manner. As the representative has to be able to take independent action, conflicts may occur. If a conflict occurs, an explanation is called for, as the representatives should not persistently be found at odds with the ones (s)he is representing without good reasons (Pitkin, 1967:209). Consequently, the representative ought to act in such a way that no permanent conflict occurs between the representative and the ones who are being represented. As the representative are to act in the interests of his constituents, (s)he must normally avoid coming into conflicts with their wishes (Pitkin, 1967:166).

Also scholars advocating group-representation tend to look upon representatives “Acting For” a certain group. Thus most scholars advocating group representation give little support to descriptive representation as it gives no clear guidelines on how a representative ought to act (Mansbridge, 1999:630). Iris Marion Young, a scholar advocating group representation, argues that: “Having such a relationship of identity or similarity with constituents says nothing about what the representatives does” (Young, 1997: 354). When it is argued that the affirmative action women in Uganda really represent women, they are looked upon as representatives of a group. But can women be defined as a group with separate interests that need to be represented? As the affirmative action women in Uganda often are looked upon as representatives of women, it is necessary to examine this rather big question.

3.4 A separate female identity?

There are feminist scholars, for example Virginia Sapiro, who tend to regard women as a *group*, arguing that they have a right to be represented merely because they are women with distinct interest from men. Sapiro argues that women have a distinct position and a shared set of problems which can be characterised as a special interest. As many have done before her, Sapiro argues that there is division of labour in society and especially within the family. Regardless of women’s employment status, housework and child-care seem to be the responsibility of women (Sapiro, 1981:703). Moreover, she says that law and public

policy continue to create and reinforce differences between men and women in property and contract manner, educational opportunities, protection from violence and so on (Sapiro, 1981:704). When women are elected to political offices, Sapiro argues that they seldom have the intention of representing women per se. Nonetheless, she argues, in the practical political life, women are often forced into their roles as 'women' candidates. Their committee work, legislation and topics in Parliament tend to reflect traditional women's concerns (Sapiro, 1981:711). Hege Skjeie did a similar research in the Parliament of Norway. Her research, and previous elite polls and surveys in Norway, have shown that male politicians are concerned about economy, industry, transport and regional politics. Women, on the other hand, have been more concerned about social welfare, equality issues and environmental protection (Skjeie, 1991: 238-239). In parallel to this she found that the distribution of men and women in different Parliamentary committees showed that women MPs were overrepresented in "soft" committees, like Committees of Social Affairs and Committee of Church and Education. Male MPs were overrepresented in "hard" committees like Finance, Transport, and Foreign affairs (Skjeie, 1991:255).

There has been a debate among scholars on the difficulties and dangers of talking about women as one single group with separate interests. For instance, Elizabeth Spelman (1988: 133-160) has argued that the identity women have as women cannot be separated from other identities like race and class in order to uncover attributes women may have in common. When holding identities like race, class and nationality constant, common characteristics for women will not appear, as these identities are closely intervened. "Women" are something that females of the human species become, or are supposed to become, when they learn how to act, live and think in a certain way. What some female learns in one society can differ enormously from what females in other society learn. Thus, she very much considers the "women-part" of a person a social construction which is not possible to distinguish from the other identities like race and class. The "women-part" of a female does not reflect any common nature or essence independent from other categories like race and class (Spelman, 1988:134). In contrast to Sapiro, who argues that women have a right to be represented as women, Kymlicka argues that women may experience difficulties in representing women as a single group because women have different interests founded in identities like class, ethnicity, race and so on. (Kymlicka, 1995:140).

Given the theoretical outlook above, some interesting events could be seen in the 2001 election in Zambia. The Zambian women's movement had laid a strategy to promote equal representation and participation for women in decision-making organs. A Zambian Women Manifest was adopted to clearly outline the issues of gender equality. The manifesto was considered to be a very important lobbying tool in the election campaign. A conference was organised in order to bring more women into politics, and to agree on common women's agenda for the elections. At a following meeting all women candidates were invited to write their name, constituency and party affiliation on a list. From the list it soon became clear that several women would face each other in the electoral campaign. Some of the aspiring candidates were asked to withdraw, and leave room for only one woman in each constituency. The women's movement considered it to be a waste of money to give support to several women who would compete in the same constituency (Bull, 2002). This example illustrates that the identity the aspiring female candidates had as candidates from political parties, prevailed over the identity they had as female candidates. Moreover, this example may also implicitly illustrate that it is not given that women will "Act For" women if a conflict occurs between the different identities a female has, e.g. as a representative as a woman and as a representative of a political party.

3.5 "Acting For" women

As indicated above, there is a dilemma as to whether or not women have distinct interests that needs to be represented. This dilemma is tried solved by Young (1997) in her article *Deferring group representation*. She defends the view that certain groups, like women, have a right to be represented. She argues that women as a group have been and continue to be excluded from decision-making powers; at the same time they continue to suffer social and economic disadvantages. However, as she argues that women "differ so vastly along so many dimensions that it seems absurd to suggest that women who might attain positions as representatives can legitimately speak for other women" (Young:1997:351).

Young holds the view that representation shall be conceptualised as a *differentiated relationship*, and like Pitkin in her "Acting For" conceptual construction, Young argues that representation is neither about the attributes of the representative, nor about the attributes of the constituent. Hence, in this differentiated relationship, it is important to

notice that the representative does not stand for someone or refer to a substance or essence of opinion or interest of opinion. By conceptualising representation as a differentiated relationship, it is recognised that there is a difference between the representative and the constituent. The representative is not to speak *as* the constituents would do due to their absence; they are rather supposed to speak *for* its constituents. According to Young, representation must be looked upon as a process evolving around concepts like authorisation and accountability. Young argues that representation requires a certain process of authorisation that establishes a relationship between the representative and the ones being represented. During the process of authorisation, the representative is establishing a relationship with the constituency. In this process of authorisation the constituency will form itself in the light of issues people believe in and find important. Ideally, in this process it shall be a broad and all inclusive discussion on the actions the representative shall take when elected as a representative, as well as on the content of the policy agenda. According to democratic norms, the process of authorisation shall include free and fair elections as this constitute the relationship between the constituency and the representative. The representative ought to act with a view that she will be held accountable in the future, i.e. have to answer for speak and actions. Representation is a process that refers backward to the process of authorisation (i.e. when a candidate is elected as a representative) and forward to the moment of accountability (i.e. when a candidate are held accountable). This dynamic relationship between the representative and the ones being represented enables them both to judge each other (Young, 1997: 358-359). This is in line with Pitkin's "Acting For" representation, when she argues that the representative is supposed to act independently, yet be held responsible whenever there is a conflict between the representative and the constituent.

Young distinguishes between three types of representation: interest, opinion, and perspectives. Representation of *interest* is well known in various political literatures. Young defines interests as "what affects or is important to the life prospects of individuals, or the goal oriented success of organisation" (Young, 1997:363) Individuals or a collective may have an interest in realising an end they have set for themselves. Interests are self-referring and differ from ideas, principles and values. Values, ideas and principles may help define the ends; it is the interest, however, which defines the means for achieving those ends. In contrast, representation of *opinions* are representation of ideas, principles and

values a person has in which (s)he bases her judgment on how things ought to be. *Opinions* are usually represented by political parties (Young, 1997: 362-364). However, with regard to group representation and the “Acting For” representation, the most important representation is the representation of *perspectives*. Representation of perspectives is a representation which takes as the entry point the way people perceive issues and events due to their structural position in society. In most societies there are structural social positions that have cultural and practical meanings for the way people interact with each other, and the status they have in society. In some societies like Uganda, women and men have different structural positions in the society that enable them to represent a certain perspective.

By applying Young’s argumentation on women, it can be argued that women have a right to be represented because they represent a different perspective (i.e. an experience, history, and social knowledge) derived from their social position in society. Like in Uganda, due to the division of labour in society, it may be argued that women have different experiences and social knowledge than men, and accordingly represent different perspectives. This has led to a call for a better representation of women in various political bodies. The representation of these perspectives will also increase the social knowledge so that fair and wise decisions are reached. Thus, it is not argued like Sapiro does, that women represent distinct interest from men. Rather, they represent a social perspective that enables them to promote certain starting point in discussions, ask certain questions, report certain kinds of experience, as well as expressing a certain way of regarding the positions of others (Young, 1997:366). In other words, according to Young, women shall be elected to Parliament not merely because they are women (and thus reflect the descriptive characteristic of gender as the case is in “Standing For” descriptive representation), but also because they contribute to the debates by bringing in a different view that they have obtained from their structural position in society. Accordingly, these women have a right to be represented because they are representatives of a group with different social perspectives enabling them to identify and “Act For” women in a different manner than men.

3.6 Applying concepts of representation

Pitkin has a clear separation between her two categories “Standing For” and “Acting For” representation. These two categories will be used as tools in order to develop a better

insight into the concept of representation as they tell us something about the representatives' behaviour in Parliament. For my purpose they will tell me something about how women elected on women's ticket are behaving; whether or not they are acting specifically on behalf of women.

Taken into account that Pitkin's theory is a western theory written in the 1960s, a problem with time and place occurs when applying her concepts on Uganda. Political theory has developed a lot since then, and it should be natural to assume that Pitkin's theory would be somehow 'out of date'. Moreover, the concepts have been developed in a western context, and Africa and Uganda was most likely far from Pitkin's consciousness when she developed these ideas. However, her concepts still reaches attentions from various scholars, like Mansbridge and Voet, which again confirms the notion that Pitkin's conceptualisation of representation is still relevant. Thus, the concepts generate new understandings of the concept of representation. The dichotomy between "Standing For" and "Acting For" representation is also relevant in the Ugandan context when examining what kind of representatives the affirmative action women in Uganda are.

When Mansbridge argues for more women in decision-making bodies she starts with Pitkin's "Standing For" descriptive representation. Mansbridge makes a distinction between microcosmic and selective descriptive representation. When arguing for the latter she comes close to what Pitkin refers to as "Acting For" representation. Voet, like Mansbridge, has Pitkin's "Standing For" descriptive representation as a starting point. In contrast to Mansbridge, however, Voet fears that when women are accepted as political leaders, they are also made harmless, in the sense that they do not challenge the male dominated society. Voet concludes her critics of descriptive representation by introducing a three-dimensional view of representation, where the second view, group interest, is very close to Pitkin's "Acting For" representation. One scholar, who is promoting the "Acting For" perspective, is Iris Marion Young. Young claims that groups, and in this case women, shall be given representation in decision-making bodies as they represent a different perspective than men due to their structural position in society.

In my analysis on female representation in Uganda, I will argue that there are three different ways of conceptualising female representation in Uganda: Either as "Acting For"

representatives, “Standing For” *descriptive* representatives, or “Standing For” *symbolic* representatives. According to official documents like the Ugandan Constitution, as well as the Parliament Election Act, the affirmative action women in Uganda are elected as representatives of their respective districts. Despite the fact that they are officially referred to as District Women Representatives, they are not elected to represent women. With reference to Pitkin’s dichotomy between “Standing For” and “Acting For” representatives, they are categorised as “Standing For” *descriptive* representatives. Formally, the affirmative action women are merely elected to Parliament because of their gender in order to represent all the people in the district. If they were supposed to act for women in particular, they would be “Acting For” representatives. There is, however, an uncertainty, both among the voters and female MPs themselves, about who they actually represent. The separate elections for women create a ‘double’ representation in Parliament: various districts are represented with ‘regular’ MPs from the various counties within the districts, as well as one District Women Representative. This has led some to assume that the District Women Representatives represent women in particular. Furthermore, given that the reserved seats in Parliament are frequently being looked upon as a ‘gift’ given to the NRM from women, combined with the fact that the affirmative action women are elected from pre-dominantly Movement friendly constituencies, it might be possible to regard the affirmative action women as representatives who are expected to “Act As” Movementists in Parliament. Thus, they may be regarded as “Standing For” *symbolic* representatives. Where in the polarity between “Standing For” and “Acting For” representation do we find the affirmative action women?

Chapter 4: Women's elections

4.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the separate women's elections and aims at getting closer to an answer as to who women represent and it will be done within the theoretical framework described above. Figuring out who the affirmative action women represent can give an insight to important aspects of the Ugandan no-party system. It may also be important for understanding the democratic development in Uganda. Before the NRM take-over in 1986, women in Uganda were prevented from representation in Parliament, most likely because a male dominated political culture made it hard for women to participate in formal politics. Has the no-party system in Uganda turned into a 'woman-friendly' political system which recognises that women have specific interest that must be represented in Parliament?

There will also be a section on the effect the separate women's elections have on the regular election, aiming at revealing why most female candidates choose to be elected from the affirmative action seats, and why some choose to be elected from the 'regular' county seats, and whether or not this has any consequences on female representation.

The first part focuses on problems related to 'double' representation as this has led to a confusion concerning who these women represent: the district in general or women in particular. This can be a problem for the voters as it is not clear who the representative they are electing to Parliament actually represent. Can the male voters, as well as female voters, regard the District Women Representatives as representatives elected to represent both sexes? Or do they elect a representative who is merely supposed to represent women? Moreover, this confusion is also a problem for the women themselves as it creates an uncertainty on how to define their role in Parliament: are they obligated to concentrate on matters that specifically focus on women? Some of my respondents²⁰ argued that most people in the districts look upon them as representatives of women. This did not, however, prevent men from approaching them in their constituencies. It was my general impression that women elected from the affirmative action seats found this frustrating as they did not know their exact role as a representative.

²⁰ Interview, Kampala: 05.08.2002, 13.08.2002, 28.08.2002. This was also confirmed by Tamale, 1999:78

As one of my respondents stated:

“People look at you as a woman representative: the person accountable to the women in the district. But [...] when you go the constituencies, you do not face women only. The men are coming because they voted for you, the youth are coming because they voted for you. That is a very, very big problem in this representation of women” (Interview, Kampala, 05.08. 2002).

When looking into who affirmative action women in Uganda actually represent the entry-point will be the perceptions female MPs have of themselves. Do they define themselves as “Standing For” descriptive representatives (i.e. representatives of the district) or “Acting For” representatives (i.e. representatives of women)?

Furthermore, I will provide alternative explanations as to who the affirmative action women represent, deduced from two factors. First, most women seem to interpret the reserved seats as ‘gift’ to women in Uganda from the NRM. This can make it difficult for them to challenge the Government as they are represented because the NRM gave them an opportunity. The interpretation of the seats as a ‘gift’ is also emphasised by President Museveni arguing that the affirmative action seats are a result of a Government introduced polity. Second, as most women are elected by Electoral Colleges consisting mainly of officials known to be strong supporters of the current regime, the affirmative action women may be represented to increase governmental support in Parliament. By having introduced mechanisms which makes it difficult for women to challenge the Government on matters important for the district in general or women in particular, women are neither “Standing For” descriptive representatives, nor “Acting For” representatives, but rather representatives that are supposed to “Act As” Movementists in Parliament. Subsequently, they come close to being what Pitkin’s refers to as symbolic representatives.

The second part of this chapter also focuses on the separate women’s election. More specifically it focuses on the effect the separate women’s elections have on the regular elections. Given that very few women compete in the ‘regular’ election, a sharp distinction between the regular election and the women’s elections has developed. Why did this happen? What consequences does this have on female representation?

A majority of my respondent argued they did not want to stay on the affirmative action seats for more than two or three terms. In the Constitutional Assembly an amendment was proposed to limit the number a woman can stay on the women's ticket to one or two terms. The argument stated was that the affirmative action seats were supposed to be a training ground preparing women to run in the 'regular' elections (Tamale, 1999:85). This section will be inspired by the affirmative action debate and aims to indicate whether or not the political culture in Uganda has become more women friendly, in terms of 'allowing' women to compete in the regular election. This shows the effect the reserved seats have on the 'regular' election, and in a broader context; the overall political culture. Ideally, it can be argued that a truly democratic culture has not developed until all groups in society can be said to be true participants in elections– including women. Moreover, this section aims at telling us something about the effect the separate women's elections have on representation. I will argue that the separate women's election reinforces the notion that men are superior to women. Furthermore, I argue that the NRM Government has an interest in continuing to elect women from women's seats increasing governmental support in Parliament.

Before focusing on the two parts, a description of the Ugandan no-party system is in place. The all-inclusive no-party system is important to take into account when explaining *why* women are secured representation in Parliament.

4.1 *The all-inclusive Movement system*

The NRM has suspended political parties in Uganda and calls itself as a Movement that is all-inclusive. The idea that NRM includes all parts and interests of various segments of the society may have increased the possibilities for women to enter “smoothly” into political life. The awareness that it is the all-inclusive no-party system which secures female representation, can be illustrated by looking at one woman representatives' response to the press when asked to give her statement on the view of opening up to political parties in Uganda :

“To me and my people, we view them (parties) as having been hierarchical in nature (with the top-bottom or trickle down approach), elitist, male dominated and have not allowed the participation of women and the masses. After all men started them all” (Monitor, 04.05,2003).

By placing a special emphasis on women and their contribution to the Ugandan society, NRM may have secured support from a very big constituency. Nonetheless, it has been argued that the reverse side of the coin is that only loyal women supporting the NRM are elected to Parliament.

4.1.1 Securing representation of various groups

As pointed out, women are not the only group that has been secured representation in Parliament. The workers, youth, army and persons with disabilities are referred to as special interest groups, while women are solely referred to as District Women Representatives. The special interest groups are referred to as representatives *of* their group, while District Women Representatives are officially elected representatives *for* the district (Parliamentary Election Act, 2001, Part V)..

The different groups in Parliament are secured representation by the NRM for various reasons: **The workers** got seats (5 representatives) in Parliament because they are considered to be a force in any country's development and accordingly the NRM recognises their role (NRM achievements 1986-1990:4). The **Youth** (5 seats, including one woman youth representative), which constitute as much as three quarters of Uganda's population, are represented in Parliament because they have potential for dynamism, bravery and imagination that they shall be credited for (NRM achievements 1986-1990:4). The third group special interest group represented in Parliament is the **Uganda People Defence Forces** (10 representatives), are represented in Parliament as a vanguard of the revolution where they have played an historical role in guarding the people and their property (NRM achievements 1986-1990:4). The final special interest group in the Parliament is the **Persons with Disabilities** (5 representatives), who are represented in Parliament because they are considered a marginalised group.

The special interest groups are elected indirectly through an Electoral College consisting of members of their own national organisations: The workers are elected by the National Organisations of Trade Unions, the youth are elected from the District Youth Councils, the representatives Uganda People Defence Forces are elected by members from different army

divisions²¹, while the Persons with Disabilities are elected by members from the National Union of Disabled People (Petersen 2001, Nordenson and Sæbønes, 2001:19, Parliamentary Elections Act 2001. part V).

The NRM considers **women** to be a force that must be represented in Parliament due to their numerical strength, role and position they play in the homes and in the nation at large (NRM achievements 1986-1990:4). Jane Mansbridge offers various contexts in relation to which groups ought to be represented in a descriptive political system. Past discrimination is one of them. This seems to be recognised by the NRM leadership:

In the past, Women's position and importance in the political life of Uganda had hitherto been neglected. This explains, probably why the country had been economically backward and politically unstable." (NRM achievements 1986-1990:4)

Moreover, it is also recognised that women have not been given the same opportunity as men to take part in the political life. As Museveni argues in his election Manifesto: "although women are a big political force, as a result of cultural barriers and our level of social development, few of them can compete ably with men in an open election" (Museveni election manifesto, 2001:99). Given that the affirmative action women not are regarded as representative for women in particular, they can be nominated (and elected) by both men and women. Furthermore, given that political parties are suspended in Uganda, the aspiring candidates are elected to Parliament on individual merit and not nominated by any political parties. In order to be a qualified candidate in parliamentary elections, (s)he must be a citizen of Uganda, a registered voter and have completed a minimal formal education. According to the Parliamentary Election Act, the candidates shall be nominated by at least two voters on the day of nomination. The two voters shall among other thing, bring with them a paper with the name and signature of at least ten people residing in the constituency the candidates seeks to be elected from. The nomination paper shall be accompanied by a nomination fee of 2 million Ugandan shilling²² (New Vision, 22.03.2001) (Parliamentary Election Act, section 5).

²¹ In the election of representatives from Uganda People Defence Forces, the nomination of candidates, campaign activities and determination of who shall sit in the Electoral College is secret, and not open for to the press, or other observant (Petersen, 2001:20).

²² This is about 1000 US\$. It has been suggested by the President that the nomination fee shall be reduced from 2 million shilling to 200 000shilling. He argues that the fee of 2 m shilling is too high, and is likely to cut of many aspirants (New Vision, 22.03.2001)

4.1.2 Problems related to representation of groups

One would assume that women in Uganda are divided by different interests, like class and ethnicity. For example, Kasfir (2000:106) argues that differences in class interest have prevented the youth from mobilising themselves in a strong and united manner (Kasfir,2000:106). However, in chapter 2, I pointed out that women's organisations in civil society consisted of different ethnic and religious groups, thus raising themselves above the different ethnic and class divisions that prevailed in the society. In the 1950s and 1960s the women's organisations in Uganda emphasised minimizing differences between ethnic races, religions and political affiliation. The organisations made a point of including all ethnic races in their institutions. This is something the women's movement in Uganda still regards as important. Leaders of national women organisations have emphasised the importance of including different ethnic and religious groups as well as women from different classes (Tripp, 2000: 128). Women appear to have managed to organise themselves in different organisations despite religious, ethnic and class differences.

Nevertheless, it is natural to assume that women represented in Parliament represent one socio-economic class. As described below, running an electoral campaign can be expensive for many aspiring female candidates. Thus, the financial expectations the candidates face during election time may have an impact on the *nature* of female representation. Given that the affirmative action women have been looked upon as representatives of women, it is important to take into account that it is most likely women from one socio-economic class who are elected to Parliament. As indicated by Kymlicka (1995:140) rich women may have difficulties in legitimately claiming to speak for poor women. Each group has its own sub-group with their own distinct experiences and characteristics.

4.1.3 Financing election campaigns

William Muhumuza (1997) studied the Ugandan Presidential and Parliamentary election in 1996 and found that the amount of money spent by candidates during election times reflected the electoral outcome. The voters' choice was influenced by money, material contributions or promise of material benefits. While Cabinet ministers used Government resources which they donated to various community projects, others gave the impression that once they were elected to Parliament they would get ministerial appointments

(Muhumza 1997:168-175). Corruption appears to be widespread in Uganda. In 1999, Transparency International classified Uganda as the world's 11th most corrupt country. Furthermore, Kiiza (2002:15) argues that "right from Amin's dictatorship to the current regime, patrimonial, rather than academic merit, has been the basis for public service recruitment and promotion".

When I asked my respondents whether or not they wanted to seek re-election in 2006, finance seemed to be an important factor for most of them. The no-party systems' strong emphasis on individual merit in the Ugandan electoral campaign also implies that the candidates pay for themselves as they do not receive financial support from a political party. Nonetheless, it is a well-known fact within the Ugandan society that some favourable candidates get support from the Movement Secretariat. Despite the fact that candidates are supposed to be elected solely on individual merit, the President and his supporters made it very clear that certain movement candidates were favoured, and the candidates favoured by the Movement also received logistical and other support (Petersen, 2001:2). One of my respondents, who have been a Member of Parliament several terms, acknowledged that she had received funds from the Movement "the campaigns are very expensive. We did get a little support from the movement, but[...]if you are going to give pictures to everybody who wants pictures of you, and they want to have them on the houses, on their cars. So, it [the campaign] is very expensive" (Interview, Kampala 13, 08.2002).

By giving support to candidates in favour of the Movement, the notion of individual merit is compromised, and the incumbent regime will have a better chance of winning the election.

As one of my respondents stated:

"the machinery in place is such that we cannot fight the force of Government in terms of corruption, the money that is released in the election, although the Movement is suppose to be non-partisan [...].But, when it comes to elections the Government has always powered money to support certain candidates who are known to be movement" (Interview, Kampala 12.08.2002).

Despite the fact that the Movement finances favourable candidates, an electoral campaign includes expenditures for the candidates; both for the ones who receive funding and for those who manage on their own. The expenditure, however, seems to depend on what kind

of campaigns the candidates run. One of my female respondent, claimed to have spent only 5000US\$ in her electoral campaign (Interview, Kampala 05.08.2002), while another one spent three times as much in the 2001 election – her third electoral term. The first time she ran for Parliament she did not spend any money since she came unopposed. The second time her Electoral College had grown from forty members to about 10.000 (due to the changing of composition of the Electoral College as stipulated in the Parliamentary Election Act from 1996), and she used about 15000 US\$. In addition she mortgaged her house, minibus and car (Interview, Kampala 06.08.2002). One of the biggest expenditures in electoral campaigns seems to be transport and fuel²³. Taken into consideration that most aspiring female candidates have a bigger constituency to cover (as mentioned, one district have on average three-to four counties which is the constituency to the regular MP), they are at risk of having to spend more money on transport than their male counterparts. Furthermore, generally speaking women in Uganda earn less than their male counterpart. The women in Uganda contribute to only 20% of formal salaried employment. Statistics also show that women constitute the majority of the poor, particularly in rural areas, where 90% of the Ugandans live (Kiiza, 2002:12). This indicates that the amount of money used during electoral campaigns prevent a majority of women to run for election. Most likely, a majority of women would face difficulties even paying the nomination fee of 2 million shilling. This gives credence to Kiiza who argues that women elected into the top political bodies are elite women and “that women’s emancipation cannot be substantiated merely on the evidence that it advances the more practical “class” interest of elite women” (Kiiza: 2002:16).

4.2 Standing For, Acting For, Acting As

“The district woman MP does not represent women, neither is she a representative of anybody”

(Vice- President Kazibwe quoted from New Vision 29th March, 2001)

The statement above came from the Vice-President during a debate in Parliament on the Parliamentary Elections Bill²⁴. Vice-President Kazibwe further argued that it is the directly elected MPs who represent the constituencies, while the affirmative action women are

²³ Interview Kampala, 05.08.2002, 13.08.2002, 14.08.2002, 15.08.2002, 20.08.2002, 28.08.2002

²⁴ This Bill will be looked into later in this chapter

exclusively role models. However, she further stated that women MPs should concentrate on sensitising Local Councils officials and directly elected MPs on gender issues (New Vision, 29.03.2001). This example illustrates the confusion that prevails regarding who the affirmative action women represent. While the Vice-President seems to be of the opinion that the affirmative action women are not representatives of women in particular, she still argues that the affirmative action women are supposed to sensitise other politicians on gender issues.

The statement of the Vice-President shows that the “Standing For” descriptive model as implemented in Uganda gives no clear indication as to the affirmative women really represent. In order to get closer to this issue, I will focus on the perception the affirmative action women have of themselves. Furthermore, I shall contribute to the debate as to who the affirmative action women represent by giving alternative perspectives. As indicated previously, affirmative action women in Uganda have, by critical voices²⁵, been looked upon as representatives who are expected to “Act As” Movementist in Parliament. By giving alternative explanation on who they represent, I have also contributed to the theoretical debate on representation by showing the limitations on the “Standing For” descriptive model as implemented in Uganda.

4.3 *Female legislators own interpretation*

The section below is organised into three parts. First, I focus on women who claimed to be representatives of the district. Second, I focus on women who claimed that they had an obligation to “Act For” women in particular. Lastly, I focus on female legislators’ connection to women organisations in civil society as this can tell us something about women’s background, and may consequently support the two previous explanations.

4.3.1 Representatives of the district

Among the women holding the affirmative action seats, when asked about who they considered themselves to represent, the almost unison respond were that they are representatives of the district. Given that the Electoral Colleges, from which they are

²⁵ Interview, Kampala 05.08, 2002. Byanyima, 2003.

elected from, consists of both men and women, they found it hard to represent women only. As one of my respondents said:

“I think we perceive ourselves as being elected by the district and for the district. Because, the idea of having women elected is that we need to increase the number of women at this level. Not that these women only came to articulate issues of women.” (Interview, Kampala 29.08.2002).

This is an indication saying that she is elected to be a representative of the district. She considers herself to be elected to parliament because it is necessary to increase the number of women in parliament. Moreover, she clearly spells out that she has no special obligation to talk for women specifically. She is not alone in claiming this view; six of my 13 woman representative’s respondents supported this view, and followed her line of argumentation. In the word of Pitkin; for these women it is about being someone, rather than doing something (Pitkin, 1967:61).

The signals from official authorities are mixed and give no clear indication as to who women are accountable to. In an early NRM publication, summarising the achievements of the Movement from 1986-1990, it is stated that “Given a place in the supreme organ of the State, Women can now forge ahead in dealing effectively with laws that affect their well-being and interest”²⁶. In this statement it is acknowledged that the women are “essential” in order to enhance legislation for women. The dominant official view, however, is that women are supposed to be held accountable to all the people in the district – not only women. The President and NRM have not wanted to single out the affirmative action women as a representative of women. As Tamale (1999) argues: “the NRM “allows” women to partake of the political cake: to participate in decision-making, but not to represent women as an interest group; not to carry special responsibility towards women” (Tamale, 1999:74).

Women who claim to represent the district in general, argue that the affirmative action measures are introduced to increase the number of female representatives in parliament. With reference to the dichotomy between “Standing For” descriptive representation and “Acting For” representation, they consider themselves as representatives who are merely

²⁶ NRM achievements 1986-1990:4

elected due to their ‘resemblance and reflection’ they share with women in Uganda. They are standing for them as women, but with little or no obligation to act for them.

4.3.2 Representatives of women

Regardless of the fact that a majority among my respondents argued that they represented the district, some women argued that they had a special obligation to focus on women in particular. After having said that they represent the district, some of my respondents followed up by saying that as representatives elected from the affirmative action ticket they were supposed to have a special focus on women²⁷. One woman summarised her position in Parliament:

“We represent the district. [...] We are voted in by both men and women, so we represent everybody. We are not just specifically for women. However, as a woman member we came [...] to look for gender issues” (Kampala, Interview, 16.08.2002).

The statement above indicates that she considers herself as a representative of the district, but are, nonetheless, supposed to have a special ‘eye’ on women, given that she was elected to the affirmative action seats. According to Prof. Victoria Mwaka (woman MP from Luwero district) it is common sense that the affirmative action women should advance the concerns of women in their district, especially the poor women in the villages. She added that their task is to coordinate with the regular MPs ensuring that the different district programs cater for women’s need (New Vision 24.04.2001). Nevertheless, it was only *one* of my respondents, a District Woman Representative who asserted that she was elected to represent women specifically. She argued that affirmative action is all about representing and enhancing legislation of the group you represent, and this is also the group you are accountable too (Interview, Kampala 20.08.2002). Women who feel obligated to specifically focus on matters related to women can be regarded as representatives that “Act For” women in particular.

Also some colleagues in Parliament argued that the affirmatives action women should represent women in particular. Not just elite women, but also women who are poor. For instance, one male MP argued that female legislators needed to focus more on the majority

²⁷ 5 of my respondents said this explicitly: Interview, Kampala: 06.08.2002, 15.08. 2002, 16.08.2002, 28.08.2002, 03.09.2002

of the women in Uganda, those who are poor and illiterate. They should not only discuss women's rights for women who are already well off (Interview, Kampala, 10.09.2002). Moreover, as one of my respondents argued: "Most women will use the popular language that they claim to represent [all] women. The problem is that once they get in power, they represent women from their own class. They become elitist" (Interview, Kampala, 31.07.2002). The expectation from some voters, journalists (New Vision, 25.06.2001) and legislators, that affirmative action women shall represent women in particular, was also confirmed by Tamale (1999:81). Furthermore, among the male respondent Tamale (1999) interviewed, none claimed to have an agenda on representing men. She argues that this is not surprising since men as a group are not as marginalised in the Ugandan society (Tamale, 1999:81). It would not be "politically correct" to represent the interests of a group which historically have been dominant and privileged. As one of male respondent put it: "Really, her [affirmative action women] single most important job is to represent the interest of the women [...] because men are at advantages anyway. [...] Women are at a very dangerous level of being disadvantaged in the society in terms of equality". (Interview, Kampala 10.09.2002). As women are often left with the sole responsibility of child care, supplying water and so on, one would assume that the poor socio-economic situation in the country is even harder for women. Consequently and also argued by Ahikire (2001a:20), women legislators are required to perform a more or less missionary role of liberating women from their poor socio-economic situation.

There has been a debate in Uganda on whether or not the District Women Representatives should be elected by women only. During the debate of the Parliamentary Election Bill²⁸, this came up as an alternative. However, this view was unpopular among the members of the women's caucus and was soon rejected (Interview, Kampala 10.08.2002). Most likely, it was rejected because it is considered a 'stigma' to only focus on women issues. Tamale (1999:81) found that some women might have had difficulties in claiming to represent women's issues in fear of being labelled as narrow-minded and unable to measure up with their male colleagues. Accordingly one of my respondents, who focused on matters relating to women during her electoral campaign, found it necessary to defend her focus on women. She argued that: "I will tell the community that my focus [women] was central to the

²⁸ This bill will be discussed in the second part of this chapter

community. If I did something for the women, I would have done it for the whole community” (Interview, Kampala, 03.09.2002).

So, given that some of the affirmative action women claimed to focus on women in particular, the representation in Parliament is, to a certain extent, leaning towards group representation of women. As can be recalled from the theoretical chapter, implicit in the notion of group representation rests an idea that some groups act for their group in a better manner than others would do. Some of my respondents admitted that by having increased the number of women represented in Parliament, certain interests will now be taken care of. For instance one of my respondents noticed that in her district ten years ago, there were health clinics, but no maternity room. Implicitly she argued that this had changed when more women were elected to Parliament (Interview, Kampala 14.08.2002). Yet, another one of my respondents worked for improving the health units where the mothers could take their children for immunisation (Interview, Kampala 16.08.2002). It can very well be argued that these are issues that relates to women’s biological role. Referring to I.M Young, these women represent a *perspective* on matters their male colleagues may have trouble doing as they have not been in the same structural positions in the society. Moreover, one of my respondents, the director of FOWODE (Forum for Women in Democracy) considered the representation of women as an opportunity for women to be heard – voices that until then had not been heard (Interview, Kampala, 04.09.2002). Consequently, and in line with the argumentation of Young, female representation allows for a more just outcome of the debate in Parliament – fairness, it can be argued, is institutionalised in a context where women are normally dominated by men.

4.3.3 Civil society and female legislators

There is yet another aspect of the female representation that is of importance when studying female representation in the Parliament of Uganda, namely the female legislators’ strong connection to NGOs focusing on women. Among my respondents, 13 out of 20 women had been members of a women’s organisation before being elected to parliament. Some were members of national women’s organisations like FOWODE (Forum for Women in Democracy), while others were active in women’s organisations operating in a smaller geographical area. For instance, three of my respondents who worked as lawyers before entering parliament, had a history in FIDA - U (The international Federation of Women

Lawyers, the Ugandan branch). FIDA aims to assist women, children and other indigent groups to attain effective legal protection²⁹. Also, some women occupying ministerial posts in Parliament were active in women's rights organisations before they were elected to Parliament. For instance the Minister for Ethics and Integrity, Miria Matembe, was one of the founding members of Action for Development, ACFODE, a leading NGO in Uganda. She even held the position as chair person from 1989 to 1993 (Matembe, 2002:119).

All of my respondents who had a background from the Ugandan women's movement were still in contact with their respective organisations. For example, one woman said she used women's organisations to get hold of information and literature. They also called her to hold courses on women and leadership (Interview, Kampala 05.08.2002). Given the close ties between many women MPs and NGOs working with matters related to women, I find it natural to assume that they have a special interest in issues considered important for women also in Parliament.

Moreover, as pointed out in chapter 2, the women's movement in Uganda includes women from all socio-economic levels, different religious and ethnic groups. Additionally, and in relation to this Goetz (2002: 559) has argued that the NRM has made an effort in constructing women as a non-sectarian political constituency: they are the model of the non-ethnic citizenship which rests as a foundation for the intentionally all-inclusive Movement system. Moreover, it is natural to assume that most female legislators are somehow 'forced' to rise above interests limited to one ethnic group, religion and so on due to the size of their constituencies. Compared to the regular MPs who represent a smaller constituency, it is natural to assume that the districts women are elected from are more cultural diverse constituencies.

4.3.4 Summary

Above I have indicated that it is not given that affirmative action women merely 'Stand For' women as they are elected to do. The 'double' representation and the expectation from some voters, journalists and colleagues that the affirmative action women are to represent women in particular, have led some women to regard themselves as representatives of

²⁹ Information found at <http://www.wougnet.org/Profiles/fidau.html>

women. Moreover, a majority of women I interviewed, regardless of whether or not they focused on women's issues, have been, or still are, a member of a women organisation. Consequently, it is natural to assume that women's interest will be represented in Parliament as memberships in these organisations may be regarded as a manifestation of interest in matters related to women.

It is hard to explain, and understand, why NRM appears to be so reluctant to single out woman representatives as representatives of women. There is nevertheless, one factor that may bring us closer to an explanation. By singling them out as representatives of women, it is natural to assume that affirmative action women would have even closer ties to the women's organisation than today. Despite the fact that the women's movement in Uganda is known to support the Movement political system, they also have an autonomy which has made them able to criticise the Government in issues considered important for women. As will be pointed out in chapter 5, the women's movement in Uganda has challenged the Government on issues considered to be of importance for a majority of Ugandan women.

Regardless of whether or not the affirmative action women are "Standing For" descriptive representatives or representatives who "Act For" women, scholars promoting theories concerning descriptive representation, as well as group representation, have a common interest in compensating for factors preventing a relatively equal representation of men and women in Parliament. In Uganda a pre-dominantly male dominated political culture would most likely have prevented women from being elected to parliament, if it wasn't for the women's elections. The unique way of electing women to Parliament in Uganda prompts the development of alternative explanations as to whom the affirmative action women represent.

4.4 Alternative perceptions regarding who the women represent

As mentioned in chapter 1, women in Uganda may also be looked as representatives expected to "Act As" Movementists in Parliament. There are two main reasons behind this. First, the affirmative action seats are looked upon as a 'gift' given to women from the NRM leadership. Second, the Electoral Colleges which elects the affirmative action women consist mainly of councillors who are part of the Movement system.

4.4.1 Affirmative action seats: Initiated from below or above?

Aili Mari Tripp argues that the seats reserved for women can be traced back to a strong women's movement, and its fight for including women in political life. Even before the NRM gained official power, women started lobbying and pressured the NRM leadership to grant women with leadership positions. Shortly after 1986, 20 leaders of the National Council of Women, the leading women's organisation ACFODE (Action for Development), as well as other NGOs, gave a memo to the President asking for women to be represented in the leadership of the country. Museveni asked the delegation to identify female leaders, and so they did. Many of these recommendations were adopted, including the appointments of nine ministers (Tripp, 2000:70).

Tripp's view has been challenged by Tamale (1999: 90) who argues that, despite the fact that there were women's organisations demanding higher female representation in politics, there was not a significant pressure group to effectively pursue this agenda. She argues that: "Obviously women were as ill prepared for this new task as men would be if asked to overnight to tend homes" (Tamale, 1999:91). She argues that due to the absence of a strong and coherent group, women were not able to mobilise politically and fill the newly created seats. Tamale found that in the first election to the National Resistance Council (NRC) (parliament) in 1989, over 90% of the women who were elected to the 34 reserved seats, were approached by elder men in their districts asking them to join politics (Tamale, 1991:91). Tamale's view about the reserved seats being a result of NRM policy, rather than a strong women's movement, was also supported by a majority of my respondents who answered that they considered the NRM as the most important factor on the subject on how and why the affirmative action seats came about. They argued that a strong women's movement alone could not push for reserved seats in Parliament, and a supportive Government was crucial for the women's movement to pursue its agenda. When asked to give their view on the origin of why Uganda has so many women in Parliament, one of my respondents stated: "I think it is because the Government introduced affirmative action, though with some help from the women's organisations. [...] I think the President himself had it in his mind to bring women on board" (Interview, Kampala, 20.08.2002). Women in Parliament seem to appreciate the efforts NRM claim to have made in favour of women. One of my respondents said that: "as much as it [the Government] hasn't done everything,

it has done quite a lot to empower [...] and uplift the women (Interview, Kampala 16.08.2002). Another of my respondent was even stronger in her appreciation of the NRM Government when she stated that "I must say that the Government has really gone out of its way to ensure that women are in places where they can say things and be heard and take decisions"(Interview, Kampala, 13.08.2002). Nevertheless, it is necessary to emphasise that some of my female respondents argued that the strong and vibrant women's movement was the most important reason why women had been secured seats in Parliament. As one of my respondent argued: "It came [the affirmative action seats] because of the pressure from the women's movement. They lobbied for it, they fought, and their contribution cannot be ignored anymore" (Interview, Kampala, 03.09.2002).

Regardless of the role the women's movement played in securing female representation, the President and the NRM leadership claim that the affirmative action seats is a result of their polity. As one of the Ministers stated it: "We have never had a strong women's movement in this country. It is the Government, who created the women's movement *after* giving the women an opportunity to participate in decision-making" (Interview, Kampala: 03.09.2002). (My italics). The NRM and the Government seems to look upon the affirmative action seats as a 'gift', or reward, given to women partly due to their involvement in the guerrilla fighting. This can be illustrated when looking at the biography of President Museveni. In his biography Museveni tells two stories with the same theme, a king and a subject.

This is one of the two stories.

"The story from Ankole concerns a king, who had a subject who did a distinguished service for him, and the king asked his subject how he could reward him. He said to the king: 'Your Majesty, I do not want any gift from you. All I want is that when we are in public place you should just call me by my name'. The king was baffled and asked the *mwananchi*³⁰ how that could help him. He replied: 'Your Majesty, it will help me very much because if the king calls me by my name in front of so many people, everybody will wonder who I am and they will all come to me and help me' (Museveni, 1997:191-192).

These stories were told with a purpose of defending allegations about the Movement not doing enough for women. However, as Ottemoeller rightly argues, these stories also tell

³⁰ Mwananchi means 'common' man

that the subject does not want any substantial reward, but rather an acknowledgement that the subject is important to the king (Ottemoeller, 1999: 96). Moreover, this story reveals that women are represented in Parliament since the Movement placed them there; they are not represented in Parliament because they have a right as women to be represented. As Museveni (1997:192) argues: “By appointing a woman Vice-President we singled out women and whispered something to them to give them prominence and confidence”. Yet, it appears as if women are given reserved seats merely as an acknowledgment of their existence, not because by they can be valuable contributors in deliberation in decision-making bodies, nor because they have a right as women to be represented. Likewise, Museveni has made no secret of his reasons for choosing Kazibwe, a woman, as his Vice-President. He has more than once told the public that he appointed her to appease women (Monitor, 23.05.2003). The NRM and President Museveni efficiently promote their role as ‘saviours’ for women. When bringing this to attention regularly, women are constantly reminded that if it had not been for the NRM, they would not be where they are today. For example, during the 2003 celebration of the Women’s Day the President stated that the immediate symbol of women’s liberation in Uganda is the fact that there is a women vice-president in Uganda (New Vision, 11.03.2003). It is not emphasised that Vice-President Kazibwe has been appointed to the position because she is a good politician. But, why does the NRM present themselves as ‘saviours’ for?

The role NRM has taken on as ‘saviours’ for women make their presence in Parliament depend on the current regime, thus securing their loyalty. It seems to have been created an understanding that if the Movement system for some reason would collapse, the same could easily happen to the seats reserved for women. Accordingly, as women become dependent on the current regime, it can be argued that they also become ‘victims of patronage’ to the NRM. As one woman in opposition put it:

“Many of them [affirmative action women] will rather go by the position of the Government because they look to the Government as the only agency that has brought them where they are. So, in other words we are now turning our affirmative action into patronage. That defeats the whole purpose of affirmative action” (Interview, Kampala, 12.08.2002)

When NRM and Museveni keep reminding women that their presence in Parliament is because of the Government’s policies towards women, one would assume that this can

make it difficult for them to challenge the Government position in Parliament. This was confirmed by one of my respondents who argued that: “it is because of the Movement system there is affirmative action”, adding that it is hard for many of female legislators to criticise the Government. She further added that if the affirmative action seats had been a result of a strong women’s movement, women in Parliament would have been able to set their own agenda and really push for it (Interview, Kampala 05.08.2002). This is also in line with what Byanyima (2003), a directly elected member in opposition to the Government, argues: “I do not think it is fair for women to be in Parliament because some group did them a favour. I hope that during the constitutional review process we shall find a way of entrenching women participation but leaving them free to make political decisions without making them in gratitude to President Museveni and his group”.

When the NRM leadership takes sole credit for the initiation of the seats, they ignore the role the women’s movement actually had in pressuring the NRM to include women in various decision-making bodies. Despite the fact that women’s organisations did not have autonomy from the state during the Amin and Obote era, there was, and still is, a strong women’s movement in Uganda. This is also most likely one reason why Amin and Obote felt the need to control the different women’s organisations. The strength of the women’s movement can be illustrated by the fact that President Obote in 1984 was forced to declare the 8th of March, the International Women’s Day, a national holiday. This was declared at the first celebrations of the women’s day ever held in Uganda. Despite the fact that some ministers put pressure on him not to partake, President Obote attended the function (Tripp, 2000:51). Moreover, the fact that Museveni and the NRM leadership felt the need to appease women, speaks volumes of the strength of the women’s movement. Women’s participation in the NRA guerrilla may in fact have indebted the NRM leadership to women. Thus, the NRM may have felt pressure to launch the reserved seats, but regardless of this they still take credit for the initiation. Hence, it is created a belief that women owe their presence in Parliament to the NRM, and the most rational behaviour would be for them to stay loyal to the Government.

The interpretation of the seats as a ‘gift’ is, however, not the only reason why women elected from the affirmative action seats may be looked upon as representatives of NRM. When looking at the way most female legislators are elected, i.e. through Electoral Colleges

consisting mostly of Local Councils officials, the notion that the affirmative action women are representative expected to “Act As” Movementists is strengthened. Before the 1995 Constitution, the Local Councils were called Resistance Councils.

4.4.2 Local Council officials close connection to the Movement

During the guerrilla years from 1981-86, various Resistance Councils (RC) were established in the liberated areas. The RCs consisted of people in the villages, and gave them an opportunity to govern their own village. The RCs were soon created in every village, parish, sub-county, and district in Uganda as it was stipulated in the ten-point program. In deciding that the whole country should be ruled by RCs, the NRM laid the foundation for its legitimacy. Over the next few years, the Government introduced regulations regarding the RCs, and set up new tasks like collecting taxes and solving local disputes (Kasfir: 2000: 64-67).

When NRM came to power in 1986, the Resistance Councils system was extended to the whole country. The national legislature (NRC), which was on the top of the five-tier decentralised structure, explained the objectives and the concept of democracy to the society (Kabwegyere,2000:55-56). In the first years after the NRM take-over, political parties (and especially the Democratic Party) saw the RCs as an opening to increase their political influence. However, as Kabwegyere argues: “sooner or later the RCs recalled these leaders because the politics of sectarianism were no longer acceptable to the people” (Kabwegyere,2000:62).By this Kabwegyere argues that political parties are equivalent with sectarian politics. I will not discuss this further, but will mention that there seems to be no room for opposition towards the Movement in the RCs. It is argued that political parties reinstall the politics of sectarianism, and are consequently given no place in the RCs. Moreover, Oloka-Onyango (1992:94-95) argues that there are some major problems with the RCs, one of them being an extensive power of control and sanction wielded by state functionaries. The RCs are supervised by officials ranging from the District Administrator who is the principal political officer in each district to the Minister of Local Government, who have the possibility to suspend the RCs due to “disrupting public security, law and order” (RC statue found in Oloka-Onyango, 1992:95)

The close connection between the Government and the LCs seems to continue. According to the Local Government Act the LCs shall be inspected by the Ministry of Local Government. It is stipulated in Article 97 that Ministries shall, in order to ensure that national policies are implemented and adheres to performance standards, inspect, monitor and “where necessary, offer technical advice, support supervision and training with the respective sectors” (Local Government Act 1997, Article 97). Accordingly, the NRM has its own political education programs that have been introduced in districts all over the country since the NRM takeover in 1986. The courses concentrate on lecturing people on different problems the country faces, as well as how the NRM attempts to solve it. In connection with these courses, separate courses are held for LC officials. At these seminars participants have been exposed to the political program of NRM, aiming at training those who can train others (Kabwegyere, 2000:110-111). As the LCs are used by the Movement to promote its ideas, it may be argued that the LCs are not merely organs for the people, but also a decentralised Government structure.

When the councils were introduced in 1986 it was most likely a genuine attempt to establish democracy at the local level. Today it seems like the Local Councils have more or less evolved into a Movement structure, - they have become increasingly allied to the NRM regime (Okoku, 2002:26). For instance, the chair of every Local Council is frequently the chair of the parallel Movement Council. The Movement Councils are built up in a parallel five-tire structure to the LCs, and are intended to act as a caucus for members in the LCs. In the Movement Councils no measures are taken to ensure gender representation, consequently few women are elected as LC chairs (Interview, Kampala, 10.08.2002, Goetz, 2002:569). The strong ties between NRM and LC officials can be illustrated by looking at the report made by Human Right Watch on election violence in the 2001 presidential election. This report described a case where LC councillors who were in favour of the current President Museveni, prevented supporters of the opposition to hang up posters of the opponent presidential candidate. Campaign agents for the opposition presidential candidate (Agori Awori) were arrested in Busia district, reported the following to Human Right Watch:

“We were putting up posters when the LC3 came and told us to remove the Awori posters. They said we must put up Museveni posters. We refused and they said they will call the police. The police came and arrested us. They kept us for about six hours. They didn’t beat us

but they put us in a dirty cell. The LC3 and the police told us that they can release us if we give up Awori and join Museveni” (Human Right Watch, 2001:8)

One would assume that the close bonds that seemingly exist between the LC officials and the NRM impact female representation in Parliament as most women are elected to Parliament by LC officials.

4.4.3 The composition and use of Electoral Colleges

The Electoral Colleges for women consists of councillors from Local Councils, as well as the Women’s Councils. The Local Councils (LCs), as well as the parallel Women’s Councils (WCs), are a five tier structure from village level to district level. Organisationally, the LCs and WCs run from the village level (LC1), through the parish level (LC2), and sub-county/town level (LC3), county level (LC4) and district level (LC5). However, only councillors from the three lower levels in the Local Council structure, as well as officials from the three lower levels in the parallel structure of Women’s Councils are part of the Electoral Colleges³¹ for women (Parliamentary Election Act, Part V). The mode of electing LC officials varies. In LC1 and LC3 all the councillors are elected directly. In LC1 and LC3, all the members, except for the chairperson in LC3, are elected by universal adult suffrage by lining up behind candidates, or a representative carrying a portrait. UWONET (Women of Uganda Network) which monitored the LC elections in 1998 found that this turned out to be intimidating for the voters. As one voter argued “We ‘ate’ money from all candidates, so how can we be seen lining behind one?” (Kawarma, 1998:49) Furthermore, allegations have been made that councillors used spies to see who line up behind the opponent candidate. Voters were also intimidated by Government officials like Ministers, MPs and hard-core Movementists. Additionally, female voters were frequently harassed and threatened from their husbands. This compromised their free electoral choice, as well as preventing some women from voting at all (Kawarma, 1998 41-51). In LC2 the councillors are elected through Electoral Colleges consisting of councillors from the level below. (Ahikire, 2001b:6-8, Nassali, 2001: 28, Local Government Official Manual) The representatives in the women’s councils are elected indirectly by an Electoral College consisting of members from the council below. Only at the village level are women elected directly by *women* in the community, and there are only five women present in the

³¹ See appendix E for the exact composition of the Electoral Colleges for women

executive committee (National Women's Councils Guidelines,1999). The population of the Electoral Colleges for women varies from 1500 to 36000 voters; most of them have between 8000 and 15000 registered voters³².

The Women's Councils broad objective is to mobilise women for social, political and cultural activities. However, Tamale notices: "In fact, other than taking part in the elections, the WCs have been in limbo since their inception in 1993" (Tamale, 1999:69). One of the main problems of the women's councils is lack of funds (New Vision, 10.07.2002). Or as one male member of Parliament said: "where there has been some certain women leadership to form those Women's Councils, they have suffered from lack of financial support to carry out some programs that have been identified. So, you find that they are frustrated now, and it seems as if they do not exist" (Interview, Kampala 10.09 2000).

It is often the same women who occupy positions in the Women's Councils and in the Local Councils (Parliamentary Hansard 17.04.2002). The chair person of the Women's Councils at the village level, as well as the parish level, shall also be the secretary for women in LC1 and LC2, as well as the public health co-coordinator at both these levels (Ahikire, 2001b:7). This has led to confusion as to whether or not a woman occupying a position in both the Local Councils and the Women's Councils can vote twice. The matter of voting twice came up in the last parliamentary elections in the "Masiko case". The "Masiko case" is about one affirmative action woman who lost her seat in Parliament after her opponent, Babihuga, had filed a petition against her. The high-court ruled amongst other things that there were some problems with the hand-written voter registers, some names appeared several times, while others were left out ³³, and that there were cases of multiple voting, thus nullifying the elections (New Vision, 07.02 2002, New Vision, 20.03.2002). However, Masiko brought the case all the way to the highest Court of Appeal, and the high-court ruling were overturned, and Masiko got her parliamentary seat back (New Vision. 09 07 2002). The Court of Appeal decided that it is legal to vote twice if a women holds a position both in the Women's Councils and in the Local Councils. It is not,

³² Statistics from the Electoral Commission, Kampala

³³ In contrast to the regular elections, the registers for the women's elections are often hand-written.(Petersen, 2001:19)

however, legal to vote twice if a person holds two positions in the Local Councils (New Vision 04.12.2002). One of my interviewees, a scholar at Makerere argued that like with the Local Councils, the Movement will also make sure that the members of the Women's Councils supports the Movement. They are also considered to be part of the decentralised structure the Movement uses to bring development to the people (Interview, Kampala, 10.08.2002). Furthermore, the WCs are under the direction of Ministry of Women in Development, Youth and Culture, which appoints the Secretary position in the new National Women's Councils. (The National Women's Council is above the five WC levels) (Tripp, 2000:88). Byanyima argues to Tripp that, given that the WCs are parastatal, they may interfere in the activities of the independent NGOs. She further argues that NGOs should not be presided over by the ministry, and as she says "it gives me the feeling of some kind of communistic state where women are being organised for the purpose of the government" (Byanyima quoted in Tripp, 2000:89).

When most women in Parliament are elected by officials supporting the Movement, one would assume that women critical of the Movement may have difficulties being elected. One of my respondents, a directly elected woman supporting the political party Ugandan People's Congress summarised the use of Electoral Colleges when electing women representatives:

The matter of electing members of Electoral College is based on the movement structure at the grass root. So, using the movement structure unbearably will encourage people who support the movement to be elected. And the Government will make sure that those who are elected to be members of the Electoral College are people who are supportive of the Movement political system. So, you will find that the majority of the members are mainly Movement supporters, and it's not possible, really for an ordinary person to defeat the system" (Interview, Kampala 12.08.2002).

The strong link that seems to exist between the Government and LC officials in Electoral Colleges was also confirmed by some of my respondents. For instance, one of my respondents said that the LC and WC are organs used by the Government to bring development to the people (Interview, Kampala 04.09.2002). Moreover, some said that the LC structure is a decentralised Movement structure, and that candidates who do not support

the Movement prefer not to run for the district women seats since they are elected through Electoral Colleges (Interview, Kampala: 29.08.2002, 06.08.2002).

When the Parliamentary Election Act³⁴ was passed in Parliament, reinstating the Electoral Colleges for affirmative action women, the opposition in Parliament sent out a press release: “In a country where the local councils have become appendages and organs of the NRM, it would appear as if all the Women District Parliamentarians have been truly given to the NRM with both hands” (quoted in Tripp, 2000:232). The opposition in Parliament claims that it will be difficult for women critical of the regime to be elected. Furthermore, when an affirmative action woman travels back to her constituency it is often the LC officials who host her. This creates a bond between the District Woman Representative and the LC officials which is hard for an outsider to penetrate (Kemigisha: 2001:32).

Given the rather strong bonds that appear to exist between the LCs and the NRM, it may very well be argued that the affirmative action women are elected by pre-dominantly NRM controlled constituencies. When electing women from pre-dominantly NRM controlled constituencies, the Government has not only secured votes in parliament, they have also identified and made one group in parliament distinguishable in an otherwise rather big parliament. There are as much as 304 MPs, and the Parliament have to a certain extent been “atomised”. In an “atomised” parliament, it can be difficult for the executive branch to get a good insight into the political platform of all parliamentarians. After the 2001 parliamentary election, Museveni spoke to journalists in order to tell them the Movement is increasing its support:

“I called to tell you how happy I am about defeating your friends the so-called multipartyist. By yesterday I had counted more than 170 Movement MPs directly elected out of 214, if you add women, workers, youth and other, I have more than 230 MPs out of a house of 292” (Monitor, 11.07.2001).

This statement suggests that Museveni takes women’s loyalty for granted. While there is a need to look into the political position of the regular MPs, this is not necessary with the interest groups represented in Parliament, e.g. the District Women Representatives (Monitor, 11.07.2001). Subsequently, Museveni’s statement adds credence to Byanyima’s

³⁴ This Bill will be discussed later in this chapter

(2003) argument that the affirmative action women are agents of the system. Moreover, she argues that despite the fact that representation is about women and men being equally represented, the Parliament is weakened by the fact that most women are placed in the hand of the Movement system. As the women are mostly elected by officials supporting the Movement system, they become accountable to them as well. She argues: “This doesn’t help to build the Parliament as a strong institution” (Byanyima, 2003).

4.5 Geographical differences

In some parts of northern Uganda, the NRM has not been able to restore peace and stability. In these areas female legislators’ connection to the NRM seems weaker, and the “Act As” representative model has to be modified. During my research in Uganda, I found that a vast majority of my respondents were of the opinion that women critical of the Government had a better chance of being elected through Electoral Colleges in the northern areas than in the rest of Uganda. In the northern part of the country there is a guerrilla war aiming at overturning the NRM Government, which has been going on since the 1980s. The majority of the Acholi people in the North joined the rebel group *Holy Spirit Movement*, a guerrilla group led by Alice Auma who claimed possession of the spirit of an Italian doctor who died. When Alice Auma was defeated, Joseph Kony soon took over as leader and the guerrilla was renamed Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). Kony stressed that his guerrilla is a pure Acholi organisation and that any Acholi who don’t support him is a legitimate target. In 1991 the LRA started losing support, and began to embrace multipartyism. This did not, however, increase the legitimacy of the LRA in the North. On the contrary; the Acholi people protest against the abduction of their children: Abducted boys become soldiers, while abducted girls become wives of LRA commanders. Nonetheless, the LRA guerrilla seems to have lasted, mostly due to support from Sudan. The Sudanese Government portray the LRA as a pro-multiparty democracy movement, and provides for arms, weapons and uniforms in exchange for ivory and children (Kayunga, 2000:112-114). There has been attempt to find solutions to end the guerrilla fighting, but this has yet to succeed

The insecurity that prevails in the northern areas is one reason why the support for the Movement Government is not as high as in the other parts of the country. Ordinary people

are tired of the constant fighting, killings and abductions and look forward to restoration and stability in their homelands. The NRM has lost legitimacy in the North as they have not been able to restore peace (Kayunga, 2000:118). This relatively low support of the NRM in the North can be illustrated by looking at the result from the last Presidential election where Museveni obtained only 36% of the votes in the northern region, while in the western region he obtained 88% (New Vision, 15.03.2001). The lack of support by the Movement in the North can also be supported with statistics from the referendum³⁵. The answers from the referendum indicates that the Movement has strong support in western Uganda (the region NRM amounted its power) and a comparatively weaker support in northern Uganda. According to official reports, the Movement won with 97% in the west, and 77% in the north in the same referendum. In three western districts (Kabale, Kisoro and Rukungiri) the Movement got 99%, while in a northern district (Gulu) they only obtained 43% (Bratton and Lambright, 2001:442).

The significantly lower support the NRM has in the northern parts of the country also has an impact on female representation in Parliament. At least two of the woman representatives from northern part of the country are outspokenly critical towards the Movement system, - despite the fact that they are elected to Parliament through Electoral Colleges. During the electoral campaigns, two women from the northern part who ran for the woman's seats were challenged by members of the Movement Secretariat: One woman, a multipartist, won over the deputy director of mass mobilisation in the Movement Secretariat who then failed in her bid to enter Parliament for a second time. Yet another woman from the northern part of Uganda won over a candidate from the Movement Secretariat (New Vision, 23.06.2001). This may indicate that the Electoral Colleges in these areas consists of officials with a looser bond to the Government in Kampala, than what is true for western Uganda where Museveni enjoys great support. Also, the regular MPs from the north are known to be more critical of the Government than MPs from the western part of Uganda. For instance, Norbert Mao a MP representing Gulu municipality, together with Cecilia Ogwal from Lira, are outspoken critical towards the Movement system (Monitor, 11.07.2001). Accordingly, one would assume that the affirmative action

³⁵ In 2000 a referendum was held in Uganda. Citizens were asked to choose between a multiparty system and an existing Movement system. A majority of the Ugandans wanted to keep on with the existing Movement system.

women from the northern part of Uganda feel less obliged to “Act As” Movementist as the Electoral Colleges have a weaker tie to the Movement Government in Kampala.

Besides the representatives’ geographical origins there are other factors that influence the nature of the female representation, namely the sharp distinction between the separate women’s elections and the ‘regular’ elections.

4.6 Women’s elections and regular elections

Given the separate women’s elections, most aspiring female candidates choose to run for the seats reserved for women. In the 2001 parliamentary election, 32 women wanted to be elected from the ‘regular’ 214 county seats, while as much as 169 women wanted to be elected from the 53³⁶ affirmative action seats (Petersen, 2001:19). Why do so few women choose to compete in the regular election? The section below will start out by focusing on why some women choose to compete for the reserved seats, and why some choose to compete in the regular election. Then I will explain why most women choose to compete in the women’s elections. This explanation will be given on three different levels, and they impact female representation in different ways. First, at the individual level I will argue that the women’s elections reinforces the notion the men are superior to women. Second, at the district level, women are discriminated when competing in the regular elections, making it hard for women to switch seats. Third, at the national level, I argue that the executive branch has an interest in continuing to elect women through electoral colleges. The executive’s view was indeed present during the process concerning the Parliamentary Election Bill. Thus, I will show that the use of separate women’s elections has to a large extent prevented women from competing in the regular election, and that that this cannot be seen in separation with the way female legislators are looked upon by the NRM.

4.6.1 Aspiring female candidates

The total number of female candidates to be elected to the woman district seats is higher than the number elected to the other special interests seats (i.e. youth, persons with disabilities, army and workers). The elections of District Women Representatives are therefore more evident and important in Uganda during election time. For instance members from the District Youth Councils only elect five youth representatives. In contrast

³⁶ After the 2001 election, 3 new districts have been created meaning that only 53 women were elected in the regular women’s election, while 3 were elected later after the 7th Parliament was elected.

56 women, one from each district, shall be elected. One of the consequences of having separate elections for women is that it seems to prevent women from competing in the regular election. Female candidates running for the regular seats are at times told to go and compete in the women's elections, and not 'interfere' in the regular election (Interview, Kampala 10.08.2002). One can assume that this is not the case for the other special interest seats, mostly because they elect only a limited number of representatives.

Female candidates competing in the regular election

Year	Candidates Running	Candidates Elected	Success Rate in per cent
1994	36 (847)	9	25
1996	26 (819)	8	31
2001	32 (1115)	13	41

Source: numbers for 1994 and 1996 are from Tripp (2000:71). 2001 numbers are obtained from the Electoral Commission, Kampala. The numbers in parentheses are total number of candidates running in the elections

The table above indicates that the success rate of the aspiring female candidates is relatively high, and that it has increased over the years. In the 1994 Constituent Assembly election, 25% women who competed in the regular election won. In 2001, the success rate of female representatives was as high as 41% - an increase of 16 percentage points. One reason for this increase may be that the affirmative action seats have created a social acceptance that men and women are equally capable as leaders and politician. Moreover, some of the directly elected women might have had the necessary financial support from the Movement Secretariat since as much as 5 of them became ministers after being elected to Parliament. Furthermore, among the 13 directly elected women, 4 of them are outspoken critics of the Movement system and well known names in Ugandan politics. Despite the high and increasing success rate for women who choose to compete in the 2001 'regular' election, the actual number of female candidates competing in the regular election is still low. In the 2001 parliamentary election, only 2,9% of the as aspiring candidates were women in the 'regular' election. The correspondent numbers in 1994 and 1996 were 4,2% and 3,2% .

As previously indicated, the affirmative action seats in Uganda are looked upon as 'training' seats for women when they first enter into political life. My impression was that

the affirmative action women are normally expected to “graduate” to the regular seats after two or three terms on the woman’s seats. One of my respondent argued that “I will love to have two terms of office, and nothing more. [...] I do not like the idea that someone go on and on” (Interview, Kampala, 16.08.2002). Her view was also supported by an another respondent who argued that she wanted to stay on the women’s ticket for two terms, if she stayed on the women’s ticket for three terms she would be selfish as she didn’t open up her position for a new woman (Interview, Kampala, 03.09 2002). As women are expected to ‘graduate’ to the regular seats after a certain time in Parliament, one would assume that the number of women competing in the regular election would increase. But, as can be seen from the table above, this has not been the case. In fact when comparing the 2001 election with the 1996 election the number of female candidates competing in the regular election has decreased. As mentioned, in 2001 169 women sought to be elected from the women’s seats. In 1996, 109 women sought to be elected from the then 39 districts³⁷ (Tripp, 2000:71). Why do so many women choose to run for the women’s seats, and so few for the regular seats?

4.6.2 Why most women choose to run for the Women District seats

Aspiring female candidates in Uganda seem to prefer running for the district women’s seat. My respondents stated different reasons why they chose to run for the district women’s seats. I have chosen to categorise the answers into three different groups. The first and largest group consist of those who stated that they had a better chance of pulling through in the women’s elections. They argued that the voters were not ready for women competing in the general election, and they considered the community to be non-supportive towards women who competed in the regular election. Consequently, it was easier to compete in an election designed for women. In a regular election they would have a lot more to fight against in the electoral campaign³⁸. For instance, one of my informants said she knew she would face problem in the electoral campaign because of her age. At that time she was only 25, and not yet married. Community would look at her as not having enough experience to be a Member of Parliament, and she preferred to meet these problems as a candidate in the women’s elections rather than as a candidate in the regular election where ‘the men had the upper hand’ (Interview, Kampala 05.08.2002). One of my respondents tried to switch seats

³⁷ Since the 1996 election, 17 new districts have been created in Uganda.

³⁸ Interview, Kampala: 05.08.2002, 13.08.2002, 13.08.2002 , 15.08.2002, 28.08.2002,21.08.2002,

from the women's elections to the general election, but was clearly told that if they changed seats the voters would not vote for them (Interview, Kampala 13.08.2002)

The second group consist of women who went for the women's elections due to very strong incumbents in the constituency³⁹. For instance, in one constituency one man had been voted in four times by the same constituents and she considered it almost impossible for her to go through. She said the incumbent was a very respectable person whom she looked upon as a father figure. She added that she didn't think any women would stand against him (Interview, Kampala 03.09.2002).

The last group consist of women who explicitly said that they wanted to be identified with women, and do something to make the society more gender-sensitive. As one woman said "my aim in being in politics is to change things. [...], transform the society and to make it equitable in terms of the gender perspective"(Interview, Kampala 20 08.2002). Another woman also said that she wanted to be on the affirmative action seats because she wanted to be associated with women (Interview, Kampala 16.08.2002)

4.6.3 Why some women choose to compete in the regular election

In the 7th Parliament, 13 women are elected on the direct ticket. Most (9 out of 13) women that won the general election have previous political experience either as ministers or as previous MPs. Among the directly elected women in the 7th Parliament one woman is has been appointed Vice- President, while four have been appointed ministers. Yet, another four have been a part of Ugandan politics for a long time, and are well-known figures in Ugandan politics because they are openly critical to the Ugandan Movement system.

Among the respondents I interviewed the answers pointed in one direction: they all felt capable enough to run for the direct ticket. Some women said that they had graduated from the women's seats and felt that they had capacity to compete in the regular election. They wanted to pass the affirmative action seat to someone else. There were also other individual reasons why they competed for the direct ticket: One woman, who is a highly educated lawyer, found it most convenient to run for the regular elections where she only

³⁹ Interview, Kampala: 29.08.2002, 03.09.2002

had one county to cover (Interview, Kampala 22.08.2002). Another woman stated that because she was an electrical engineer, she was used to working with men, and did not feel that competing with men was a real challenge (Interview, Kampala 20.08.2002).

Female candidates running for the regular seats seem to face other problems than candidates in district woman's election. For instance, one of my female respondents experienced severe problems with the man she was running against in the 1996 election. He told her that she should not be contesting in the 'regular' election, but run for the women district seats. She answered that she wanted to represent the county and not the district. The opponent candidate was the same age group as her father and, reportedly he looked at her as a daughter trying to force him out. She lost the 1996 election, but won in the 2001 election (Interview, Kampala 20.08.2002).

4.6.4 The tendency to stay on the women's seats

The answers above indicate that the purpose of affirmative action seats is to let women be exposed to politics, consequently the affirmative action seats are looked upon as a process rather than a permanent mechanism. As it has been argued: "The seats were supposed to be testing ground for eventual power contestation in a male dominated sphere" (Odrek, 2001:7). Regardless of this, women tend to keep running for the women's seats, for reasons found at three different levels.

At the *individual level* there seems to be a lack of self-confidence among women since they refuse to run for the direct seats. Taken into consideration that the affirmative action seats were introduced more than a decade ago (1989), one would expect that more than 32 female candidates among 1115 aspiring candidates (2,9%) would compete in the 2001 regular election. Given the low number of female candidates who chose to compete in the regular election, those who chose to run are probably the "best of the best" among all aspiring female candidates.

The low percentage of women competing in the 'regular' election can indicate that there are no 'maturing' elements in the parliament making women ready to switch seats. It appears to be commonly accepted that women elected from the affirmative action seats are 'allowed' to use five years in order to get the necessary insight into the parliamentary procedures.

Two terms is what is normally considered to be the appropriate time on the woman's seats, although some women considered it appropriate to remain on the women's seats for as much as three to four periods. As one woman stated to New Vision:

“For any woman to successfully defeat a male colleague in any of the district juicy elective posts in the house, she needs to be in Parliament for three terms [...]. The first five years in Parliament is for fresh woman MP to study what is going on in the House, while the following two terms is for her to consolidate her achievements” (New Vision, 17.04.2002).

When the affirmative action women are “allowed” to be back benchers in Parliament for a whole period of five years, I assume that they become less experienced with the confrontational political life, and perhaps their political skills are not developing as fast as they could have been. A woman is considered to have become politically matured when she is competing in the ‘regular’ election.

Since women competing with men on an equal level are looked upon as a landmark for political maturity, the notion of women's inferiority is strengthened as their *real* political capacity is measured with references to their male opponents. This was visible when the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Zoe Bakoko, directly elected, made remarks about the affirmative action women in Parliament: “I want to state categorically that Hon. Angupale is in Parliament because I decided to step down as the Arua woman representative so that I could compete with politicians of high calibre and class” (Monitor, 26.09.2003). This created a drama in Parliament where some MPs asked the Minister to resign arguing that she was not fit to be Minister of Gender because she considers herself as a superior politician given that she is directly elected. (Monitor, 26.09.2003, New Vision, 26.09.2003). As Ahikire (2001a:18) rightly argues the whole question of affirmative action is no longer a question of addressing imbalances between the genders, it is rather a question of reinforcing the ideology about women being less qualified than men. Thus, the separate women's election seems to reinforce the notion that men are superior to women, rather than challenge it. This seems to affect female representation in the sense that it becomes hard for aspiring female candidates to compete in the regular election.

Part of the answer why most women choose to be elected from the women's seats is also to be found at the *district level*. By having designated seats for women, some of the female

candidates are of the opinion that the voters may discriminate against them in the regular election. A vast majority of my respondent elected from the women's seats indicated that they chose to run for the women's seats because they had a better chance of pulling through in this election. This is also why some women refuse to compete in the regular election, and keep running on the women's ticket. One woman who has refused to switch seats is Hon. Miria Matembe, Minister for Ethics and Integrity. She has been elected on the women's districts seats from its initiation in 1989 to the present. She has just written a biography, where she states that:

"I had another go at the Parliamentary race in 2001. I again contested my usual women district seats, against the loud calls from many elites in Kampala, both men and women, for Matembe to quit contesting for that seat. The rural women and the people of Mbarara ignored those calls to throw me aside. It seems they appreciate my work[...].They returned me to Parliament with an overwhelmingly majority of 82 percent. Wow, what an energiser! Now, you tell me. How can I quit?"(Matembe, 2002:276).

Miria Matembe is a well-known figure in Ugandan politics, and has an incumbency advantage. As this statement indicates, she continues to compete in the women's elections in fear of loosing in the regular election. Uganda has lost some good female politicians who decided to run for the regular election (Interview, Kampala 10.07.2002). For instance, Rebecca Kadaga Alitwala, was elected to the NRC in 1989 on a women's ticket. In the 1994 CA election she contested in the regular election and lost. In the last two elections she has chosen to run on the women's ticket, and in the 7th Parliament she was elected deputy speaker. Also Fiona Lucy Eguny Asemo held a women seat in the CA, as well as in the 6th Parliament. She lost her seat to a male newcomer in the 2001 election. The same is the case with Winifred Adio who sat in the CA on a women's ticket. In 2001 she chose to run for the regular seats, and lost the seat to a male contestor with no experience from parliament or Local Councils⁴⁰.

Yet another problem found on the district level, and which relates to above, is the problem concerning incumbency. Mostly due to political culture women have been excluded from political life. This has lead to strong male incumbents, and as mentioned, some of my respondents refused to run for the regular seats due to this. The design of the affirmative

⁴⁰ Information found in statistics from the Electoral Commission, Kampala

actions measures is not constructed in a way that challenges strong incumbents or other male aspirants. Thus, as a result it can be argued that the political culture has not been 'confronted' by women wanting to take part. Furthermore the manner in which these separate women's elections are carried out, allows us to regard the affirmative action women as representatives that are expected to "Act As" Movementists in Parliament. As will be shown below, the process with the Parliamentary Election Act revealed that the Government is reluctant to introduce election of women by universal adult suffrage. The NRM seem to have an interest in continuing to elect women from Electoral Colleges.

Part of the answer why most women choose to be elected from the women's seats can also be found at the *national level*. To my knowledge, there have been few attempts by the NRM to make women switch seats. Currently, the women who are strong opponents of the NRM are directly elected, and it appears as if they can criticise the Government more freely. They do not owe their presence in Parliament to the Movement, nor are they elected in by controlled constituencies. Today, in the 7th Parliament, four of the directly elected women are openly criticising the Movement political system: Winnie Byanyima supporting the Reform Agenda⁴¹, Cecilia Ogwal as a UPC member, Juliet Rainer Kafire as a member of the Democratic Party, as well as Proscovia Musumba Salaamu.

The Parliamentary Election Act, which passed in the 6th Parliament, specifies how to elect Members to Parliament. During the deliberation on the Parliamentary Election Bill the method of electing District Women Representatives came up, and various reasons were given why the law should be changed. COPAW ('Coalition for Political Accountability to Women', composed of women activist from various women's organisations) said that universal adult suffrage "would give women the much-needed experience to compete with men in mainstream elections" (New Vision, 24.03.2001). The main reason stated among those in favour of universal adult suffrage was that the Electoral Colleges are easy to bribe and manipulate, and as one member of COPAW stated: "it is highly prone to systematic manipulation" and at the end only handpicked candidates would get elected. Also new

⁴¹ Reform Agenda is a 'counter-movement' that was established after the 2001 election. They argue that the Movement political system has turned out to be a political system which does not include everybody, rather the contrary has happened.

candidates are at disadvantage because members of the colleges do not know them (New Vision, 24.03.2001).

In January 2001, the Parliamentary Election Bill, which aimed at guiding the forthcoming Parliamentary election allowing for universal adult suffrage for women, was passed in Parliament and sent to the Presidents office (New Vision, 15.02.2001). The President, however, refused to sign the bill and returned it to Parliament. He said that some of the clauses in the bill was too restrictive, and asked the MPs to consider a clause that required District Women Representatives to be elected from Electoral Colleges. Museveni said that he could not accept the fact that women representatives should be elected on universal adult suffrage because it would be too expensive for them to traverse the whole districts (New Vision, 19.02. 2001).The President's view was challenged by some of my respondents. They argued that despite the fact that they are elected through electoral colleges, they had to traverse the whole district looking for college members. Given that LC1 and WC1 (i.e. at the village level) officials are members of the college , they had to reach all the way down to village-level in the district during the electoral campaign⁴².

Furthermore, some of my respondents found it difficult to be elected from Electoral Colleges as they did not exactly know who they were supposed to talk too; all the people in the district, or the college members in particular? Given that the members of the LC and WC are elected by the people in the district, they may also have a saying in the outcome as they can 'punish' the official by not re-elect him or her. One woman had these remarks about the rallies in her electoral campaign:

‘you know you move the whole parish looking for one person, a college member, and if you call a rally you will not only have college members, you will have members of the whole village with few college members. Then some individual college members, they will not have their independent mind because they are elected individuals. So, they have to listen to the people who elected them. It is more like you actually have two colleges; one who is going to elect you and the others who convince the others to elect you. Really, it is very problematic ’ (Interview, Kampala: 03.09.2002).

⁴² Interview, Kampala: 07.08.2002, 13.08.2002, 03.09.2002

In March 2001, when the Parliamentary Election Bill was passed for the second time in Parliament, the Electoral College system for electing women representatives was restored. The Vice-President and the Prime Minister overran resistance from those who wanted adult universal suffrage for women (New Vision, 28.03.2001).

There are only speculations about what really happened behind the scenes when the Bill was sent back to Parliament from the President's office. Some are of the opinion that powerful women had gone to the President and asked him to reinstate the Electoral Colleges. This was allegedly done on a 'selfish' ground because most women who opposed it knew that they had the possibility to manipulate it (Interview, Kampala 10.09.2002). Yet, another one of my respondent stated a similar view. She suspected that some people had advised the President and told him that since elections are coming up, and if it should still be Movement people in Parliament, it was no way around the Electoral Colleges (Interview, Kampala 10.08.2002). Critics of the President have insinuated that this change was made to ensure that the woman representatives were elected by Movement loyal local council's executives (Petersen, 2001: 12). By continuing to elect women through Electoral Colleges, it may be argued that the Government can, given that the colleges mostly exists of officials supporting the Movement, be relatively sure that it is women who supports the NRM who are elected to Parliament. Thus, Museveni's expectation that affirmative action women in Parliament supports the Movement is strengthened, likewise the "Act As" representative model.

The relatively small size of the Electoral Colleges may make them vulnerable towards malpractices and corruption, making them easier to manipulate. Given the high level of corruption in Uganda, one would assume that they are open to persuasion by the NRM Government, as well as bribery by aspiring female candidates. The NRM Governments' interference in the election's can be illustrated by looking at the Masiko case again. Masiko's opponent, Babihuga, accused state officials of influencing the election result during President Museveni's visit to the district the 12th and 13th of June 2001. The court heard by Babihuga's lawyer that Museveni had a meeting with district officials, local council's officials, security agencies and Masiko campaign agents. This was not denied by Masiko's lawyers, they merely argued that if the President had a meeting, this was in the normal course of his duties (New Vision 07.02.2002). Women loyal to the Movement, and

perhaps with the necessary economic capital, may find it easier to be elected through an Electoral College, rather than by universal adult suffrage. If this is the case (i.e. that the Electoral Colleges are manipulated either by capital or by governmental persuasion), these corrupt methods are parts of the reasons why women tend to stay on the women's ticket. Women who support NRM and most likely have the necessary economic capacity choose to be elected from an Electoral College when they run for parliamentary election. This is probably the election where they face the easiest opposition – especially if they run as an incumbent.

4.7 Summary

The women-only competition means that women are treated as a disadvantaged social group that should have a certain access to the state. Even so, they are not singled out as representatives of women (Goetz, 2002: 559). Accordingly, female legislators themselves have to decide whether or not they want to represent women in particular. While some of women considered themselves as representatives of the district, others felt an obligation to focus on women in particular. With reference to Pitkin some of the affirmative action women claim to be “Standing For” women, while some feel an obligation to “Act For” women. With reference to I. M. Young, it can be argued that the latter group represent a perspective developed due their structural position in society. What consequences does this interpretation have for their work in Parliament? One way to answer this question is to look at their committee memberships in Parliament. Due to the fact that some women feel the obligation to represent women in particular, it is natural to assume that some women would choose to become members of committees that specifically focus on matters related to women's needs and interest. This will be a focus in the following chapter.

Furthermore, the interpretation of the seats reserved for women as a ‘gift’ from the NRM, and the continuous use of Electoral Colleges can make it difficult for women critical of the NRM to be elected. Moreover, this may prevent the already elected women from confronting the NRM Government in controversial issues. This has enabled us to develop a concept where the affirmative action women come close to being ‘symbolic’ representative expected to “Act As” Movement supporters in Parliament. One way of challenging the notion that most affirmative action women support the NRM is to focus on the coherency

of the women's caucus in Parliament. Is the women's caucus in Parliament in reality a Movement caucus?

Furthermore, women's binding to the NRM can make it difficult for them to confront the NRM Government in controversial issues. By the NRM, and especially the President, it is emphasised that the affirmative action women presence in Parliament depend on the current regime. Consequently, it may be argued that women, elected from the affirmative action, seats are 'victims of patronage' to the NRM. Do female legislators challenge the current patriarchal structures that exist in the Ugandan society through their work in Parliament? Have the women's caucus been able to push for legislation important for women, or are they being compromised by the Government? Have the relatively high female representation in Parliament turned out to be a powerful weapon when challenging the patriarchal structures in society? These are some of the questions which will be addressed below.

Chapter 5: Women in Parliament

5.0 Introduction

This chapter is structured in two parts and focuses on women's work in Parliament. It aims at substantiating and challenging the various explanations given in the previous chapter as to who the affirmative action women represent: (i) the district in general, (ii) women in particular, (iii) representatives who are expected to support the Movement.

The first part of this chapter attempts to shed light on the notion whether or not women are "Standing For" women or "Acting For" women. This will be accomplished by focusing on female representation in the various parliamentary committees. Are women equally distributed in the various committees, or are they over-represented in committees where they have the possibility to "Act For" women? The latter refers to committees which cover issues known to be of importance for women in particular.

In **the second part** of this chapter, the idea that affirmative action women are representatives who are expected to "Act As" Movementists in Parliament is examined. The first part focuses on the coherence of the women's caucus arguing that the women's caucus mainly consist of movement supporters. Thus, the anticipation that most affirmative action women are NRM supporters is strengthened. Second, the focus is on female legislators' possibility to challenge the Government in controversial issues which again may challenge the patriarchal structures that seemingly exist in Uganda. More specifically the focus will be on the Domestic Relations Bill (DRB) which is yet to be passed in Parliament, and the Land Act which was passed in Parliament in 1998, but without a clause securing women co-ownership of land. I will argue that the desire of some women MPs to be "Acting For" representatives is compromised by their loyalty to the current regime making it hard to challenge the Government in controversial issues. Moreover, the "Act As" representation is held by the fact that the Movement system continues to reserve seats for women in various decision-making bodies in exchange for political support and loyalty. Third, the feminisation of the deputy role is looked into. My findings are that the all-inclusive movement system places women in positions with little or no real power. Hence, the gender-policy in Uganda is to a certain extent abused as women often are elected as

representatives who is supposed to reflect the gender-sensitiveness' of various decision-making bodies and the overall Movement system.

5.1 Female representation in committees

Virginia Sapiro (1981) holds the view that women are often placed in committees covering issues that reflect the division of labour in society. In Uganda, as in most part of Africa, girls are raised and socialised towards a feminine and 'motherly' role. They are expected by the parents, schools, and the overall culture to be in charge of the domestic arena. Boys on the other hand, are often raised into roles which are focused on being ambitious and venturing into the world beyond the domestic arena. As a result of this socialisation, Ugandan women are in charge of housework, childbearing, securing the child's education, food-preparation, small-scale farming, as well as household level production of both foods and goods for the market. Likewise the men operate more in the 'public' sphere and thus outside the domestic arena (Tamale1999:27). Accordingly, the stereotyped expectation of the sexes, and the division of labour which seemingly exist in the Ugandan society, may also be reflected in a division of labour within Parliament, i.e. that female legislators are well represented in committees focusing on matters considered to be of relevance for women in particular given their role in society.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, some District Women Representatives in Parliament looked upon themselves as representatives that ought to have a 'special eye' on women. Having this in mind it is interesting to focus on female representation in committees, as it may tell us something about women's work in Parliament; of what their interests, and preferences are.

5.1.1 Functions of the Parliamentary Committees

The parliamentary committees allow the Parliament to perform several functions; review of proposed legislations, oversight of executive administration and examination of governmental problems. Additionally, the MPs get a thorough insight into matters within the jurisdiction of certain committees. The deliberation process in a committee is conducted in a less formal manner than the discussions in the House. This informality facilitates compromising and improving technical details in legislation (Kayunga, 2001:201). In the Ugandan Parliament there are four kinds of committees: The Standing Committees which

last for five years (during the whole seating of the Parliament), Sessional Committees which last one session, Select Committees appointed by the Speaker and finally, Ad Hoc Committees, established to investigate into matters considered to be of public importance. The Select Committees and the Ad Hoc Committees are few in number, making it hard to compare the committee memberships of male and female MPs. Accordingly, this section will only focus on the Standing and the Sessional Committees⁴³.

The members of the Standing Committees are, in contrast to the Sessional Committees, elected by Parliament. The aspiring Standing members contest for their seats during the first Parliamentary period. In the Standing Committees there are a total of 228 members, out of which 65 are women, which equals 29%. As this is higher than the 24% women in Parliament this implies that women are well represented in the Standing Committees. The Standing Committees shall discuss and make recommendations on bills laid before Parliament, as well as initiate any bill within their respective area. They shall also carry out relevant research in their respective field and report to Parliament. In the Sessional Committees there are a total of 227 Hon. Members, and 52 of these are women, which equals 22%. The Sessional Committees are linked to a Ministry, and their task is to examine and comment on policies affecting the ministries involved. The Members of Parliament are free to stand for whatever Sessional committee they want. The first 25 to sign up for a certain committee becomes a member. In other words, there are no campaign activities during this election, which again may prevent women (or men) from becoming member of a certain committee. As the MPs are free to choose their committee membership, it is, as Hernes (1973:10) argues, possible to look at the committees as a structural expression of interests⁴⁴. It is, however, stated in the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Uganda, Rule 142, that the composition of the Sessional Committees is to be gender balanced. However, when members are elected by signing up on a list, and the first 25 who signs up are elected, this can be quite difficult to achieve. This was also pointed out in Parliament by Dora Byamukama, one of the directly elected women in Parliament. As she says: "If it [committees] is supposed to take into account gender sensitivity, how will this be done if it is on first come first served basis?" (Parliamentary Hansard, 17.07.2001).

⁴³ Most information on the tasks of the committee, as well as the information on gender breakdowns, is from the Directory of Uganda's seventh Parliament.

⁴⁴ Standing Committee candidates are elected by the whole House. However, it was my impression that most members sat in the Standing committee they wanted to be represented in.

5.1.2 “Soft” Committees and “Hard” Committees

As briefly mentioned in the theoretical chapter, it is possible to distinguish between “soft” and “hard” committees. The distinction is used to describe the horizontal division of labour that seemingly exists between men and women in political life, a distinction that may reflect the division of labour that exists in society. A “soft” committee is a committee that covers areas like education, health and social politics. These have a *reproductive* aspect, while “hard” committees are characterised by a *productive* aspect and normally focuses on matters like economy, foreign affairs, security and defence. The “hard” committees are considered to be politically more prestigious than the “soft” committees. It has been claimed that it is within these committees the important political decisions are taken (Raaum, 1995: 90-91). This distinction was adopted by Hege Skjeie (1991) in a study on women in the Norwegian Parliament. She found that women were under-represented in “hard” committees like committees of Finance, Transportation, Foreign Affairs and Agriculture, and over-represented in “soft” committees like Committee of Social Affairs, Church and Education and Consumer and Administration (Skjeie, 1991:255).

The distinction between “soft” and “hard” committees has been met with criticism. It has been argued that it can be quite difficult to classify and categorise the various political issues as “soft” and “hard”, and that this distinction gives a wrong description of the character of the political decisions. Moreover, it has also been argued that important political decisions are in fact taken in the “soft” committees, and that they are just as prestigious as the “hard” committees, especially since they tend to cover a large part of the public expenditure (Raaum, 1995:91). In the 2003/04 Ugandan budget, education and health are sectors that rank high on the list in the national budget; they are amongst the three most important sectors the Ministry of Finance seek to approve recommendation from in Parliament (Muhakanaizi, 2003). In other words, the over-representation of women in typical “soft” committees like the Committees of Social Services is not necessarily equivalent with women having political assignments without any real power.

Despite the fact that this distinction has been called old-fashioned and inaccurate⁴⁵, and it has received well-founded criticism, I still find it productive to apply when studying the

⁴⁵ See Lovundeski and Karam, 1998: 136

division of labour in Parliament, and more specifically the gender breakdown of committee memberships. The distinction between “soft” and “hard” committees can say something about what kind of committees women may be well-represented in, and what kind of committees they are poorly represented in.

As I have not been able to do any survey on women’s interests and correspondence to committee membership, it is not clear *why* women are members of certain committees. They may be member of a specific committee, e.g. a committee which focuses on education and health, because this is a committee which they think serve the interests of the women better. They may, however, also be represented in this committee because this is where they find it most natural to be member as a female– a committee which focuses on issues they are familiar with, and where they feel they have the necessary competence needed to contribute in debates and deliberation. Regardless of *why* they became member in a specific committee, one would assume that some, if not all, will “Act For” for a majority of women in these committees.

5.1.3 Gender breakdown of committee memberships

The tables below show that women and men are *relatively* equally distributed in the Standing committees, as well as in the Sessional committees. Nonetheless, it is also noticeable that women are well represented in some committees, and poorly represented in others.

Standing Committees

	Committee	Total	Women	Per Cent
1	Public Account	15	–	-
2	Budget	15	4 (DC)	26%
3	Rules, Privileges and Discipline	15	1 (DC)	6%
4	National Economy	15	2	13%
5	Commissions, Statutory Authorities and Enterprise	15	4 (DC)	26%
6	Government Assurances	15	5 (CP)	33%
7	Local Governments Accounts	15	6	40%
8	Business and Welfare	15	7	50%
9	Appointments ⁴⁶	66	21 (DC)	32%
10*	HIV/Aids and Related Matters	15	8	53%
11*	Science and Technology	15	4	27%
12*	Equal Opportunity	15	6 (CP)	40%

*Committee number 10, 11, 12 was formed during the second term of the 7th Parliament

Sessional Committees

	Committees	Total	Women	Per Cent
1	Agriculture, Animal industry and Fishery	26	6 (DC)	23%
	Defence and Internal Affairs	20	–	--
3	Presidential and Foreign Affairs	26	9	35%
4	Natural Resources	20	5	25%
5	Public Service and Local Government	25	7 (CP)	28%
6	Tourism, Trade and Industry	21	6 (DC)	28,5%
7	Works, Housing and Communications	25	1	4%
8	Social Welfare	24	11 (CP)	46%
9	Legal and Parliamentary Affairs	13	2	15%
10	Finance, Planning and Economic Development	24	5	21%

CP = woman chairperson, DP= woman deputy chairperson

⁴⁶ The committee of Appointments shall consist of 56 Members from each district, 11 Members representing army, women, youth persons with disabilities and workers. The Committee is headed by the Speaker, while the Deputy speaker is the deputy chair (A Directory of Uganda's 7th Parliament)

5.1.4 Committees with a low female representation

In the *Standing Committees* women are in particular poorly represented in three committees: the Public Account Committee, Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline and the Committee on National Economy. These are all committees which performs a control function. The Public Account committee is a committee that is designated the task to examine the accounts given to the Government and the Judiciary from the Parliament. The accounts given from the Parliament to the Government are to meet the public expenditure of the Government, as well as to the Judiciary. The Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline is amongst other things, there to enquire complaints of contempt in Parliament. It is supposed to look into matters of discipline referred to by the Speaker or the Parliament itself, and investigate whether or not any MPs have an office which compromise membership in Parliament. Women are also poorly represented in the Committee on National Economy. This is a committee that shall mainly monitor, examine and review the state of the National Economy. It is also to examine and make recommendations to the House on all loan agreements required to be authorised or approved by the Parliament. Furthermore, the *Sessional Committees* where women are under-represented, are all ‘technical’ committees with a national perspective, and can be categorised as “hard” committees as they are known to reflect what is traditionally looked upon as men’s interests. Defence and Internal affairs are known to be a typically male dominated area, and covers areas like the military and the police. Works, Housing and Communications is a committee that deals with infrastructure. The latter committee, the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs focuses on matters concerned with legal matters, like law reforms.

During a Parliamentary debate in October 2001, the absence of women in one of the Sessional Committees was noticed and commented. When the Speaker announced that some Hon. Members had gone to Kasese district to witness the return of army troops from the Democratic Republic of Congo, some women members stood up and protested against the fact that no women were part of the delegation:

MRS.MUGERWA: Mr. Speaker, I have heard you reading the names of the people who were invited from this House to escort you to go and witness the return of the sons of Uganda. Unfortunately, this was a stag delegation; no woman was among the delegates! Does

this mean that women are not concerned with the issue of their sons being in the Congo? Is it really good for even the Woman Representative from Kasese not to be part of your delegation?

THE SPEAKER: I received the invitation on Sunday, and the ceremony was to take place the following day. Actually, the invitation was to me and the Members of the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs. I regret to note that no woman Member of Parliament volunteered to sit on this particular Committee (Parliamentary Hansard, 16.10.2001)

In this particular case women noticed their absence in the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs. Whether or not they have “learnt” something from this particular case is hard to tell, but in the 2002/2003 parliamentary period, one woman, who also became the deputy-chair, is now member of that committee.

5.1.5 Committees with a high female representation

The *Standing Committees* that have a high representation of women are the Committee on Local Governments Accounts, Committee on Business and Welfare, HIV/Aids committee and Equal Opportunity Committee. The Committee of Local Governments Accounts main task is to examine the audited accounts which have been given to the Local Governments. The Business and Welfare Committee coordinates the work of the other Standing Committees, and prepares rota of ministers to be in the House to answer questions. This committee does not meet in public, and are only to meet at the request of the Speaker. Moreover, there is a high female representation in the Committee on HIV/Aids, a committee which is supposed to look into to the country’s policy on matters like HIV/Aids drugs and to be a link between the Parliament and the Uganda AIDS Commission in combating the epidemic (New Vision, 08.02.2002). Finally, there is also a high female representation in the Equal Opportunity Committee. This committee works to ensure that all people have equal opportunities regardless of e.g. gender and physical disabilities. It has also worked for the establishment of an equal opportunity commission as provided for in the Constitution, Article 32 (1). (New Vision, 09.09.2002) In the *Sessional Committees*, women are over-represented in two committees; namely the Committee on Social Welfare and the Committee on Presidential and Foreign Affairs. The former committee is a typical “soft” committee. In contrast, the latter committee has not traditionally been perceived as a “soft” committee. Nonetheless, as can be seen from the table above, women are fairly well

represented in this committee. It is interesting, however, that some prominent women politicians are members of this committee: among the 9 women represented in this committee, 3 women are directly elected and are well known figures in Ugandan politics, while at least two other women elected on the women's ticket frequently participate in the public debates.

5.1.6 “Acting For” women through committee memberships?

In Uganda, with an exception of two committees, female committee representation is rather good: in 6 out of 9 Standing Committees women have a representation above 24%. In the Sessional Committees, women have a representation above 20% in 7 out of 10 committees. There is a relatively high percentage of women in the “hard” committees, as there is a relatively high percentages of men in the “soft” committees. However, misrepresentations can be found in certain committees: women are over-represented in some committees, while in under-represented in some. The misrepresentations correspond to the distinction between “soft” and “hard” committees.

One committee with a relatively high female representation is the Local Government Committee. This committee focuses on Local Councils, and it can be argued that this is a “soft” committee since the Local Councils are political bodies that amongst other work to improve conditions within health, education and water – typically reproductive and “soft” sectors perceived to be women's responsibility. As previously mentioned, there is a gender division of labour in Uganda where women's role and activities tend to be local and community bound (Kwagala, 2000:124, Tukahebwa, 2000:15). Thus, there is a distinction between committees with a local and national focus: women seem to be better represented in committees that focus on the local level, while men seem to be better represented in committees that focus on the national level (e.g. the National Economy Committee)⁴⁷. Moreover, women are well represented in two Committees which particular focus on matters important for women: the HIV/Aids Committee, and the Equal Opportunity

⁴⁷ Moreover, women are also over-represented in the Business and Welfare Committee. This committee shall co-ordinate various activities within Parliament. The Business and Welfare Committee proposes the timeframe within which bills shall be completed, recommends time for debate, co-ordinates the work of the other Standing Committees, and facilitates proper attention to the welfare needs of the Members. This is not a typical “soft” committee, but it is, nonetheless a ‘local’ committee. It is local in the sense that it only focuses on issues within the Parliament itself, and it is natural to assume that this committee is not as political prestigious as committees that focuses on national issues outside parliament – like the Public Account Committee and the Committee on National Economy.

Committee. The HIV/Aids Committee can be considered to be of importance for women since the Aids epidemic in Africa is especially hard on women. They are often left as caretakers of orphans, and to nurse the sick (Tripp, 2000:115). The latter committee, the Equal Opportunity Committees, handles issues related to equal opportunity. Given that the Ugandan society is a pre-dominantly patriarchal society, it is natural to assume that women, more often than men, are discriminated against, e.g. in land issues and divorce cases. A strong female voice in these committees may secure that Ugandan women's needs and interests are heard. Women are also well represented in the Social Welfare Committee. The Social Welfare Committee covers areas like education, health, and gender. This is a committee which relates to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education and Sports. These are ministries that implement program related to children, health issues like immunisation, and educational matters like school fees⁴⁸.

However, Uganda is not the only African country where women are over-represented in "soft" committees. When comparing Uganda with South Africa, and Namibia, two countries with a high female representation in Parliament, an almost equal trend is revealed⁴⁹. Before illustrating this, it is important to have in mind, that in South Africa and Namibia women are elected to Parliament through political parties. Consequently, it is natural to assume that it is little, or no, confusion regarding who the female legislators represent, and that they do not feel the same obligation to "Act For" women as the case is in Uganda.

Like Uganda, South Africa and Namibia have a relatively high female representation in most of their Parliamentary committees: In South Africa⁵⁰ women are represented in all portfolio committees, as well as in the two Standing Committees. However, in only 8 out of 27, they are represented with 30% (i.e. their numerical strength) or more. They are,

⁴⁸ Information obtained from the Parliamentary web-page: <http://www.parliament.go.ug>

⁴⁹ I find it natural to assume that this division of labour in society is also visible in Namibia and South Africa as well. This means that issues considered important for women in Uganda are also of importance for women in Namibia and South Africa. The type of committees where female legislators may "Act For" women resembles those of Uganda. See Appendix F for the gender breakdown of the different committees in South Africa and Namibia

⁵⁰ The National Assembly appoints from among its members a number of portfolio committees to shadow the work of the various national government departments. In addition, the National Assembly has two Standing Committees: Public Accounts and Members' Legislative Proposals and Petitions

however, represented with 20% or more in 20 out of the 27 committees. South Africa, like Uganda has a high female representation in “soft” committees. In the Social Development Committee, there is 61% women, 31 percentage points above the numerical strength. Moreover, in the Committee of Education, as well as in the Committee of Health, there is 51% women. In Namibia⁵¹, with 26% women in Parliament, female representation in the committees ranges from 16% to 45%, and there are no committees without women. In 6 out of 10 committees, women are represented with the numerical strength of 26% or more. In the Human Resources Committee 38 % of the members are women, while the Equality and Gender Development Committee has 45% women. Thus, in both of these committees female legislators are represented well beyond their numerical strength of 26%.

Conclusively, female legislators in Uganda, South Africa and Namibia are well represented in the so-called “soft” committees. Accordingly, it cannot be argued that female legislators in Uganda, through their committee membership in Parliament, tend to “Act For” women more than their colleagues in South Africa and Namibia, as it would be natural to assume due to the ‘double’ representation, and the unique way of implementing female representation in the Parliament.

5.1.7 Summing Up

This section on committee memberships aimed at challenging the “Standing For” descriptive representation and “Acting For” representation, and has revealed that Ugandan MPs are rather well distributed in the different committees: Women are relatively well represented (given their numerical strength) in a number of the so-called “hard ” committees, while men are relatively well represented in the so-called “soft” committees. Thus, it seems as if there are some women who do not feel obligated to be represented in committees focusing on matters considered to be of importance for the Ugandan women. This gives credence to the fact that there are affirmative action women who regard themselves as representatives that merely “Stand For” women. Nevertheless, it has also been revealed that there is an over-representation of women in “soft” committees in Uganda, and this shouldn’t be ignored. The over-representation of women in “soft” committees indicates that a number of women MPs are represented in committees focusing

⁵¹ In Namibia there are mainly Standing Committees. Select Committees are only created to inquire into and report on a particular matter

on matters important for women in particular given the division of labour in society. It is not clear, however, why so many women are represented in these committees: It may be because quite many women in Parliament want to work with matters important for women, or it may be because these are committees they feel familiar with as women. With such a high female representation, it is natural to assume that some, if not all, of the women will identify and represent a perspective that is of importance for women in particular. However, by looking at female representation in South Africa and Namibia, an almost equal trend occurs, i.e. an over-representation in “soft” committees. Accordingly, the over-representation in the “soft” committees in Uganda is not necessarily linked to the separate women’s elections and the ‘double’ representation in Parliament.

Furthermore, as mentioned, the separate women’s elections rest as a foundation when I developed the “Act As” representative model. So, when aiming at developing a thorough insight into the characteristics of female representation in Parliament, some answer to the following questions will be sought: Are the close ties between female MPs and the current regime visible in Parliament? Do female legislators have a real possibility to enhance legislation important for them? Do they have the political willingness it takes to fight the Government in controversial issues? Or has the all-inclusive movement system turned into a political system where women are merely elected as an “alibi” reflecting the gender-sensitive political system?

5.2 A united women’s caucus

The term caucus refers to a private meeting of a faction or party group. According to Kayunga (2001), the formation of caucuses is a common characteristic of Parliaments in no party political systems. In Uganda this is a relatively new phenomenon in the legislative process, and it is closely associated with the no-party system. Taken into consideration that there is no formally organised opposition, the caucuses have played an important role in Parliament where they are expected to act as collective opposition to the executive branch (Kayunga, 2001:190). The 7th Parliament has the following caucuses: The Parliamentary Advocacy Forum⁵², The Movement Caucus⁵³, The Uganda Women Parliamentary

⁵² The Parliamentary Advocacy Forum is the caucus who is currently in opposition to the Movement

⁵³ The Movement Caucus consists of MPs supporting the Movement, but also MPs who have some reservations regarding the Movement system.

Association, and The Young Parliamentarian Association⁵⁴. Additionally, each region has its own caucus⁵⁵.

The goal of the Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA) is to “discuss, share experiences and support activities that would enhance women’s participation, effective representation and leadership in political, economic and social activities in (Parliament) in Uganda”. There are three groups of members in UWOPA: (i) Ordinary members including all female MPs, (ii) Associate members which include those who subscribe and share UWOPA’s aims, objectives, visions and missions, and (iii) Honorary members that have made a substantial contribution to UWOPA⁵⁶.

5.2.1 The Women’s Caucus

The history of the women’s caucus in the Parliament of Uganda can be traced back to the Constituent Assembly (CA) which was elected in 1994. Out of 286 delegates, 52 (18%) were women, - and most of them participated in the women’s caucus. (Tripp, 2000:77). The women’s caucus was a non-partisan organisation which aimed at achieving a consensus on issues related to women. The women’s caucus in the CA turned out to be effective and women were able to talk with one voice and raise common objectives turning the women’s caucus into the most coherent caucus in the CA. (Tripp:2000:77, Women’s Landmarks 1995:15). In the CA the women’s caucus did not take a stand on the debate on the country’s political system, and since it was a non-partisan caucus, it did not establish a relationship with the multiparty caucus called the National Caucus for Democracy (Goetz, 2002:560).

In the CA, one important event may have increased the women’s caucus effectiveness: The creation of a Gender Information Centre. The overall objective to the Information Centre was to support the delegates when debating constitutional provisions that aimed at promoting women in all respects. The Information Centre was organised by the National Association of Women’s Organisations in Uganda, and soon turned out to be an important meeting place for the electorate, delegates, as well as NGOs focusing on women (Women’s

⁵⁴ The Young Parliamentary Association is a caucus consisting of Members who have been in Parliament for only one or two terms. In the previous Parliament, this caucus was critical to the Movement system, but has now been infiltrated by Movementists (Goetz, 2002)

⁵⁵ This information is based on interviews

⁵⁶ Information found in an UWOPA pamphlet

Landmarks 1995: 19). The support the CA delegates got from the women's movement was important, if not decisive, in the process of fighting for the provisions in the Constitution concerning the status and participation of women in Uganda⁵⁷ (Oloka-Onyango, 2000:11, Tamale, 1999:117).

The caucus, in co-operation with the women's movement, was effective in implementing Article 31 (on the family), Article 32 (on affirmative action) and Article 33 (on the rights of women) of the Constitution. In comparison with the two previous constitutions, the 1962 Independence Constitution and the 1967 Constitution, there are Articles in the 1995 Constitution which specifically take women's rights into account. In other words, women's presence and deliberation in the CA were effective. Despite the women's caucus achievements in securing a Constitution which acts as a fundament when discussing issues important for women, it is beyond doubt that the Constitution needs strong back-up of the laws. The Constitution may be weakened by passing laws that serves to decrease the status of women⁵⁸.

One danger with establishing a separate caucus for women is that they may prevent gender issues from being discussed in the whole Parliament. In Uganda, the women's caucus seems to be aware of this limitation. The tactic that has been used by the women's caucus, right from the CA to the present, is to lobby and get the support from gender-sensitive male members of Parliament. In controversial issues, they get some of the male members to argue their cases. Alliances are, in other words, made with 'gender friendly' male colleagues. For instance when representatives to the East African Assembly were to be elected, the caucus decided that they wanted at least four out of nine delegates to be women. The caucus then decided that a man had to move the motion in Parliament (Interview, Kampala 05.08.02). The male legislators seem to continuously move, and campaign for, motions on behalf of the women's caucus. After years of debating the Domestic Relations Bill, four men were asked to campaign for the passing of the Bill. As one female legislator told New Vision: "When male colleagues join us, it will help us

⁵⁷ See appendix C for an outline of the Gender-Friendly Articles in the 1995 Constitution

⁵⁸ This happened in China where the 1949 Constitution granted women and men equal status. Nevertheless, laws and legal traditions served to destroy these provisions (Women's Landmarks 1995:47)

balance the message and make it more meaningful and applicable to men and women” (New Vision, 12.11.2002).

5.2.2 The Women’s Caucus – a Movement Caucus?

As indicated above, the women’s caucus in CA spoke with one voice in matters related to women, despite their different political affiliations. In the previous chapter, I indicated that most affirmative action women in Parliament seem to support the Movement. One manifestation of this is the united women’s caucus. As one woman put it: “much as we have a few women who would love to have a multiparty system, a lot of women do subscribe to the Movement kind of government because of the affirmative action given to women for any position” (Interview, Kampala, 16.08.2002). Moreover, the notion that the women’s caucus is basically a Movement caucus is strengthened by looking at the ‘membership’ in the Movement caucus. In the 6th Parliament Tamale (1999:103) found that women elected from the affirmative action seats constituted the core of the Movement caucus, a caucus that lobbies and promotes Government policies in Parliament. This again gives credence to the findings that most of the affirmative action women support the Movement making it natural to assume that the women’s caucus consists mainly of NRM supporters.

In the previous chapter, I also indicated that women from some northern part of Uganda, as well as some of the directly elected MPs, do not necessarily have a strong connection to the Movement. One of my respondents, an affirmative action woman from the northern part of Uganda was not a member of the caucus. She argued that she was never called to their meetings, but even if she was called she would not attend. Her main reason was that she was not particularly interested in women’s issues; the second reason was that she considered the Women’s Caucus to be a Movement caucus (Interview, Kampala: 21.08.2002). I find her observations important, as it strengthens the notion that most women in Parliament have close ties to the current regime, but that this connection seems to be looser amongst women elected from areas where the NRM support is less strong

Given that some of female members of the caucus are critical of the Movement system, the caucus appears to be divided when the cases discussed are opposed to the executive position.

As one of the directly elected women, a UPC supporter advocate:

“I think the caucus is mainly divided on the issues of democracy and multipartyism. This crusade for women’s emancipation was intensified during the NRM regime, and so many of the women look at the NRM as their Godfather. You, know without NRM they would not probably have been here. So, on matters concerning human rights, multipartyism and things like that, we always disagree because the majority of the women are actually Movement supporters” (Interview, Kampala 12.08.2002).

This small division has often prevented the caucus from discussing politically loaded issues which centres on matters related to the country’s political system, i.e. on whether or not Uganda shall continue with the no-party political system. As one woman said “controversial issues have not been brought up because we agree as women on certain issues, but when it comes to political issues, we disagree. So we can’t get political issues in that group” (Interview, Kampala, 28.08.2002). In the 7th Parliament there have not yet been any controversial issues that could have divided the women in the caucus, as the main work of the caucus has concentrated on workshops and capacity building (Interview, Kampala, 28.08.2002).

There have also been allegations that whenever important issues are to be discussed in the whole Parliament, the executive invites women to meetings and inform them on what the Government position is (Interview, Kampala, 06.08.2002). If this is the case, the executive takes advantage of the fact that the women’s caucus consists of Movement supporters. And as mentioned in the previous chapter, in an “atomised” parliament like Uganda, it can be an advantage for the Government to have a group represented in Parliament that is easy to identify.

The women’s caucus in Uganda is not as divided as one would assume they would be, had Uganda had MPs from two or more political parties. In South Africa there have been attempts at creating a Women’s Parliamentary Group which aims at incorporating women parliamentarians from all parties. However, the minority parties did not support it and to a certain extent considered it to be controlled by the ANC (Geisler, 2000:622). A study by Hege Skjeie in Norway showed that in cases where there are competing loyalties, the party loyalty largely prevails (Skjeie, 1991:249). Thus, in countries with MPs elected through

political parties, caucuses appear to face problems developing a unity as the party loyalty is often the prevailing loyalty. This problem seems to be less visible in Uganda, as the women's caucus have raised issues important for women and talked with one voice. Mostly because the women's caucus seem to have members with the same loyalties.

The unity of the women's caucus gives credence to the notion that most affirmative action support the Movement system, and that they are expected to "Act As" Movementists in Parliament. The women's close ties to the current regime has not only prevented the caucus from discussing issues that are politically loaded, but also prevented it from discussing matters that are controversial in the sense that they challenge the Government. This has also made it difficult for female legislators to promote legislation important for women.

5.3 *Enhancing legislation for women*

"Women right up to the village, when they see me talking, when they hear me talking, they will know that the women of Uganda is in Parliament, in leadership, and things will move in her favour" (Vice President Kazibwe: Parliamentary Hansard, 12.07.2001).

The above statement came from the Vice-President, in one the first days of the 7th parliament. It indicates that she as the Vice President, as well as female legislators shall "Act For" Ugandan women⁵⁹. This section will take as a point of departure two issues my respondents argued were of importance for women. One of them is the Land Act, which was passed in Parliament in 1998, but without the co-ownership clause securing women the right to inherit land. The second contested issue is the Domestic Relations Bill, which is yet to be passed⁶⁰. These are both of importance for Ugandan women in Uganda since they challenge some of the discriminating patriarchal structures that seemingly exist in Uganda.

Given that Uganda is a pre-dominantly patriarchal society, there are customs which discriminate towards women. As in most part of Africa, women's central role in agriculture is widely recognised. Nonetheless, with regard to land management, women in Uganda face constraints in different areas, and one such central area is the limited access to and control

⁵⁹ This stands in contrast to what I referred to in the previous chapter, where the Vice President argued that the affirmative action women are merely role models, and that they are not representing women in particular.

⁶⁰ See appendix H for Rules of Procedure when enacting new laws

over land. Cultivable land is the basic resource for food and livelihood of many Ugandans, and thus the most important factor for the poor. In Uganda most land is acquired by inheritance rather than purchase. These land titles are often vested in men either by legal or socio-economic norms. Women are less likely to have the same rights as men regarding the use, improvement, or disposal of land. In some parts of the country women are even prohibited from owning land altogether (Karuhanga-Beraho, 2002:93). It is not only in matters related to land women experience discrimination, also in matters like marriage and divorce, child custody and inheritance women face constraints. The 1964 Divorce Act, which is still in use, makes it easier for a man to divorce a woman, than for a woman to divorce a man. In order to seek a divorce, a man has to prove that the woman has committed adultery. In contrast adultery is not a good enough reason for a woman to be granted a divorce. Moreover, the meaning of adultery is biased. A man commits adultery only if he has intercourse with a married woman, not with an unmarried woman. In contrast, if a woman has an affair with an unmarried man it is legally considered adultery (Tripp, 2000:76-77).

These are all discriminating issues that have a direct impact on women's lives, and passing laws dealing with these problems would enhance most women's strategic interests. These issues came up in the 6th Parliament, and are still debated in the 7th Parliament. Did female legislators have the possibility to "Act For" women in these matters, or did they experience difficulties doing so given their binding to the current regime?

5.3.1 The Land Act

According to the Fifteen Point Movement Program, which came in 1999, the Movement specifies that it wants to change some of the discriminating factors that exist in the contemporary Ugandan society. It is stipulated that: The Movement through the land law shall pursue a policy that guarantees matrimonial property and the right to inheritance by the girl child. (The Fifteen Point Movement Program, 1999:47). Women in Uganda cultivate as much as 70% -80% of the land, while they only own 10% of it. Consequently, it is mostly men who control the crop (Matembe:2002: 237, Emasu, 2003:22). The Land Act, which was passed in Parliament in the 6th Parliament, is: "An Act to provide for the tenure, ownership and management of land; to amend and consolidate the law relating to tenure, ownership and management of land; and to provide for other related or incidental

matters” (Land Act, 1998: Introduction). During the deliberation of the Land Act attempts were made by female legislators and civil society organisations to put an end to discriminatory practices in land issues.

According to women rights groups, the most important clause in the Land Act was the one that allowed spouses to co-own property. The basic principle behind the co-ownership clause is that both husband and a wife shall equally own the land where their home is situated. It is argued that if women were co-owners of land together with their spouses, they would have been in charge of their own income, and consequently be financially independent of their husbands (Asiimwe, 2002b:127). The Land Act, with the co-ownership clause, was discussed and approved of by the Parliament. However, when the Land Act was returned to Parliament from the executive, the clause was missing. As a result of this, the co-ownership clause is now being referred to as the “lost clause” (Asiimwe, 2002a, Asiimwe, 2002b:121). To my knowledge there have been few, or none, official statements why the clause was left out, but it seems natural to assume that it was left out because it was too controversial. Traditionally, in Uganda women have not owned land, and as Asiimwe says: “Women are regarded as being unable to own property in their own right, and are regarded as mere trustees for male kin” (Asiimwe, 2002a). Shortly after, a proposal was made by the Cabinet to place the co-ownership clause in the Domestic Relations Bill. The women’s rights groups, the most during the Land Act process, considered this to be a delaying tactic (Asiimwe, 2002a).

Despite the fact that the co-ownership clause was left out, the women’s caucus won one important battle. Article 40 in the Land Act, stipulates that it is not allowed to sell land without a written consent from both spouses. And as one of my respondents stated: “The consent of the women when they are selling land is something that we feel proud of, because normally the man will sell land in a drinking place” (Interview, Kampala 06.08.2002).⁶¹

⁶¹ This view was supported by Khadiagala (2001:69), where she argues that there seems to be a strategic use of beers among men. LC officials use their positions to accumulate land, buying it from men in bars. The LCs are supposed to solve disputes in matters concerning land and property rights. However, as the men who sell off family land are often drinking partners with the LC officials, it is frequently hard for women to win the case. A nation wide study on poverty found that enforcement of laws against alcohol is weak in part because police, and LC officials are frequently among the brewers or local customers.

The Land Act resurfaced April 2003, when the President wanted the Act to provide for acquisition of land for private interests for example in big private investments⁶². (Monitor, 28.03.2003). The Ugandan Land alliance, a network consisting of different NGOs, took advantage of the situation and demanded for inclusion of the 'lost clause' in the amendment. The amendment sought to have both children and spouses registered on land certificates. The Speaker did not want to put the amendment to vote as he had "sensed tension and conflict in the house" and therefore the Speaker requested that the Parliament set up a select committee with equal numbers of males and females (New Vision, 15.04.2003). The select committee again decided, in collaboration with the Government, that the clause was to be included in the Domestic Relations Bill.

In June 2003, the chairmen of the select committee tabled a report in Parliament. He said that, after receiving consultations from experts on land, banking institutions, civil society and other groups, the committee had come to an agreement that it was not feasible to adopt the 'lost clause'. Among other, the inclusion of the 'lost clause' would increase the cost of lending as there would be need for preparing various consents, powers of attorneys and transfer costs. The Minister of Land said this was fully supported by the Government (Monitor, 12.06.2003). In other words, the committees advised the Parliament to drop the 'lost clause' as it would be too expensive to transfer all land to include both men and women as owners.

5.3.2 The Domestic Relations Bill

The contents of the Domestic Relation Bill (DRB) have been debated in Uganda for the last forty years. The DRB is a spillover from the 6th to the 7th Parliament, and is currently in Cabinet. The Bill aims at protecting the rights of women in areas like polygamy, abolition of the bride price, child custody, divorce, inheritance, consent in sexual relations and property ownership. This Bill is highly controversial, and has met resistance from various parts of society; for example many Muslims have rejected the parts regarding polygamous marriages, while some men object to the issue regarding marital rape (Goetz, 2002:564).

⁶² Article 237 in the Constitution only gives the Government powers to acquire land if it is to be used for public interest

Given that there are so many controversial issues in the DRB, the Bill will most likely suffer some serious setbacks if it ever arrives to the floor in Parliament. Matembe, the current Minister of Ethics and Integrity, explicitly made her views known on the future of the DRB, as well as on the inclusion of the co-ownership clause clear: “Since anyone who knows the Domestic Relations Bill is dead, dead, dead, this was the same as killing the co-ownership clauses forever” (Matembe, 2002:252). Nonetheless, the Speaker of Parliament has pledged to support the Domestic Relations Bill when it gets to Parliament. He said that he would “accord it the importance it deserves. I will ask the committee concerned to expeditiously, scrutinise the Bill and interview the people concerned, so that we can pass it“. He said that since women are partners, he would do the best to get the law enacted (New Vision, 16.12 2002).

Both the Land Act and the DRB have been heavily debated in Uganda. However, given that most affirmative action women have a close connection to the current regime, they seem to have difficulties in challenging the Government on these matters. It is in civil society, where the Land Act and, to a certain extent, the DRB have been energetically fought. Thus, the “Acting For” representation is compromised by the expectation that affirmative action women are expected to be representatives who “Act As” Movementists in Parliament for one important reason: there is a lack of will among female ministers, as well as female legislators, to confront controversial issues in Parliament. Consequently, the battle for passing these Amendments and Bills are left to civil society. Moreover, women’s of enhancing legislation considered as important for women has been compromised by a strong executive branch.

5.3.3 Lack of will to confront controversial issues

Despite the fact that the Movement political system appears to be gender friendly in nature, women in Uganda are still discriminated against due to patriarchal practices that still exist. One reason is as Oloka-Onyango argues that female legislators only occasionally speak out against the male chauvinism (Oloka-Onyango, 1992:105). This view has also been supported by opposition politician Byanyima (2003) who argues that many women in Parliament are inexperienced and vulnerable to a strong Movement. Few of them can stand up and take a firm position against the Movement.

According to Tripp, the Land Act seems to have put Museveni's most loyal supporters on a test. The Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development has been more loyal to Museveni, than to the women's cause (Tripp, 2002b: 425). Miria Matembe, who currently is the Minister of Ethics and Integrity, was in fact the one who moved the co-ownership motion in the 6th Parliament, when she was 'only' an MP. After she was appointed minister, she found herself almost alone among her Ministerial colleagues in arguing for the 'lost clause' (Tripp, 2002b:425). However, as Oloka-Onyango (2000:36) points out, Matembe has been uncharacteristically mute on women's issues after she was appointed Minister. After the 'lost clause'⁶³ was moved to the DRB, she rarely spoke openly against the Government. Moreover, the female Vice-President has openly told women to put an end to the fight for the clause. At the Women's World 2003 Conference the Vice-President, at the closing ceremony, advised women to go out and buy their own land instead of co-own. She argued that the co-ownership clause jeopardises the marriage balance (New Vision, 15.08.2002). Nevertheless, some women have actively brought the 'lost' clause to attention. Winnie Byanyima, an outspoken opposition politician who has been directly elected, has called on fellow activists to join in the struggle. She argues that "women are the voters and the Movement will lose their vote unless the co-ownership clause is brought back to board" (Tripp, 2002b: 424). Also few ministers, as well as few Members in Parliament have fronted Domestic Relations Bill. When the DRB was debated in the 6th Parliament, Janat Mukwaya was the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development. She is a Muslim, and refused to be associated with the Bill. In the 7th Parliament she was appointed Minister of Justice and Constitutional affairs, and she is not likely to promote the DRB in the Ministry. The female Deputy Speaker, who has worked as a women's right lawyer, has not offered any support to the Bill. There also seems to be a lack of will among women MPs to confront the DRB in Parliament. Goetz (2002) claims that the prominent women like Winnie Byanyima, Miria Matembe, or Proscovia Salaamu Musumba, who have been vocal on women rights issues, have not wanted to risk their political career on such unpopular legislation. The latter withdrew an offer to table the DRB as a private members bill. (Goetz, 2002:565).

⁶³ The 'lost clause' is also referred to as the Matembe Amendment since she was the one who moved the co-ownership clause in Parliament

The lack of will to debate these issues is also revealed when looking at the activities on the floor of Parliament. During the first year in the 7th Parliament only one woman from the North and one directly elected woman stood up in Parliament and asked about the DRB⁶⁴. This was also the case with the ‘lost clause’ in the Land Act. In the 7th Parliament, the issue of co-ownership has, so far, only rarely been brought to attention in Parliament, and when it has surfaced, it has been promoted by directly elected women, or women from the northern part of the country. Hon. Alice Alasso, from Soroti, mentioned the co-ownership clause when the Parliament discussed the Financial Institutions Bill:

“Mr Speaker, the other thing I wish to mention is on land and natural resources. In the Budget Speech we are talking about the security of land tenure. What does this security of land tenure mean to the Ugandan woman when the Co-ownership Bill is lost somewhere? (*Applause*) Nobody is showing us where this Co-ownership Bill disappeared from and the Ugandan women continue to toil day and night. We produce but we do not have control, we produce but we cannot predict into the future. If Government is committed to this statement of security of land tenure, why doesn't it come up with that lost bill and clause so that the women are encouraged to make their input into production?” (Parliamentary Hansard, 18.07.2002)

Given that the DRB, as well as the ‘lost clause’ in the Land Act only has been brought to attention a few times, either by women from the northern part of Uganda or by directly elected women, this gives credence to the belief that female legislators who are either directly elected, or elected from the northern part of Uganda, have a weaker binding to the Movement Government than the majority of the affirmative action women. Thus, they may feel less obligated to “Act As” Movement representatives in Parliament.

The women’s caucus in Parliament has, however, established contact with civil society organisations both in debates on the Land Act, and the Domestic Relations Bill. In 2002 a coalition between the women’s caucus and the coalition on the DRB initiated a campaign for lobbying the Bill (Tripp:2002a:9, Kayunga, 2001:199). Nevertheless, the debates in Parliament on these matters have been rather few. These matters have without doubt been most vigorously debated in civil society. Little or nothing indicates that some women have

⁶⁴ See their statements in Appendix G

taken personal responsibility to front the DRB in Parliament, which again affects the 'lost clause'.

5.3.4 The role of civil society

In Uganda, there is a strong women's movement that has fought for issues considered to be important for women, and they were also deeply involved in the discussion of the Land Act (Tripp, 2000: 76). A broad coalition, consisting of NGOs in civil society, was set up to advocate for land to the poor. The coalition, called the Land Alliance, is leading a lobbying effort in support of the 'lost clause'. The Land Alliance combined their expertise and resources and lobbied the Parliament to pass the co-ownership clause. Meetings were set up with policymakers and a public forum was organised. One of its major events was on the women's day in year 2000. Thousands of women marched in Rukungiri district where the national celebrations took place, and members of women's groups from all parts of the country came to Rukungiri. The women had big banners demanding that they had the right to own land. They argued that by giving women the opportunity to co-own land, they would be financially secured: their inheritance rights would be protected and they would be less financially dependent on their husband. The women's movement declared the women's day as a day of mourning rather than a day of celebration. In Africa, Asimwe argues, mourning signifies a great loss, especially when it is done publicly (Women in Action, Asimwe, 2002b:126-130). In April 2003, when the Land Act was to be amended, over 100 land right demonstrators from various NGOs marched from the Constitutional Square to Parliament, demanding for the inclusion of the 'lost clause', recently renamed 'family land rights clause'. Again, they argued that the enactment of the clause would protect the rights of women and children, thereby promoting gender equality and equity in the family (New Vision, 30.04.2003). Tripp (2002a:427) argues that:

“The conflict over the Land Law showed how women's organisations took their struggle to transform deeply entrenched customary practices and institutions into the political arena and directly challenged economic and political constraints blocking them”.

Although, civil society has not organised itself in the firm manner as it did in relation to the Land Act, it is still lobbying for the DRB to be passed. FIDA (a Ugandan Association of Women Lawyers) worked closely with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development when drawing up the DRB (Tripp, 2000:76). Civil society has followed up by

arranging various workshops, and lobbying efforts are organised. For instance, in June 2003, a round-table was organised by the organisation Law and Advocacy for Women in Uganda. There they agreed to soften their stand on the bride price to accommodate the popular support of the practice (New Vision, 21.07.2003).

However, given female representatives' lack of will to confront the Land Act and the DRB in Parliament, these issues have been most vigorously fought in civil society. As will be revealed below, the possibility of enhancing legislation important for women has also been weakened by the President's direct interference in these matters.

5.3.5 The power of the Executive Branch

With regard to the Land Act, the power of the executive branch was noticed when the Land Bill was sent back to Parliament, without the co-ownership clause securing women with a right to inherit land. Most likely the clause was left out because it was too controversial. During the debate in spring 2003, when the law came up for amendment, allegations were made that Cabinet Members and strong Movement MPs had received a presidential directive ordering them not to pass the 'lost clause' amendment. (New Vision, 22.04.2003). Moreover, President Museveni has several times argued that co-ownership of land between spouses will only tempt greedy women to grab a share of their husbands' property (Emasu, 2003:23). He has also gone as far as to argue that men and women will shy away from marriages for fear of losing properties to unscrupulous spouses. Moreover, he has argued that there will be quite a few murders because those who get into marriage relationships without love will take the first opportunity to kill off their counter-parts in order to take over the inheritance (Mishambi, 2003). It took months for some women MPs and civil society organisations to trace the 'lost clause'. They were told that there were procedural irregularities in the way they had tabled the amendment. Finally, the President admitted that he had intervened personally and removed it (Goetz, 2002:564).

Also, during the DRB process, President Museveni took personal interest in the matter. In October 2002, the President wrote to the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, and took personal responsibility for the delay of DRB. The President argued that the DRB is rather shallow and cannot address the issues of the Ugandan society. Furthermore, he argued that the DRB is trying to copy the extravagant western life style – a lifestyle which

he argues has led to an enormous damage to humanity and thousands of broken families. In his response to the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, he poses questions like: “Do we make the men do the same home chores as women? Do we make the family a centre of love and mutual appreciation or a market place for property bargains?” (Mishambi, 2003). In January 2003, Museveni once again explained the delay in the Domestic Relation Bill. He said that it was delayed for scrutiny so that more comprehensive clauses could be added to ensure that families are ‘firmly and happy rooted’ (New Vision, 27.01.2003).

The DRB and the inclusion of the co-ownership clause in the Land Act represented an important opportunity for the Government to put in place laws that confirm the gender-sensitive articles in the Constitution. Moreover, it represented an opportunity for the Government to really show its willingness to promote the emancipation of women. When the Cabinet suggested that the co-ownership clause should be placed in the Domestic Relations Bill, women’s groups threatened to boycott the 2000 referendum and encourage rural women to do the same, if the Government failed to ensure that the demand about the co-ownership clause were taken seriously (Asiimwe, 2002:130). The Minister of Gender in the 6th Parliament, Janet Mukwaya was deployed by the state to request women to abandon their threat against the referendum (Oloka-Onyango, 2000:102).

If the DRB is ever passed in Parliament, it will most likely be without the co-ownership clause, merely because it is not a domestic issue. As Tripp (2002b:426) argues, the DRB is already loaded with controversial issues, and by adding yet another controversial issue, the debate on the DRB stands in danger of being locked completely. These cases have shown that the power of the executive compromises the power of the legislative branch. It does not only compromise the desire some women have as “Acting For” representatives, it compromises the whole Parliament. This is illustrated by the President’s direct interference in controversial Bills, like the Land Bill (now an Act), as well as in relation to the DRB. As Goetz (2002) rightly argues, it seems to be impossible to pass legislation without the endorsement of the top political leadership in Uganda.

5.3.6 Summing Up

Women activists have not been very satisfied with the work of the women's caucus in the 6th Parliament. Especially this applies to its work on the Land Act (New Vision, 25.06.2001). Five years down the road, neither Government, nor Parliament is willing to include the 'lost cause' (Monitor, 30.07.2003). Furthermore, the women's caucus seems to have difficulties in "Acting For" women in certain matters such as the Land Act and the DRB, due to lack of will to confront controversial issues in Parliament. Instead this has been the task of civil society organisations. These have the autonomy required to challenge the Government in controversial matters. As can be recalled from the theoretical chapter, Voet argued that descriptive representation may have led to harmless women. When women in Uganda have been included as representatives in Parliament, it seems as if they may have become pacified. The process with the Land Act and the DRB seem to indicate that the female representation in Uganda is a weak instrument when challenging patriarchal structures. Thus, female representation in Parliament has only led to a limited ideological advantage for most Ugandan women.

Moreover, due to the President's personal involvement in these issues, in combination with a resistance from male parliamentarians and male ministers, there has been a continuous foot-dragging on these issues (Tripp, 2002b: 420). The *perspective* the women represented were also compromised by the executive branch. Subsequently, a fair outcome of the debate has not been institutionalised. Ottemoeller rightly argues that: "women's increased stature in politics has not resulted in significant policy initiatives" (Ottemoeller, 1999: 95).

The expectation that the affirmative action women are representatives that mainly support the Movement can be said to be based upon an agreement between women and the NRM: guarantees of representation are exchanged for support and loyalty. In the section below I argue that the all-inclusive movement has developed a 'logic of its own' in granting women reserved seats in various decision-making bodies. However, women are often placed in positions which hold a lot of formal power, but less real power. This gives some credence to the understanding that women tend to be an "alibi" for the gender-sensitive all-inclusive no-party system.

5.4 The “gender balance syndrome”

This part focuses on the granting of seats to women in various decision-making bodies, and what kind of positions women are placed in. Since the NRM gained power in 1986, reserved seats have been given to women in different decision-making bodies; all the way from village level to the regional East African level. Some of the seats are provided for in the Constitution, while some have been provided by laws. I will argue that these granting continuous granting of reserved seats tie the women even more to the current regime since they in this way are given even more ‘gifts’. Moreover, these seats often place women in deputy positions.

Ottemoeller (1999) argues that the Ugandan female representation is a result of an agreement between NRM and women: women’s political support has largely been paid by guarantees of representation, appointments in governments, and creation of directories of women affairs within government. He further argues that when securing women seats in various decision-making bodies, the NRM politicians answer one of women’s basic political demands. This agreement between women and the NRM, is political inexpensive as it prevents criticism from opposition politicians. In addition, the importance of gender within the donor-community, opposition politicians are likely to continue refraining from criticising the NRM gender policies (Ottemoeller, 1999:94-95).

5.4.1 Reserving Seats

When illustrating that the Movement system has turned into political system where women are guaranteed representation in decision-making bodies, the focus will be on decision-making bodies at the regional East African level, the local level, as well as on the various land management bodies.

At the regional East African level, women are guaranteed representation in the East African Assembly. The East African Assembly was established by a treaty which was intended to enhance further co-operation between the three East African States of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The East African Assembly consists of 27 elected members, nine from each country. When electing representatives to the East African Assembly, gender parity is supposed to be one important principle (Mambo, 2001). All the East African Assembly

members are elected from the National Assemblies. Both Tanzania and Uganda applied geographical and affirmative action criteria when they elected candidates. In Tanzania, five of the seven regions elected one representative while two regions elected two representatives⁶⁵. One-third of the delegates from Tanzania are women. In Uganda four regions were created, all sending two candidates each and according to the principle of one man and one woman from each district. The final candidate who was elected from a National Constituency was a man: currently 4 out of 9 Ugandan representatives are women. In Kenya only lip service was given to the principle of affirmative action. Not more than two women were elected, and one of these was the wife of the Minister in charge of Regional Co-operation. The low number of Kenyan women elected to the East African Legislative Assembly disappointed Kenyan women, and big protests took place in Arusha during the opening of the East African Assembly (Mambo, 2001).

Uganda is the country with most women represented in the East African Assembly (Mambo, 2001). At first, a committee in the Ugandan Parliament suggested that three out of nine members should be women, while six members should be elected without any gender consideration (Parliamentary Hansard, 05.10.2001). This was rejected by the women's caucus and it fought for proportional representation and won. Apparently the presentations of Ugandan female candidates were considered quite impressive. One of my informants noted the following:

“when we elected people to represent Uganda in the East African Assembly, we found that people who had put up the best presentations before us as candidates were women. In fact a motion was raised in Parliament that let all the eight seats be given to women because they acted so well. Of course, that's not how we wanted to do it.” (Interview, Kampala 12.08.2002).

The election process to the East African Assembly showed that women's presence in Parliament was important in relation to securing women seats in the East African Assembly. However, women have not only been secured female representation at the regional level, also in the Local Councils women have been secured representation. According to the Constitution, Article 182 (2), women are to have at least one-third of the

⁶⁵ Due to their large population, Zanzibar and Mbeya has two representatives each. (Mambo, 2001)

seats in the Local Councils⁶⁶. Before the 1995 Constitution, the RCs (renamed Local Councils) had only one position for women. This was a position called ‘women’s secretary’, and as Khadiagala (2001) argues, this was a position that had a greater symbolic than strategic significance. As she says: “It signalled to women that they have a legal right to participate in the public arena but the often sole female voice had little power to influence LC decisions (Khadiagala, 2001:64). Thus, it was realised that one position was not enough to change the position of women in politics and decision-making bodies. The women’s organisation, as well as the women’s caucus, managed to secure a mandatory one-third reservation for women at each LC level (Ahikire, 2001b:6). Moreover, the 1998 Land Act largely secured women representation in various *land management* bodies. The latter came as a result of the women’s caucus efforts (Interview, Kampala, 06.08.2002). The land management bodies are found at national level, district level and parish level. At the *national* level, there is the Uganda Land Commission which is to hold and manage land which is vested or acquired by the Constitution. At the *district* level there is the District Land Boards that among other are supposed to facilitate the registration of and transfer of interests in Land (Article, 60 [b]. For each *parish* a Land Committee is to assist the board in matters regarding land, including ascertaining rights in any land issues (Article 65 [6]). In these Commissions, Boards and Committees women have reserved seats. In the Land Commissions (at the parish level) and in the Land Committees (at the national level) there shall be at least one woman among the members (Article 48 [4] and Article 66 [2]). At the district level women shall be represented with at least one-third (Article 58 [3]).

Conclusively, besides being represented in Parliament, women are also represented at the regional East African level, in the Local Councils and in decision-making bodies related to land management. It may be argued that the Movement system has developed into a system where women have a chance to be represented and heard. With regard to the election of leadership positions, however, it has been argued that in most cases a man is elected leader while a woman is elected as his vice/deputy.

⁶⁶ See appendix for an exact composition of officials in the LCs.

5.4.2 The feminisation of the deputy position

Women occupy several deputy seats may contribute gain social acceptance for men and women being equally capable as leaders. However, in a short term perspective, by continuously appointing women to deputy positions, women are granted formal power, but frequently real power. Naturally, this depends on the leader in question. However, as directly elected Winnie Byanyima notes, it appears to be a problem that the vices/deputies are left with few tasks. During the appointment of Dr. Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe as vice-President, she noted the following:

‘I am proud of the fact that women are being appointed to very senior positions; it makes me happy but I am always concerned that gender does not become an issue to exploit, but that gender equality becomes firmly rooted in our political culture. We have very many vices and deputies right from the top to the village level. It is almost now a standing practice that when a leader is chosen, the vice is a woman but some recent research reveals that most of these women deputies are never really deputies. The opportunities never seem to arise. The people who occupy the real positions never seem to have time off for the deputies to have a hand at the job. And on the few occasions when they are not at their jobs, they will assign the responsibilities to other people so that the women vices do not seem to be gaining in experience on the job.[...] If the Vice President, hon. Speciosa Kazibwe is the person who will be our next President, I would like to see this transition. If she is not, then he should reconsider; he should think about an appointment that is most substantive, that will in turn become for us a smooth transition to new leadership at the top level’ (Parliamentary Hansard, 09.07.2001).

According to the Constitution, the Vice President is supposed to act as a deputy for the President when the need arises and perform such functions as is delegated to him/her. The problem raised by Byanyima in Parliament seems to be real: President Museveni is known to have delegated few tasks to his Vice President, leaving her with little to do. The number of times she has presided as a President is few – unless when considering the number of times she has attended important funerals on behalf of her boss (Monitor, 23.04.2003, 25.05.2003). The Presidents rarely talks about his female vice as a serious politician. Rather he refers to her as the immediate symbol of women’ liberation in Uganda (Monitor, 23.06.2003, Interview, Kampala 06.08.2002).

The feminisation of the deputy-role can also be illustrated by looking at the leadership positions in the LCs. Numbers from 1998 show that 45 males served LC5 chairpersons. There were no female chairs. However, in 40 out of 45 districts, the LC5 Vice Chairperson was a woman. Ahikire argues that “The forty deputy chairpersons out of 45 may reflect a situation where women are getting closer to power. But, in reality, there is a consistent trend emerging in local governments that mirrors marriage structures where the male is the head and female under him” (Ahikire: 2001a:18). Furthermore, it is interesting to notice that the vice-chairperson in LC1 and LC2 is also the Secretary for Children Welfare. This is a position one would assume is frequently occupied by women councillors given women’s role in society. (Ahikire, 200b: 7) In a study done by ACFODE⁶⁷ (Arise 2000), it was found that men nearly always took the lead, while women were trailing behind as deputies. Female deputy chairpersons found that they were only deputies in the name. Regardless, of how much work the chairperson had, he never seemed to delegate work to the deputy. Reportedly it has been argued that, “Many of these deputies have to wait for the Speaker or Chairperson to fall ill, lose a relative, or go away on an official trip, in order to get an opportunity to play their role” (Arise, 2000:42). For example, one woman was told to chair a meeting when the chair was going out of town. This was the first time in a year that she was going to lead a LC meeting. This meeting, however, turned out to be a meeting where the councillors were supposed to discuss a very difficult and controversial issue. Due to the short notice, she had little time to read and update herself on the matters that were to be discussed. It has been claimed that the chairperson did this deliberately so as to avoid the embarrassment of failing to handle the issue in council (Arise, no 29, 2000:42).

The position as a deputy chair can also be frustrating: a vice/deputy cannot rule alone, nor be in charge unless the chair/leader tell him or her to be so, neither can (s)he be a regular member as (s)he is part of the leadership. It can be argued that the position as a deputy makes it hard to set an own agenda as you are expected to be loyal to the leader. In May 2003 the female Vice President of Uganda resigned from her position as the Vice President. She is now going to pursue a PhD in the US⁶⁸. After she resigned, there were several statements in the press that she now was “out of prison” and that she “felt free”: “I’m no longer so much of a prisoner. I’m free to do things for the people I much care about” (New

⁶⁷ ACFODE is a leading NGO in Uganda

⁶⁸ I will continue to refer to her as the Vice President in order to avoid confusion

Vision, 12.06.2003). She also said “that job is a job of suffocation. It is a prison”, and that the vice-presidency is not a place to further personal ends as you have no agenda of your own (Monitor, 12.06.2003).

As hon. Byanyima notices, the policies on gender in Uganda are in danger of being ‘abused’ when women constantly are placed in senior-positions, and never in leadership positions. Still appointments to official positions may strengthen the notion that the Movement political system is a system where women have the possibility of being represented in high positions in decision-making bodies.

5.4.3 Summing Up

The Movement system in Uganda has developed into a political system which takes into consideration all the different groups in Uganda. As one of the woman MP put it:” within the Movement Democracy, it is a reality that we still think about special groups” (Parliamentary Hansard, 05.10.2001). The policy on reserving seats for women in Uganda seems to have developed its own logic. It appears to be the ‘norm’ in the Ugandan Parliament that whenever the compositions of decision making bodies is discussed, some seats shall be reserved for women.

The Movement apparently use the reserves seats for women in various decision-making bodies to present itself as gender-friendly (Tamale, 2003). As can be recalled from the theoretical chapter, Voet argues that it is possible that the impact of more women in politics will create an acceptance of women being in politics. However, in a short-term perspective the effect of this practice seems to be to appease women and secure their votes. This view has also been supported by Kiiza (2002:16) who argues that:

“Ironically, the politically “correct” strategy of the ruling elite is to co-opt women into the commanding heights of politics, coupled with spirited announcements of “fundamental change” in gender and women affairs. This strategy, which invokes “sympathy” as the rationale for gender-friendliness, arguably degrades women to the status of perpetual beggars of political “favours”. Females are reduced to the proverbial recipients of ready-made fish, rather than masters of fishing know-how.”

Furthermore, the feminisation of the deputy positions, combined with the tendency of female vice/deputy being left with little, or no work, indicate that women are merely elected to these positions so as to signal the friendliness' of the particular decision-making body.

5.5 Summary

In this chapter I have focused on the work of female legislators. The first section of this chapter challenged the "Acting For" representation by focusing on female representation in various committees. The distinction between "soft" and "hard" committees were used. Despite the fact that women are rather well represented in the various committees a misrepresentation can be found: women are well represented in some committees, and scarcely represented in others. The committees women are well represented in are "soft" committees. This again reflects the division of labour in society. Thus, women are well represented in committees that cover areas of importance for most women in Uganda. The tendency of overrepresentation in "soft" committees is, however, also visible in South Africa and Namibia, two countries where female legislators are not expected to "Act For" women to the same extent as in Uganda. Thus, when comparing female representation in committees in Uganda, South Africa and Namibia, it cannot be argued that the 'double' representation in Parliament has led female legislators in Uganda to "Act For" women more than their female colleagues in Namibia and South Africa.

In the second section of this chapter, I aimed at substantiating the notion that affirmative action women are representatives expected to "Act As" Movementist in Parliament. This was accomplished by focusing on three factors. First, I looked into the unity of the women's caucus and argued that most women in Parliament actually do seem to support the Movement. Thus, confirming the notion that it is mostly women supporting the NRM who are elected to Parliament in the separate women's elections. Consequently, Museveni was correct when he stated that the affirmative action women are Movementists. However, given that the women's caucus has members who are critical of the incumbent regime, e.g. mostly women from the north and directly elected women, the caucus have avoided bringing up issues that may divide them. Second, the "Act As" representative model is strengthened by looking at the legislative process in matters considered to be of importance for women, i.e. the Land Act and the DRB. There seems to be a lack of will to confront

these issues in Parliament, and when these issues have been discussed in Parliament, these have been promoted mostly by women from the northern parts of the country, or by directly elected women. Given the comparatively low support for NRM in the northern areas of the country, it is natural to assume that affirmative action women are elected from Electoral Colleges where the members are less supportive of the Government, making it easier for women who are critical of the Movement system to be elected. Moreover, the possibility female legislators had to “Act For” women were also compromised by the interference of the executive branch in the Land Act and the Domestic Relations Bill. It is the organisations within civil society, rather than women in Parliament, who have challenged the Government on issues they find important. Finally, the “Act As” representation may compromise the “Standing For” descriptive representation and “Acting For” representation by a further strengthening of what Ottemoeller (1999) has referred to as an agreement between women and the Movement: by being guaranteed seats in decision-making bodies, women are expected to support the Movement. Accordingly, the standard that there are seats reserved for women in every decision-making body seems to maintain affirmative action women’s strong attachment to the regime. Or with the word of Kiiza (2002:17):

“The political strategy of rewarding elitist women with political “favours” (such as ministerial appointments) is tantamount to building political capital on the numerical strength of women. It implies sacrificing the strategic interest of the majority of Ugandan women on the altar of short-termist “political” gains”.

Chapter 6: A step towards symbolic representation?

This thesis has aimed at looking into female representation in Uganda's Parliament, given the separate elections for women to the reserved seats. As an entry-point in this study Pitkin's dichotomy between "Standing For" and "Acting For" representation has been applied. The study has attempted to find out where in this polarity the affirmative action women in the Uganda Parliament might be found.

6.1 Summary of findings

6.1.1 Descriptive representation vs. "Acting For" representation

Given that the District Women Representatives and special interest groups are elected in addition to the regular MPs, there is a 'double' representation in Parliament. While the other special interest groups are elected to Parliament as representative *of* their group, the District Women Representatives are elected to Parliament as representatives *for* their district, and not *of* women. Accordingly, they are officially elected as "Standing For" descriptive representatives. Yet, given the 'double' representation, the District Women Representatives have been looked upon as representative of women in particular. Some voters, colleagues in Parliament, and female legislators themselves have defined the role of the 56 women as representatives with an obligation to have a special 'eye' on women in particular. Some of the affirmative action women ran as candidates in the separate women's election's because they wanted to be identified as a representative for women. Nevertheless, the degree in which they considered themselves as representatives of women in particular varied. Some women felt no obligations to focus on women in particular. They considered themselves elected simply because there was a need to increase the number of women in Parliament. Most of them chose to run in the separate women's elections only because they considered it easier to pull through in this election. If they chose to run in the 'regular' elections, they feared that the voters might have discriminated against them. As mentioned, there are women who have changed seats and lost to less experienced men.

Furthermore, some of the county constituencies have strong male incumbents, by many considered "father figures". Accordingly, women from these constituencies sometimes refuse to run in the regular election. Consequently, as Uganda is a pre-dominantly

patriarchal society, the separate women's elections do not challenge the male-dominated political culture. Rather, the separate elections for women might reinforce the notion that men are superior to women. Women elected on a women's ticket are supposed to graduate to the 'regular' elections after normally two or three terms in Parliament. Women are considered to have matured politically when they switch seats. However, when Museveni argues in his election Manifesto that few women can compete ably with men due to cultural barriers, having separate elections for women seems to be of little help when challenging those barriers. In the 1994, 1996 and 2001 'regular' elections the average of women competing was less than 4%. As Goetz (2002:569) argues: "women's participation in politics is constructed around notions of difference from men, rather than equality."

Nevertheless, with 56 reserved seats female legislators have a real opportunity to "Act For" women in issues that are of strategic importance for the majority of women. When some women claimed that they have an obligation to represent women in particular, they, as Young argues, represent a perspective they have developed given their structural position in society. When one of my respondents fought for a maternity room in the local health clinic, it can be argued that she had a history and a position in society enabling her to identify issues important for most women. This indicates that female representation in parliament is of importance and not without relevance for women in the district. Likewise, when some affirmative action women define themselves as "Acting For" representatives, it is reasonable to assume that women in the districts feel they have their interests' better represented in Parliament, than the case would have been if all the district women represented defined themselves as "Standing For" descriptive representatives, with no obligation to speak or act for women. Consequently, it may be the case that the Parliaments legitimacy is increased, perhaps especially with regard to female voters.

6.1.2 Committee membership and efficient politicians

When substantiating the "Standing For" descriptive representation vs. "Acting For" representation by focusing on female representations in committees, I found that women were quite well distributed in the various committees. Nevertheless, in some committees there were misrepresentations: Women are overrepresented in committees that cover areas considered to be of importance for most Ugandan women, given the division of labour in society. Hence, one would assume that the overrepresentation of women in "soft"

committees provide Ugandan women a chance of being heard, given that some women actually claimed to focus on women in particular. Furthermore, female legislators in Uganda have indeed raised issues important for women in Parliament. The most visible outcome is Article 31, 32 and 33 in the 1995 Constitution, which the women's caucus successfully implemented. With regard to the process of electing representatives to the East African Assembly the women's caucus managed to convince the Parliament to elect four women, instead of three as first suggested. Yet another battle was won during the deliberation on the Land Act when the women's caucus managed to secure that a written declaration from both spouses is needed when selling off family land.

In comparison with countries like India and Pakistan where a significant number of female legislators have entered Parliaments through their families, a large number of Ugandan female legislators have a background from the women's movement. With regard to India, Rai (1998:121) has argued that:

“Women's representation in the parliament, while important on the grounds of social justice and legitimacy of the political system, does not easily translate into improved representation of women's various interests.”

This is not the case in Uganda. As mentioned above a number of women have turned out to be good and efficient representatives in Parliament who identify and represent issues important for the majority of women in Uganda. They are not without relevance in Ugandan politics: they contribute in debates, share their experience, and are not insignificant in Parliament.

6.1.3 "Act As" politicians

One thing compromises the “Standing For” descriptive representation and “Acting For” representation, and that is the notion that the affirmative action women are expected to “Act As” Movementists in Parliament. Probably as a slip of the tongue, this was openly admitted by President Museveni when he spoke to the press after the 2001 parliamentary election, telling them how many Movement supporters were elected to Parliament. The notion that the affirmative action women have a strong connection to the current regime is deduced from two factors:

- (i) The reserved are by the NRM leadership regarded as an initiative from above making the women feel gratitude to the incumbent regime. When the NRM leadership argues that they are the main reason for women's strong presence in politics, they ignore the role the women's movement actually played in securing female representation in politics. Accordingly, the women are elected *because* the NRM gave them the opportunity. This belief seems to be held by some women themselves. Although most of them recognise the role the women's movement's had in the initiation of the seats, the opportunity Movement have given them to be represented in Parliament is indeed emphasised and considered crucial for their presence.
- (ii) Women are elected indirectly through Electoral Colleges consisting of officials with strong ties to the Movement. With time the current LC structure, as well as the WC structure, have become integrated with the Movement structure: the chairperson of the LCs are also frequently a member of the parallel Movement structure. Furthermore, the women in the LCs are often the same women that are in the WCs.

The way of electing women to Parliament came up in the 6th Parliament, during the discussion of the Parliamentary Election Act. When the Bill was passed in Parliament, it was stipulated that women should be elected to Parliament on universal suffrage. However, when the Bill was returned from Cabinet, Electoral Colleges were re-instated. The Bill was then passed without allowing for universal suffrage for women. There are only speculations about what happened behind the scenes, but it is natural to assume that the NRM leadership, as well as some of the women themselves, have an interest in continuing with the Electoral Colleges. Most of the Electoral Colleges consist of officials supporting the Movement, making it hard for women critical of the regime to be elected. Furthermore, the Electoral Colleges are vulnerable to corrupt methods like bribery and Government persuasion, as shown with the "Masiko" case. These factors combined enable us to regard the affirmative action women as representatives expected to "Act As" Movementists.

6.1.4 Consequences of the "Act As" representation

When focusing on the unity of the women's caucus it was revealed that most female legislators actually do support the Movement. This was acknowledged by women who

supports the Movement, and by the relatively few women critical of it. Evidently women seem to face difficulties in enhancing legislation that are controversial in the sense that they challenge the Government or the patriarchal structures that exist in the Ugandan society. This was visible during the deliberation of the Land Act, as well as the DRB. Few women in Government and Parliament have taken personal responsibility in fronting these cases. Consequently, it is the NGOs within civil society that challenge the Government in these issues. The NGOs have arranged big demonstrations, organised workshops and lobbied the legislators. Before the Land Act was debated in Parliament, during the amendment in 2003, the Women of Uganda Network (UWONET) and the Uganda Land Alliance (ULA) sent out an SMS to all Parliamentarians: "*UWONET/ULA and the women of Uganda are relying on you to vote for the inclusion of the family land rights clause in the Land Act*"⁶⁹. However, as the speaker felt some tension in the house, he established a select committee to look into the matter instead of debating at the whole floor in Parliament. This committee has advised Parliament to stop fighting for the 'lost clause'. Furthermore, the President's personal interference in these matters has also continued to delay these matters: when the Land Act was sent back from the executive, the co-ownership clause was left out, with no explanation. Moreover, the President has taken personal responsibility for the delay of the DRB because he wants to make sure that families are "firmly and happy rooted"⁷⁰; he argues that the Bill, as it is now, would upset the marriage.

Given the discriminating patriarchal structures, the 'lost clause' and the DRB would be in the strategic interest of the majority of Ugandan women. In these matters, the "Act As" representation seems to have compromised the "Acting For" representation. Tamale argues: "Without advancing women's strategic interests at all, the NRM administration gained the support of women legislators and councillors by offering them access to the political world of male power" (Tamale, 2003).

Ottemoeller (1999) has argued that there seems to be an agreement between women and NRM: Women are guaranteed representation in Parliament and Cabinet, in exchange for support. This agreement seems to have been upheld, as women have been given representation in almost all newly established decision-making bodies like the East African

⁶⁹ Information found at the webpage of UWONET: <http://www.wougnet.org/Alerts/domesticrelations.html>

⁷⁰ New Vision, 27.01.2003

Assembly and various Land Management bodies. It is interesting to notice, however, that women are scarcely represented in organs for policy-making in the *inner* Movement circles. One such policy-organ is the National Executive Committee (NEC). NEC consists of 150 elected people, but has rather few women. Five seats are reserved for women, as a special interest group. The rest are LC 5 district chairpersons, and MPs elected from each district – most of whom are men. However, the NEC is not an effective organ as it has rarely met since 1998. Moreover, it has been claimed that since 1998 there has been no discussion on gender issues. Rather, the most efficient organ for policy making in the Movement seem to be within an inner circle consisting of close army comrades of the president. This circle is popularly known as the ‘Movement Political High Command’ and has no women in it. Hence, women are scarcely represented in the decision-making body that seems to be the most influential (Goetz, 2002: 568-570).

6.2 The Ugandan “Standing For” descriptive model revisited

This thesis also aimed at showing the consequences of the “Standing For” descriptive representation. The NRM leadership has avoided singling out the affirmative action women as representatives of women; hence the affirmative action women are elected as “Standing For” descriptive representatives with no clear guidelines on what qualifies as good representation. Accordingly, those who consider the District Women Representatives as representatives of women might only hope that they will focus on issues considered to be of importance for a majority of Ugandan women. Nevertheless, in Uganda, the ‘double’ representation has led some of the affirmative action women to define themselves as representatives that have a special obligation to “Act For” women in particular. Accordingly, these women turn the “Standing For” descriptive model into an “Acting For” model: these women do not merely “Stand For” women on the basis of resemblance of descriptive characteristics of gender; rather they “Act For” them as they identify and represent perspectives they as women have developed given their structural position in society. Thus, like with the special interest groups, these affirmative action women define themselves as representatives *of* women, and not *for* the district.

Nevertheless, Voet argues that when it is required that women are represented, politics may turn into an administration of interest, and the essence of politics is lost. Furthermore, Voet

argues acceptability implies harmlessness. Women who are accepted as representatives may become pacified in the sense that they don't represent any threat to a male dominated society. As mentioned a number of the affirmative action women have close ties to the current NRM regime, and this has made it hard for them to challenge the Government. The affirmative action women's close connection to the NRM regime enables us to regard them as representatives expected to "Act As" Movementists in Parliament. Subsequently, they become close to what Pitkin refers to as "Standing For" *symbolic* representatives. In contrast to "Standing For" *descriptive* representatives, the *symbolic* "Standing For" representatives are recipients of objects and expressions of feelings. They do not necessarily reflect the descriptive characteristics of the people (s)he represents.

When Pitkin describes *symbolic* political representation, her focus is merely on a political leader as head of a nation, and not a whole community of political representatives. Nevertheless, by applying her characterization on symbolic representatives on affirmative action women in Uganda, this would indicate that affirmative action women are passively "Standing For" for women symbolically reflecting the gender-friendly NRM agenda. Accordingly, the reserved seats are there to foster belief, loyalty and satisfaction among the voters, especially the female voters. One indication that the Movement system and President Museveni has managed to build political capital on women's numerical strength by their intentionally gender-sensitive policy can be illustrated by looking at numbers from 2000 where 81% men support the NRM while the equal number for women is 88⁷¹. Furthermore, in April 2003 the National Executive Committee (NEC) recommended that President Museveni should be given a third term as a President. According to a poll done in June 2003 by the newspaper Monitor and Strategic PR & Research in Nairobi, 42% of women supported Museveni to stand for a third term, while only 22% of the men did so (Monitor, 09.06.2003). Consequently, it can be argued that the selective descriptive representation used on the affirmative action women in the parliament today are *leaning* towards a "Standing For symbolic representation. Thus, the representation of women becomes identified with the effective leadership of the Movement.

⁷¹ Bratton et al 2000: 47

Nevertheless, the affirmative action seats in Uganda have tended to constitute a mixed blessing. It is acknowledged that the creation of space for women within parliament is a fundamental break with the past. Despite some of the mentioned short-comings, the significance of including women into top political decision-making bodies and the place of gender in public discourse is indeed important and cannot be ignored (Ahikire, 2001a:21). But what is the future of female representation in the intentionally all-inclusive Movement system?

6.3 The future of female representation in the all-inclusive Movement

In March 2003, the National Executive Committee (NEC) came with the surprising announcement recommending that political parties be ‘freed’ in a referendum (Monitor 02.04.2003). The Movement, however, should continue to be an intentionally all-inclusive organisation, and they emphasize that the political parties were never banned; only limited in their mode of operation. However, as Oloka-Onyango (2003) argues:

“In practice however, political parties were effectively excluded from the Movement, even if the Constitution and the Movement Act compelled everybody belonged to it. This is how we came to have ‘Movement’ candidates, and why the President campaigned so vigorously against candidates in Rukungiri, Mbarara and the Kampala City elections, to mention only a few instances”.

Most likely the NRM leadership has decided to open up for political parties to get rid of internal opposition within the Movement (Oloka-Onyango 2003). Furthermore, when the NEC decided to recommend ‘freeing’ political parties, they also recommended that the presidential two-term limit, as stipulated in the Constitution, be discussed as a matter of principle and not as a personal tribute given to Museveni (Monitor, 31.03.2003). In the same recommendations from the NEC it is stated that whenever there is a conflict between the executive and the legislators, the President should have the power to dissolve Parliament, or both the President and the Parliament should resign and seek a fresh mandate. Museveni has expressed a preference for the former. Moreover, the President has proposed that the Parliament shall cease to have power to remove Ministers. Today, the President has power to re-instate previously removed ministers, and he has done it, but the political price for doing so is quite high (Oloka-Onyango, 2003). If these recommendations

are to be fulfilled, the President will increase its power at the expense of the legislature. When the legislature is compromised, this naturally also affects female MPs' power to "Act For" women. Moreover, it is natural to assume that the power of the inner policy organs of the Movement, where women are scarcely represented, will be strengthened.

Furthermore, the 22nd of May 2003, Vice-President Kazibwe handed in her resignation, requesting the President to allow her to go and pursue a PhD at Harvard University. Kazibwe was the only woman in Africa to hold the post as a vice-president, and has been the highest ranking woman politician in Africa. Two days after Kazibwe's resignation, the President reshuffled the Cabinet. In this reshuffling, Miria Matembe, who openly spoke against the third term and is an outspoken women's activist, was dropped. Moreover, in this process the hope that Uganda would have yet another female vice president was ruined. All in all the reshuffling of Cabinet, and the resignation of the Kazibwe, is by most of the Ugandan women MPs considered to be a set-back for women. As one of the woman MPs states: "We have really been left out at a time when we believed in the government's concern for women" (New Vision. 03.06.2003).

If the Ugandan people decides to 'free' political parties and consequently allows for a multiparty system in Uganda, it is hard to tell what role women will play in this new era. If the NRM leadership continues to emphasise that the reserved seats in Parliament are given as a 'gift' to Ugandan women from the NRM, as well as continuing to elect women from pre-dominantly Movement-friendly Electoral Colleges, it is natural to assume that most female legislators will continue to stay loyal to the "new" Movement. On the other hand, it is possible that the affirmative action seats may have had a contagious effect in the sense that political parties will nominate female candidates. It remains to be seen how many women are elected as representatives of political parties, and whether or not the affirmative action measures currently taken in use in Uganda have consolidated female representation. That is, if the Ugandan people decides to open up for a multiparty system. As Miria Matembe who recently served as a Minister for Ethics and Integrity said to Monitor (18. 11.2003): "The political environment is uncertain. But let us not waver in our demands. We need to be re-energised to continue fanning the flame."

Appendix A: Female representation in parliament in Africa

Country	Election	Total seats	Women	Percent Women
Mozambique	1999	250	75	30,0%
South Africa	1999	399	119	29,8%
Seychelles	2002	34	10	29,4%
Rwanda	1994	74	19	25,7%
Namibia	1999	72	18	25,0%
<i>Uganda</i>	2001	305	74	24,3%
United Republic of Tanzania	2000	274	61	22,3%
Eritrea	1994	150	33	22,0%
Guinea	2002	114	22	19,3%
Senegal	2001	120	23	19,2%
Burundi	1993	179	33	18,4%
Botswana	1999	47	8	17,0%
Angola	1992	220	34	15,5%
Sierra Leone	2002	124	18	14,5%
Zambia	2001	158	19	12,0%
Burkina Faso	2002	111	13	11,7%
Lesotho	2002	120	14	11,7%
Tunisia	1999	182	21	11,5%
Cape Verde	2001	72	8	11,1%
Morocco	2002	325	35	10,8%
Mali	2002	147	15	10,2%
Zimbabwe	2000	150	15	10,0%
Sudan	2000	360	35	9,7%
Malawi	1999	193	18	9,3%
Gabon	2001	119	11	9,2%
Ghana	2000	200	18	9,0%
Sao Tome & Principe	2002	55	5	9,0%
Cameroon	2002	180	16	8,9%
Congo	2002	129	11	8,5%
Cote d'Ivoire	2000	223	19	8,5%
Guinea-Bissau	1999	102	8	7,8%
Liberia	1997	64	5	7,8%
Ethiopia	2000	547	42	7,7%
Algeria	2002	389	24	6,2%
Benin	1999	83	5	6,0%
Maldives	1999	50	3	6,0%
Chad	2002	155	9	5,8%
Gambia	2002	53	3	5,7%
Mauritius	2000	70	4	5,7%
Equatorial	1999	80	4	5,0%

Guinea				
Togo	2002	81	4	4,9%
Madagascar	2002	160	6	3,7%
Mauritania	2001	81	3	3,7%
Swaziland	1998	65	2	3,1%
Egypt	2000	454	11	2,4%
Niger	1999	83	1	1,2%
Djibouti	1997	65	0	0,0%
Libya	1997	760	NA	NA
Democratic Republic of Congo	2000	300	NA	NA
Comoros	NA	NA	NA	NA
Somalia	NA	NA	NA	NA
Central African Republic	NA	NA	NA	NA

All information is from Inter Parliamentary Union, available at: <http://www.ipu.org>

Appendix B: Gender friendly Articles in the Ugandan Constitution

In the National Objectives XV in the Ugandan constitution it is stated that “The state shall recognise the significant role that women play in society”(Ugandan Constitution, 1995). Moreover there are three articles that specifically concerns women’s rights, namely Articles 31, 32 and 33.

Article 31, on family:

- (1) Men and women of the age of eighteen years and above, have the right to marry and to found family and are entitled to equal rights in marriage, during marriage and its dissolution.
- (2) Parliament shall make appropriate laws for the protection of the rights of widows and widowers to inherit the property of their deceased spouses and to enjoy parental rights over children
- (3) Marriage shall be entered into with free consent of the man and woman intending to marry
- (4) It is the right and duty of parents to care for and bring up their children
- (5) Children may not be separated from their families or of those persons, except on accordance with the law

Article 32, on affirmative action:

- (1) Notwithstanding anything in the Constitution, the State shall take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalised on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom, for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them
- (2) Parliament shall make relevant laws, including laws for the establishment of an equal opportunities commission, for the purpose of giving full effect to clause (1) of this article.

Article 33, on Rights of Women:

- 1) Women shall be accorded full and equal dignity of the person with men.
- 2) The state shall provide the facilities and opportunity necessary to enhance the welfare of the women to enable them to realize their full potential and advancement.
- 3) The state shall protect women and their rights, taking into account their unique status and natural maternal functions in society.
- 4) Women shall have the right to equal treatment with men and that right shall include equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities.
- 5) Women shall have the right to affirmative action for the purpose of redressing the imbalances created by history, tradition or custom
- 6) Laws, cultures, customs or tradition which is against the dignity, welfare, or interest of women or which undermine their status are prohibited by this Constitution

Appendix C: The ten-point program of the NRM

The ten-point program of the NRM

1. Establishment of popular democracy
2. Restoration of security
3. Consolidation of National Unity
4. Defending National Independence
5. Building a national economy
6. Restoration and rehabilitation of Social Services
7. Elimination of corruption and misuse of power
8. Resettlement of the displaced people
9. Regional co-operation and human rights
10. Following a strategy of mixed economy

Appendix D: The 7th Parliament

The 7th Parliament consists of:

- 214 Constituency Representatives
- 56 District Woman Representatives
- 10 Uganda People's Defence Forces Representatives
- 5 Representatives of the Youth
- 5 Representatives of Persons with Disabilities
- 5 Representatives of Workers
- 10 Ex-officio Members

Appendix E: Electoral College

The exact composition of the Electoral College for women: Composition of the three lower levels in the Local Councils and the Women's Councils

(Local Government Election Officials Manual, National Women's Councils Guidelines)

In LC1, at the village level, there are 10 executive positions. The 10 executives are elected by adult suffrage, and four of them must be women. Positions in the LC1 executive committee:

1. Chairperson
2. Vice- Chairperson (also Secretary for Children Welfare)
3. General Secretary
4. Secretary for Information, Education and Mobilisation
5. Secretary for Security
6. Secretary for Finance
7. Secretary for Production and Environmental Production
8. The chairperson of the Women's Council at the village level, who is also the Secretary for Women
9. The chairperson of the Youth Council at the village level, who is also the Secretary for Youth
10. The chairperson of the Organisation for Persons with Disabilities at the village level, who is also Secretary for Persons with Disabilities.

In LC2, at the parish level, there are 10 executive positions. The 10 executives are elected indirectly by the members of the executive committee in LC1. The composition is the same as in LC1.

In LC3, at the sub-county/town level, the size depends on how many parishes there are:

1. Chairperson directly elected through a secret ballot and by universal adult suffrage
2. Directly elected Councillors to represent the parishes. Elected by adult suffrage and lining up
3. Two Councillors representing Youth, one male and one female, elected by all Parish Youth Councils and sub-county executives.
4. Two Councillors representing disabled persons of whom shall be one female elected by an electoral college consisting of the Parish Executive Committee
5. Female Councillors forming 1/3 of all the sub-county councillors

In the Women's Councils there are 5 representatives in the three lower executive committees. At the village level, WC1, the officials are elected directly by the women in the community, except for the secretary position which are appointed by the Ministry of Women in Development, Youth and Culture. The officials in WC2 and WC3 are elected indirectly by the members from the council below. These are the positions to be filled:

1. Chairperson
2. Vice-chairperson
3. Secretary
4. Publicity Secretary
5. Secretary for Finance

In addition to the three lower levels, which constitute the Electoral Colleges for women, there is also the LC4, county level and LC5, district level, as well as the WC4 and WC5. In LC4, the officials are elected indirectly from the LC3 councillors. In LC5, the councillors are elected by the same procedure as in the LC3, and number officials depend on the size of the district. For example in Mukono district (LC5) 63 officials have been elected to the executive committee (Ahikire, 2001b:7-9).

In WC4 and WC5, the five councillors are elected indirectly by the councillors from the level below. In WC5 the District Woman Representative is also a member increasing the number of officials to 6.

Appendix F: Committees in South Africa and Namibia

Standing Committees – *Namibia*

	Committees	Total Number	Women	Percentage
1	Rules, Orders and Internal Arrangements	19	5	26%
2	Privileges*	6	1	16%
3	Public Accounts	13	3	23%
4	Ombudsman	11	4 (CP)	36%
5	Natural Resources	11	2	18%
6	Security	11	3	27%
7	Governmental Affairs	11	4	36%
8	Economics	11	2	18%
9	Human Resources**	13	5	38%
10	Equality and Gender Development**	11	5	45%

* Deputy position is not available. These two committees recently emerged into one. And the deputy position is currently vacant. Information received on mail, 20.06.2003 from Mr I. Nehoya, Parliament of Namibia.

** These two committees recently merged into one.

Standing Committees - *South Africa*

	Committee	Total	Women	Percentage
1	Public Accounts	27	4	14%
2	Private Member's Legislative Proposals and Special Petitions	21	5	23%

Portfolio Committees - *South Africa*

	Committee	Total	Women	Percentage
1	Agriculture and Land Affairs	30	7	23%
2	Arts, Culture, Science and Technology	29	12 (CP ⁷²)	41%
3	Communications	23	9	39%
4	Correctional Services	28	6	21%
5	Defence	33	4 (CP)	12%
6	Education	32	7	21%
7	Environmental Affairs and Tourism	32	12 (CP)	37%
8	Finance	28	6 (CP)	21%
9	Foreign Affairs	32	8	25%
10	Health	27	14	51%
11	Home Affairs	27	9	33%
12	Housing	31	16 (CP)	51%
13	Justice and Constitutional Development	24	6	25%
14	Labour	27	4	14%
15	Mineral and Energy Affairs	29	5	17%
16	Provincial and Local Government	33	5	15%
17	Public Enterprises	26	5	19%
18	Public Service and Administration	23	2	8%
19	Public Works	23	6	26%
20	Safety and Security	34	8	23%
21	Sports and Recreation	26	6 (CP)	23%
22	Trade and Industry	32	8	25%
23	Transport	23	9	39%
24	Water Affairs and Forestry	30	6 (CP)	20%
25	Social Development	31	19	61%

⁷²The committees in the National Assembly in have no deputies, only a Committee Secretary. The information on the chairpersons is from 2002.

Appendix G: Domestic Relations Bill

Statements made in the first term in the 7th Parliament concerning the Domestic Relations Bill:

Mrs Dora Byamukama (directly elected): Every time we talk about the Domestic Relations law, people think about polygamy, and co-ownership of land. They forget that we are talking about security, governance, and tranquillity in the basic unit of society. Let me allay the fears of Members of Parliament and Uganda at large. The domestic Relations Bill does not prohibit polygamy; it restricts polygamy. I, as a woman rights activist, would have wanted it to prohibit polygamy because Article 31[...] Article 31 of the Constitution states that we should have equal rights in marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. But when we talk about people being polygamous, it means that the woman does not have the same rights. So what I am trying to tell you is that this restriction is for your own good. If you are not financially capable, we are protecting the man, we are protecting the woman who will enter into this polygamous relationship and the children involved (Parliamentary Hansard, 10.07.2002)

Ms Betty Amongi (Apac district): This particular Bill affects the vast majority of the women of this country. We have been lobbying, we have been begging for this Bill to come to Parliament for approval, because this Domestic Relations Bill handles the socio-economic relations, the gender socio-economic relations in society, and it is very, very important for the question of advancing women's equality in this country (Parliamentary Hansard, 16.10.2001).

Appendix H: Parliamentary procedure for enacting new laws

(Rules of Procedure in Parliament, 2003, Tamale, 1999)

- 1: A bill is introduced in Parliament either by Government, Standing Committees or by Private Members
- 2: The draft bill is submitted to Cabinet accompanied with a memorandum explaining the legal effects of the more important provisions
- 3: When the bill is approved by cabinet, it is published in the official gazette and published to all MPs.
- 4: After being shortly introduced to the House, the bill is forwarded to the relevant sessional committee. The committee submits a report, and seconded for a second reading
- 5: The House goes into a detailed debate on the bills merit and principles, either in the full House or in a Select Committee
- 6: After the debate is concluded, the House reads the bill for a third time and it is passed by in Parliament
- 7: The bill is passed if presidential assent has been given, then published as a law.

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A Directory of Uganda's Seventh Parliament, 2001-2006

UWOPA Pamphlet

List of Informants

Women MPs

1. Hon. Alice Alasso. District Woman Representative, Soroti District
2. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga Alitwala, District Woman Representative, Kamuli District. She is also the Deputy Speaker
3. Hon. Betty Ongom Amongi, District Woman Representative, Apac District
4. Hon. Zoe Bakoko Bakouro, Ayivu, Arua District. She is also Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development
5. Hon. Syda Bbumba, Nakaseke, Luwero District. She is also Minister for Energy and Mineral Development
6. Hon. Bernadette Bigirwa, District Woman Representative, Bushyeni District
7. Hon. Beatrice Byenkya. District Woman Representative, Hoima District
8. Hon. Dora Byamukama, Mwenge South, Kyenjo District
9. Hon. Loice Bwambale, District Woman Representative, Kasese District. Also chairperson of UWOPA
10. Hon. Jessica, Eriyo District Woman Representative, Adjumani District
11. Hon. Justine Lumumba Kasule, District Woman Representative, Bugiri District
12. Hon. Beatrice Kiraso District Woman Representative, Kabarole District
13. Hon. Margaret Komuhangi, District Woman Representative, Nakasangola District
14. Hon. Idah Mehangye District Woman Representative, Kamwengye District
15. Hon. Hope Mwesigye, District Woman Representative, Kabale District
16. Hon. Janet Nantume, Buikwe West, Mukono District
17. Hon. Wonekha Oliver, District Woman Representative, Mbale District
18. Hon. Cecilia Atim Ogwal, Leader, Uganda People Congress, Lira Municipality, Lira District
19. Hon. Margeret Ateng Otim, District Woman Representative, Lira District
20. Hon. Proscovia, Salaamu Musumba, Bugabula South, Kamuli District

Male MPs

21. Hon. Nathan Byanyima, Bukanga, Mbarara District
22. Hon. Guma, Gumasiri, Ibanda North, Mbarara District

Others

23. Chairperson: Forum for Women in Development, FOWODE
24. Dr. Julius Kiiza, Lecturer Makerere University
25. Dr. Sylvia Tamale, Lecturer Makerere University
26. Official working in the Women's Council. Wanted to be anonymous

