PUPPETS OF AN ILLEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT -
Ugandan Indians in the eyes of the Baganda

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This thesis explores the interrelations and roots of conflict between the Indians and Africans in Kampala, Uganda. More precisely it focuses on how the historical middle-position of the Bayindi (Indians) is produced in contemporary Uganda by people living in the capital region and what the descriptions of ‘the other’ uncover about the Baganda's own societal position.

The study was carried out with an ethnographic approach, including a two-month field research in Uganda. The research data consists of semi-structured interviews (21), participatory observations and tens of informal talks. Content analysis was employed to analyze the research data.

The collected data demonstrates that the historical middle positioning of the Ugandan Indians is still produced in contemporary Uganda. Now, instead of the colonial setting of British at the top, Indians in the middle and the Africans on the bottom of the society, the Indians are perceived as the middle actors in between the detested NRM government and the Ugandans.

The construction of the Indians' contemporary middle-position reveals some of the social, political and economic frustrations the Baganda have gone through as a group over the past half a decade. Though Museveni has re-established the traditional kingdom's culturally they still don't have the political or the economic power which the Baganda and the Mengo have yearned ever since the colonial times.

The study concludes that the ethnic division lines are still alive in contemporary Uganda. Current conflicts, such as the Buganda riots in 2009, show clearly how the anxieties in contemporary Uganda are deeply rooted in the colonial era and how all the post-independent governments have failed to erase ethnic biases in the society.

Avainsanat/Nyckelord
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Foreword

I would like to thank my extended Ugandan family for opening up their home and hearts to me, all of my informants who were willing to shared parts of their lives with me and Nishaati for taking me to a Hindu temple back in 2009. I am grateful to all of you for opening the door to the unknown and teaching me livelong lessons.
PART I - INTRODUCTION

Buganda riots in 2009

In September 2009 government officials prohibited the Buganda¹ king, Kabaka Ronald Mutebi II, from entering Kayunga district in central Uganda. The government stated it wanted to avoid tension in the fragile area where a visit by the king could cause anxiety.

When the news reached the capital rumours started to spread. Gossips claimed that the prime minister of the kingdom had been arrested by the police. The Baganda² youth got infuriated and started gathering on the streets of Kampala, showing their support to the kingdom and anger towards the government. Very soon the expressions of frustration turned forceful.

The violent crowd began to set fires, burn cars and loot mainly Indian owned shops all around town. Tens of Indian entrepreneurs sought protection from Kampala police headquarters fortunate to be physically uninjured. In the meanwhile heavily armed police and army shot around 40 rioters and civilians dead on the streets. Asian businesses were kept closed for several days after the riots.

I was lucky enough to have left town a few hours before the rioting started. When things had somewhat settled my British friend with Asian roots told me he was worried. If something like the Kampala riots would start to build up again “people like him” would be the first ones targeted by the angry and frustrated crowd.

I became interested in what was laying behind such, at least seemingly, tense relations between the Africans, or at least the Baganda, and the Indians in Uganda. I also wondered why it was that while the Indians sought protection from the police, many local Africans had the national police as their number one worry. The aim of this thesis is to shed light on this subject.

¹ Buganda kingdom is historically the most powerful of Uganda’s five traditional kingdoms. The kingdoms, demolished in the 60’s, were reestablished as cultural institutions under central authority by the current president Yoweri Museveni (see for example Mutibwa 1992 or part III ‘Uganda as a context’.)

² People of the Buganda kingdom are called Baganda in plural and Muganda in singular in the Luganda language.
**Objectives of research**
This study focuses on the interrelations and the roots of tension between the Ugandan Indians and Africans. It aims to show light on how people living in the capital region produce the Bayindi\(^3\) image in relation to their own societal position and what historical factors lay behind the ethnic categorization of ‘the Bayindi’ in Uganda.

The Indians have been historical middlemen in the Ugandan society, acting in-between the colonialist and their African subjects. Towards the end of this study I aim to prove that this middle-position is still produced in today’s society though now, instead of the the British and the Africans, the Bayindi are seen to be intermediates between the NRM\(^4\) government and the Ugandan Africans, especially the Baganda.

The Indians position as the right hand of the power elite used to be something the Baganda identified with. They used to be the allies, not objects, of the British gaining a notable elite position themselves. In many ways the constructions of Indians’ current political middle-position reveals sore spots of the Baganda’s own identity and the social, political and economic frustrations they have gone through as a group over the past half a decade. Though Museveni has re-established the traditional kingdom’s culturally they still don’t have the political or economic power which the Baganda and the Mengo\(^5\) have yearned ever since the colonial times.

**Research questions**
1. How is the ‘Muyindi image’ produced by the Ugandan Africans living in the capital region?

2. What do the descriptions of the Bayindi reveal about the Baganda’s own societal position in Uganda?

**Study in context**
Indian oversea merchants have been the subject of scientific writing throughout the century (see for example Rice 1923, Morris 1956, Markovitch 2000, Oonk 2006 and 2013) and some researchers have conducted thorough studies on the East African Indian diaspora communities (see for example Oonk 2006, 2007; Levi 2007; Bharati 1972). Nevertheless, the histories behind East African Indians remain somewhat unknown worldwide.

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\(^3\) Bayindi is the plural form and Muyindi singular form for Indians/south Asians in the Luganda language.

\(^4\) National Resistance Movement

\(^5\) Mengo is the main palace of the King of Buganda, the Kabaka.
During the seventies the expulsion\(^6\) of the Asians raised a lot of global attention towards the Indians in Uganda. Academics pointed out how the reasons behind the expulsion where manifold but unequal societal structures - where the Indians had been the middle actors of the society and enjoyed heavy control of the economic sector – were a key issue behind the matter (see for example Twaddle 1975, Ocyak-Lakidi 1975, Motani 1975). However, little has been written about Indians living in contemporary Uganda - let alone their social interaction with the African population.

One of the most extensive, yet limited, book editions on Ugandan Indians is waiting to be published by Dr. Vali Jamal (forthcoming) an expelled Indian himself. The intention of his book, called *Ugandan Asians: Then and Now, Here and There, We Contributed, We Contribute*, is to raise awareness on the family tales behind the expelled, respect the Indians pioneering work in and outside Uganda and also honour President Museveni who invited the Indians back to Uganda after their expulsion. The first edition of the book was waiting to be published at the time of the country’s 50th jubilee. However, several attempts, emails and phone calls later by the time of writing this thesis I have not been able to get the actual book or its’ draft in my hands and have only seen the content and front page of the manuscript.

Another recent book about East African Indians is written by Gijsbert Oonk, the Head of the Department of History at ESHCC in Netherlands. Oonk has published several books on Asian business communities in East Africa and the most recent one is called *Settled Strangers: Asian Business Elites in East Africa (1800-2000)* (Oonk 2013) which aims at understanding the social, economic and political evolution of the transnational migrant community of Gujarati traders and merchants in East Africa. Oonk has been active in uncovering the neglected histories of Indian merchant communities - whose overall economic contribution and political significance might be even more important than the history of the actual colonisers. Another recent publication of his is called *Global Indian Diasporas* which explores trajectories of migration and theory (Oonk 2007).

Oonk has done a significant and admirable job in uncovering the East African Indians’ unknown yet very relevant histories. However, the extensive work still leaves a question mark when it comes to the interrelations and encounters between the majority and the minority population in today’s Ugandan society, especially the Indians relationship with the Baganda.

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\(6\) President Idi Amin expelled the Ugandan Indians in 1972. For more information see chapter ‘Ugandan Indians.’
Information on current-day interactions between the Indian and African population and the social atmosphere in Uganda can be found in descriptive newspaper articles. Hooker (BBC 2007) writes that Ugandans feel African and Asian companies are not treated equally. According to the article President Museveni’s regime values the Indian investments significantly and, though not allowed to vote unless citizens, the Indians are now-a-days financing some local politicians. Hooker points out that the Ugandan Africans find this treatment unequal and blame Museveni for setting the Indians on a higher level than the African population. (Hooker BBC 2007.)

An Independent Ugandan newspaper, The Daily Monitor, has published various articles on Indian individuals and businesses over the years. An article called Journalist returns ‘home’ published on 31.10.2012 triggered some lively discussion and debate on the newspaper’s website. Concerns were raised about the current situation between the Indian minority and the African majority in Uganda, and the mistreatment of African employers. One of the comments read as follows:

[T]he way Indians are treating Ugandans has not changed [over the years] instead it's worsening. I work for an Indian company but what happens here is horrible, blacks are harassed, abused sexually, blacks eat with broken plates, any simple mistake you are terminated, blacks are paid less money that cannot even help u meet basic problems. [...] We have no voice here. This is our country we deserve at least basic fair treatment.[...] So many horrible things are happening in most of the Indian companies but you can’t report anywhere because everyone is bribed.[...] If we continue like this where we are reaching it means we are going to keep hiding these stories until Amin’s days return. Pen-name Davis Kamugisha on Daily Monitor’s website.

The relationships between different ethnic groups in post-colonial societies are interesting not only in the Ugandan context but also in a wider perspective. The roots of some contemporary conflicts such as the Buganda riots in 2009 demonstrate how current day discontent and anxieties reflect the colonial legacy that the post-independent leaders of the country have either been unable or unwilling to erase from the society. The colonial sense of separateness that has been kept alive is a hindrance for national unity and integration between different groups, and furthermore it can lead to ethnic conflicts.

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7 See www.monitor.co.ug search ‘Indian’ (visited 12.11.2012):
The reason why the encounters between the Ugandan Indians and Ugandan Africans, especially the Baganda, are particularly interesting now is because Uganda is getting closer to 2016 Presidential elections and 2015 Parliamentary elections. President Museveni and his National Resistance Movement (NRM) party have been running Uganda for nearly three decades and it is becoming clear that ordinary people, at least in the capital region, are fatigued of the unchanging political scene. Like the Kampala riots in 2009 indicated, in times of political tension the ethnic segmentation of the society can become very much alive.

One of my Baganda informants, a female shopkeeper and a mother of three children, told me she no longer wanted to take part in any political discussions because the exchange of thoughts had become increasingly disruptive in the eyes of common Ugandans. Her comment shows clearly how the ‘old’ ethnic division lines, rooted to the Ugandan society during colonialism, activate in times of political anxiety. This can lead to people being categorized in purely ethnic terms.

When the power changes I will be the first one killed here [at a bodaboda stage].

- Why?

Because my nose resembles a Munyankole.⁹

Definitions

In order to avoid confusion over the multiple terms used in the coming pages I will open up some definitions here.

The Ugandan Indians are a heterogenic group of people. The concept of a ‘Ugandan Indian’ covers people coming from areas now Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal, though a more precise name for the mixture of nationalities would probably be South Asian (see Bharati 1972). Yet, even this term would not pay enough respect to the heterogeneity of the people since some of these ‘South Asians’ may have never lived in Asia and can identify themselves as Africans or even Europeans.

However, this study is about how the image of a Muyindi is produced in contemporary Ugandan society and for that use the term Ugandan Indian is a necessity. In the Luganda language the Ugandan Indians are called Bayindi in plural and Muyindi in singular. As the colonial boarders of

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⁹ The current president is a western Munyankole himself whereas Kampala has traditionally belonged to the Buganda kingdom and the Baganda dominate in the area.
India just to be wider than what is now called India and the term ‘Indian’ has been integrated to the Ugandan society, I will use the term (Ugandan) Indian to cover the heterogenic group of people and nationalities in this study. I will also utilize the concepts of Bayindi/Muyindi as synonyms to Ugandan Indians.

The same heterogeneity should be kept in mind when we discuss about the Baganda or Ugandan Africans living in the capital region. The Baganda is plural and Muganda a singular form for people belonging to the Buganda kingdom. Traditionally Buganda has been the most significant kingdom of all the historical kingdoms on Ugandan land. There is no single Baganda, let alone Ugandan, identity. However, in this study I will not tackle the actual heterogeneity of the group or the hybridity of individual identities but will focus on the collective Baganda identity and their position as a group in the surrounding society. As most of my Ugandan African informants were Baganda at times I use the two terms as synonyms.

One term that is frequently used in this study yet not discussed further in the theoretical framework is the concept of ‘interrelations’. With the term I refer to social encounters and relationship between the Bayindi and the Baganda.

**What is coming next**

This thesis begins by introducing the context of Uganda – a heterogeneous society with a colonial history of clear-cut ethnic division lines and polarized post-independence political scene. Special focus will be paid to the Baganda’s role in the country’s colonial and post-colonial history, and the Ugandan Indians’ middleman position in the society.

After introducing the context of the study, we are going to move to theoretical framework with concepts of sojourniing, buffer- and middleman position introduced in order to frame the Indians societal position in Uganda. Since the thesis is not only about the Indian’s societal position but also about how the Baganda uncovered some of their own political and societal frustration whilst producing the ‘otherness’ of the Bayindi, we will also talk about the concepts of identity sore spots and the production of master narratives.

Next we are going to focus on research methodology. This thesis was conducted by using ethnographic methods, mainly semi-structured interviews and participatory observation, in order to understand more in depth the interrelations of the studied groups and the Ugandan society as a whole.
Finally in part IV we tackle the historical middlemen’s societal position as the embodiment of power in contemporary Uganda. The chapter starts from historical and conceptual introductions and continues to the actual analysis divided into three parts: social, economic and political position. We then end with conclusions.

All in all, I aim to show how the Indian’s role as the historical middlemen is still produced in today’s society and how producing the ‘otherness’ of the Indians reflect the build-up frustrations of the Baganda in contemporary Uganda.

PART II – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

Theoretical framework

This study is multidisciplinary at heart, drawing mainly from sociology, development studies and social psychology. The key concepts used to explain the Indians position in their surrounding society are labour & auxiliary diasporas (Cohen 2008), and middle position - more specifically concepts of sojourning, solidarity, middle and buffer positions (Bonacich 1973 & Cohen 2008). It is necessary to understand the societal position of the minority in order to explain some of the tensions that I have witnessed between the Ugandan Indians and Africans, especially the Baganda.

As this thesis is also about the definitions of an “immigrant group” often seen as alien and other by the local Africans one cannot overlook the concept of Baganda’s own societal position: what do the informants reveal about their identity sore spots (Connolly 2002) and social and political frustrations whilst describing ‘the other’? In a wider perspective, how do the Baganda produce the ‘otherness’ of the Indians in relation to the master narratives (Hammack 2008) provided by the colonial and post-independent power elites in Uganda?

Diasporas

In their book Diaspora & Hybridity Kalra, Kaur and Hutnyk (2005) compare the concept ‘diaspora’ to that of ‘immigration’. They come to the conclusion that diaspora implies a two-sited process whereas the word ‘immigrant’ is seen as a more static and fixed notion. According to them the word diaspora widens the narrower perspective of a migrant, making migration more an ongoing process of building relationships. Diaspora also refers to relationships and links in both ‘receiving’ and ‘sending’ countries. According to the writers, the concept of diaspora can therefore add new dimensions to the concept of immigration (Kalra etc. 2005, 16.)
A diaspora community does not always have to arise from a traumatic dispersal, like in the case of the worldwide Somali diaspora. Diasporic communities can also be generated for example by colonial ambitions or simply by emigrants in search of work. Cohen (2008) groups these different types of diaspora as imperial, trade or labour-related diasporas (Cohen 2008: 61).

Kalra et al. (2005) criticize Cohen for building too strict labels for diaspora communities and being over-ambitious with the whole concept. The critics rather highlight the hybridity of the concept. Also Gjisbert Oonk, a known Indian diaspora researcher from the Netherlands, points out the variety of immigrant stories that lay behind the seemingly homogenic community of the Indian diaspora and points out how the concept of a diaspora is too narrow to capture the uniqueness of each diaspora community and individual family (Oonk 2007).

However, Cohen never implies that overlapping’s would not occur and he underlines that no category is fixed. He gives many practical examples and attempts to avoid deterministic explanations. Even the critics point out his work gives a good starting point for conceptual diaspora debates.

Next I will focus on the categories of labour and auxiliary diasporas because as will be shown in the chapter ‘Ugandan Indians’, the Bayindi’s historical background lays firmly on the administrational and commercial expansion of the British protectorate, decisively interlinked with one another. In the protectorate period the Indians of Uganda were acting both as buffers between the ruled and the ruling, executing the British orders as middlemen, and formed somewhat independent merchant communities that locals saw as their competitors.

According to Cohen (2008) the Indian indentured workers in the late nineteenth – early twentieth century East Africa, deployed by the British imperialist, offer a text book example of a labour diaspora. By his definition a labour diaspora can be said to exist, if:

a) A strong retention of group ties are sustained over an extended period of time (in respect of language, religion, endogamy and cultural norms);

b) A myth of and connection to home land prevails; and

c) Significant levels of social exclusion exist in destination societies.
Oonk (2007) criticizes strict diaspora categorizations, such as Cohen’s, especially on the part of ‘missing home’. According to him Cohen’s definition “b) a myth of and connection to home land prevails” is especially debatable. Oonk and his colleagues have studied tens of different South Asian immigrant groups and point out that many of them have a controversial relationship to ‘the homeland’. This relationship is much more complex than simple definitions would suggest.

Though most of my Indian informants did not have plans of settling to Uganda for good there is no evidence that all of them would have been longing to ‘return home’. First of all the whole concept of ‘home’ can be debated in the current global context - which has influenced especially the expelled Ugandan Indians. Among my ‘Indian’ informants ‘home’ may have referred to several physical or imaginary places such as: a green village near Delhi, Mumbai’s busy streets, the organized city of Chester in the UK or even the colonial village life in Uganda.

I agree with the criticism that imposing strict categorizations and prevailed myths can easily undercut the hybrity of diaspora communities and individuals. If this study would focus on the identities of the minority group, such categorizations could seriously undercut the heterogeneity of the group. However the concepts of labour and auxiliary diaspora are very useful when it comes to explaining the Ugandan Indians societal position. The terms provide a framework in order to understand why the Indians are perceived as the middlemen of the society and to some extent also the embodiment of power in the Ugandan society.

Phillip Curtin (1984) was the first researcher to define a trade diaspora. His definition of the concept is the following:

Commercial specialists would remove themselves physically from the home community and go to live as aliens in another town [...] There, the stranger merchants could settle down and learn the language, the customs and the commercial ways of their hosts. They could then serve as cross-cultural brokers helping and encouraging trade between the host society and people of their own origin who moved along the trade routes [...] What might have begun as a single settlement soon became more complex [...] The result was an interrelated net of commercial communities, forming a trade network, or trade diaspora. Curtin 1984 2, emphasis included.
Where Cohen defines labour diaspora on the basis of interrelations within and outside the diaspora community Curtin focuses his trade diaspora definition more on the groups’ societal position as cross-cultural brokers. Maybe more than Cohen, Curtin manages to capture the complexity of the settlement of these stranger merchants as he highlights the intricacy of the phenomenon. Yet, these definitions should not be seen as separate or exclusionary but as interlinked and complementary.

According to Cohen (2008) trade diasporas and imperial diasporas, which for example the British colonialist formed in East Africa, had an intermediate type called ‘auxiliary diaspora’.

Auxiliary diasporas profited from colonial expansion but were composed of ethnically different camp followers of military conquest or minorities permitted to provide retail shops by colonial regimes. Often the small numbers representing the imperial power meant that local hostility was directed instead to the more visible and often more numerous auxiliaries, who were seen to be ‘foreigners’ allied to the colonial administration. Cohen 2008 84, emphasis added.

The Indians in East Africa undoubtedly had some features of an auxiliary diaspora but their autonomous network expansions also influenced their arrival to eastern Africa. That would suggest the Ugandan Indians to be a hybrid mix of labour, trade and auxiliary diasporas – especially in the eyes of local African communities. Cohen also notes that not all auxiliaries were traders. The Sikhs, for example, formed the Kenyan police force and when the East African countries later on nationalized the positions these auxiliaries were forced to choose between local citizenship, repatriation, or rescue by the former imperial power (Cohen 2008 84.) Many of the expelled Ugandans chose the latter.

The Bayindi of Uganda have never been a single entity that could be put to a one category of origin: historically some came to work as indentured labour forming more or less a labour diaspora whereas some came purely to seek for better commercial opportunities and might be named trade diaspora members. In the case of today’s Indian new comers - who have no ties to the former expelled group of people - the group may be defined as a combination of labour and auxiliary diasporas, since in the local eyes the Indians of Uganda are still perceived through the ‘colonial lenses’.
All these diaspora definitions are however interlinked and do not exclude one-another. As was described before, the diaspora definitions are used mainly to understand and analyze the societal positions of Ugandan Indians. This position is not simply a product of what the Indians in actual terms are but most importantly *how they are perceived* by local Africans.

**Middleman position**

Hubert Blalock, a former sociology professor in Washington University, created the term middleman minority in 1967. Blalock had discovered that some immigrant minorities formed a uniform class of entrepreneurs and, quite uncommonly when compared to other marginal groups, were located in the middle of the society – as a buffer between the power elite and the bottom classes (Blalock 1967, 80–81). In addition, an individual’s occupation was often in-between two groups: for example a trader between seller and buyer or a lender between a bank and a household. (Bonacich 1973, 583.)

California University Professor, Edna Bonacich, developed the middleman concept further in her article “A Theory of Middleman Minorities” (1973). Bonacich explained the exceptional placement of the minority by *sojourning mentality* - an intention to return back home. This intention made an individual sacrifice some of his/her current welfare for the sake of the future. With time the thrifty, future oriented lifestyle lead to an accumulation of capital and therefore a somewhat notable economic position in the surrounding society.

Bonacich writes that sojourn guides an individual to occupations which do not tie him/her to one place for long periods. According to her middleman minorities avoid investing their money to binding activities, such as livestock, but instead want possessions which can be easily transferred into money. Popular industries are commercial trade, money exchange and lending, and some handicrafts (Bonacich 1973, 583.)

Because settling is not a goal for a middleman minority, linking up with the surrounding society is not a necessity for its members. Resistance towards multi-ethnic marriages, isolation, own culture and language schools all fit to the middleman minority description. At the same time, the endogenous relationships within the group are cherished as they may prove to become useful when returning back home. The internal relations are also often a necessity for succeeding in the surrounding society. This is why, according to Bonacich, there is a deep sense of belonging within the minority. She calls it *solidarity* (Bonacich 1973, 585–586.)
Solidarity is a definite asset in the economic field: it makes lending possible on the basis of trust. This arrangement benefits the borrower especially since interest rates are low and information flow is fluent and easily accessible among the minority. A typical business for an individual middleman minority member is a family business which benefits from free labour and appoints members of the same group even when it has to hire people outside the family. In other words, the middleman businesses are very labour intensive but, because of family relation and solidarity, they enjoy low labour costs. Since the hours of work are not always counted only few companies can compete with these businesses. This can lead to middleman business domination in certain industries (Bonacich 1973, 586-587.)

Because other society members are normally not planning to leave their place of stay, the sojourning mentality is also likely to separate the minority from the majority. According to Bonacich conflicts between the minority and the surrounding society arise because these two groups often have separate interests: the middlemen, unlike the majority population, do not intent to settle to the surrounding society permanently. The majority population does not normally have one mutual goal and so different groups get into conflicts with the minority for different reasons. However, Bonacich separated the causing factors into financial inequality and solidarity caused factors. (Bonacich 1973, 590.)

Because of lacking employee rights and long, uncounted working hours rival businesses have to compete against low prices. This is a real threat for companies whose employees are not willing to play by the rules of solidarity. In family businesses the employer’s and employee’s interest are not that different from each other, whereas in “normal” employment relations they might differ from one another a great deal. In market economy, the majority of employers may not be able to offer any better conditions to their employees than the minority ones since the competition is fierce and somewhat obscured. (Bonacich 1973, 590.) When demanding their rights the worker is faced with a threat of being dismissed - especially in countries with plenty of available work force.

In other words, the middleman minority businesses may become a threat both to other businesses and workers of the same branch. This can lead to a distortion of the country’s labour market, at least in fields where middleman businesses are close to a monopoly position and in countries where labour laws are not effective.
In a wider perspective Bonacich points that the majority population can see the sojourning minority as disloyal towards the host society. Isolation and reluctance towards settlement can feed the negative stereotypes and anger towards the minority. Ironically, the majority’s hostile attitude is likely to stiffen the isolation and increase the hopes of returning back ‘home’. Vicious circle is established and the mutual reluctance towards one another is likely to grow deeper. (Bonacich 1973.) According to Kalra etc. the problem states have with diaspora communities has to do particularly with the concept of loyalty. States are assumed to be the homes of affiliation for all those who live within the national borders and so it can easily represent, or claim to represent, and protect the needs of those people. Diasporas make this equation a lot less simplistic. (Kalra etc. 2005, 20)

Light and Bonacich (1988) write in their book *Immigrant entrepreneurs* that since middleman minority play a mediating role between the dominant order and other oppressed minorities this buffer position is setting a potential ground for conflict (Light&Bonacich 1988.) I will focus especially on this middle-positioning – role of the minority as mediators and buffers - when analyzing my data.

**Comparing the concepts**

Cohen’s labour diaspora definitions have significant resonance with Bonachich’s middleman minority theory: strong retention of group ties (a) could be rephrased as solidarity; and social exclusion (c) as sojourning mentality; whereas home land myth (b) would not have its own term in the minority theory but would never the less be included in both. Like was mentioned about over simplifications earlier, Cohen reminds us that “Diasporas are neither uniform in class terms at the moment of their migration, nor do they remain so over time” (Cohen 2008 62).

In my analysis I will utilize the middleman theory and labour diaspora theory on sojourning mentality, solidarity, middle and buffer position when analyzing the Indians societal position in Uganda. Since the historical roots of colonialism have certainly influenced the Indians societal position and role I find the auxiliary diaspora - auxiliary people as an embodiment of power - especially useful. This all is to explain the minority’s social, economic and political role as buffers, mediators and middlemen in the surrounding society. It is necessary to understand this position in order to explain some of the tension I have witnessed between the Ugandan Indians and Africans, especially the Baganda.
Identity production

Since this study is also about the African/Baganda perceptions on the Indians/Bayindi, the concept of identity cannot be overlooked simply because whilst describing ‘the other’, often quite an alien group of people, one is likely to uncover something about his/her own identity and social positioning in the surrounding society.

According to Stuart Hall identity is an invention from the start till the end. Identities do not exist as objective accounts of who and what people really are but are continuously negotiated, reshaped and rebuilt. However, this does not make the concept of identity any less real. Identity is produced through distinctions - the self can only be born when it is reflected to others. The same applies not only with individuals but with groups and nations. Identity differentiates and builds imagined boundaries between nations, regions, ethnical groups, sexualities, families and individuals (Hall 1999 ; Hansen 2006.)

An identity is established in relation to a series of differences that have become socially recognized. These differences are essential to its being. If they did not coexist as differences, it [identity] would not exist in its distinctness and solidity [...] Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty. Connolly 2002 64 ; emphasis added.

Identity of the self can be constructed through a variety of non-selves comprising complementary identities and competing identities (Connolly 2002 8). For example there can be no understanding of how the Baganda identify themselves unless there is an understanding of how they separate themselves from others, in this case the Indians living in Uganda. According to Connolly the other can easily be defined as evil or irrational because it exposes sore spots in one's own identity (2002 8).

In the case of colonial Uganda, ethnic identities were unarguably constructed through difference in relation to other groups. The Baganda were identified as bright, educated and prominent people whereas for example the people of the north were seen backward, uneducated and martial - and the Indians hardworking, selfish and arrogant (see the parts III and IV). Hammack (2008) calls these narrative identities, constructed by the power elite of the time, as master narratives. However, the identity is not only narrated by the elite but all members of a group make sense of themselves - and others - in relation to the master narratives of a culture (Hammack 2008).
Hammack points out how the concern over the possible loss of collective identity is common among marginalized or disempowered groups within a particular social structure. This is likely to motivate strong connection between master narratives and the collective narratives of identity. (Hammack 2008, 224-225.) In the case of the Buganda the colonial master narrative was adopted as part of the collective group identity since it was favouring the Baganda. This made the Baganda reproduce, not contest, the given social order - but also increased anxieties concerning other groups, such as the Bayindi, for possibly disempowering them. Hammack points out how the ways in which states have re-produced master identity and managed cultural diversity have contributed to the insecurity of separate groups (Hammack 2008).

This study will not focus on Bagandas’ identity as such but will reflect the often negative descriptions given of the Bayindi to the social and political position of the Baganda themselves. Whilst producing the otherness, describing the Bayindi, the Baganda exposed some sore spots concerning their own identity and societal position. The sore spots are particularly interesting because as we are about to see all the colonial and post-colonial governments of Uganda have made distinctions rather than similarities an integral part of the Ugandan society.

In the following analysis I will argue that the colonial divide and rule policy produced a master narrative of the Buganda which was very beneficial to the Baganda themselves - placing them at the peak of the society. Since protectorate times, the post-colonial governments of Uganda have reproduced/reformulated the master narrative(s) of the Buganda now seen as elitist, self-aware group that sees Uganda only through the lenses of Buganda. This has made the disempowered Baganda cling onto the old division lines which used to strongly favour them and has raised the feelings of insecurity towards other groups. Therefore it is only natural that other groups, such as the Bayindi, may be seen as competitors threatening to take the (remaining) elite status of the Baganda away, thereby exposing sore spots in the Buganda identity.

**Data and Methods**

This study is about the encounters of the Bayindi and Baganda of Uganda, more specifically the societal position and the produced otherness of the Bayindi. I chose qualitative ethnographic research approach in order to gain in-depth and multilayered picture of the topic and understand and explain the social phenomenon behind it (see Alasuutari 1999 24 & 55).
Ethnography can be described as an inductive research drawing from a family of methods, involving sustained contact with human agents in the context of their daily lives, observing and asking questions, producing an account that respects human experience and acknowledges both theory as well as researchers own role with in the process (O’Reilly 2005 25).

The field
My first personal experiences in Kampala are from 2009-2010 when I was working with a local NGO and lived in a storage room of a local Ganda family of mother and three girls for nearly one year. The year taught me a lot about myself, my field of study, life in general, my home society and the interconnected world we live in - to mention a few.

I got interested on the Indians residing in Uganda and especially their seemingly limited interrelations with the Africans after visiting a navratri\textsuperscript{10} celebration in a Hindu temple in old Kampala in 2009. Before a British friend with Pakistani roots took me to follow the celebrations I had no clue that this relatively small yet very visible and economically powerful Asian minority populated several East African countries. Whilst following and participating in stick dancing I was stunned by the fact that within the capital of Uganda there was this seemingly isolated community with very colorful cultural traditions of their own.

During the year in Kampala I witnessed several occasions where the tension between the majority Africans and minority Indians was tangible even for a foreigner. One of those cases being the aftermath of the Kampala riots (see chapter ‘Introduction’). However, I only got thinking about those occurrences in a retrospect. Though Indians had been invited back to Uganda after their expulsion the relations between the two groups seemed somewhat tense and still far from equal. After doing my Bachelor’s thesis on the Ugandan Indians’ historical background and expulsion from Uganda I started to wonder whether this tension was there because the Indians were still perceived as some kind of an embodiment of the (colonial) rule (see Twaddle 1975).

\textsuperscript{10} A Hindu festival dedicated to the worship of the Hindu deity Durga. Navratri is an important major festival and is celebrated all over India. (Wikipedia, search ‘navratri’)
My second stay in Kampala was in the beginning of 2013. I stayed in the same old family but now the aim of my seven week stay was to collect data for this thesis, primarily through interviews, participatory observation and taking part in many informal discussions.

It was both a great privilege and to some extent an obstacle that I had been in Uganda before. I knew where to look for contacts and had already built many trustworthy relationships but was also expected to fill some of my old roles and duties. This meant that besides doing the actual ‘research work’ I also participated in many different social events, such as Adventist Masses, visits to sick relatives and my God daughter’s baptism. Of course in a retrospect I realize that though all these “extra activities” seemed unrelated to my research topic at the time they all helped me to gain multilayered knowledge about the Ugandan society.

This second time my old British friend with Asian roots was no longer staying in Kampala so I was there without my “Asian wing man” and since I could not get a hold of some old Ugandan Indian acquaintances I was forced to start from scratch with the Asian contacts. However, with the Ugandan Africans, and especially the Baganda, I had already established many long lasting and confidential relationships. This helped my research significantly though at first I did not realize that was the case.

When I arrived in Entebbe airport on New Year’s Day 2013 I thought I was there to get an in-depth picture of the Indian community in Uganda. I was hoping to find out something about the Ugandan Indians’ ‘shared identity’ and the interrelations between the Africans and the Indians.

Very soon I came to realized I was walking on a very fine line with my categorizations. Naturally there was no single entity called ‘the Indians’. Someone who had come to Uganda without any knowledge of English, whose passport had been seized by his (Indian) employer and who was in
Uganda purely to work, save money and send it back home was in a totally different position than a person who had been born in Uganda, had big networks in the country, was highly educated in Europe and now enjoyed the favors of the ruling. There was a great difference between the possibilities these two extremes had and the lives they lived. During the data collection period I both worked with Indians and spent some of my free time with them but I soon realized this was not enough for me to say anything comprehensive about them as a group or their hybrid identities. For that I would have needed to spend a lot more time with them, build stronger relationships and gain a lot more knowledge on the Indian caste system, religions and cultures.

As I came to understand I was not going gain the level of trust needed for the Indians to talk as openly about their lives, relationships and perceptions with me as the Ugandan Africans did, I realized I would have to focus on the latter. Though I knew the context of the capital region of Uganda relatively well, I only knew it from the Ugandan Africans’ and/or foreigners’ perspective – not from the Indians point of view. Besides having already established many trustworthy relationships with especially the Baganda, I knew some Luganda, was familiar with Buganda cultural habits, and was seen as a privileged white woman, a Muzungu. All those factors helped me realize this study was not going to focus on the Indians as an entity after all but instead on the interrelations of the Indians and Africans, the Indians societal position and most especially on how the Baganda perceived and produced the otherness of the Indians. In a retrospect, though unplanned, this perspective became the most fascinating part of the study.

As Alasuutari describes, doing qualitative research is a process where the researcher has to test and continuously redefine his/her predicaments and beliefs and try to solve the mystery of a certain phenomenon through various clues. With the help of the clues the researcher tries to gain an understanding that explains the phenomenon the way the bare eye cannot. (Alasuutari 1999.)

Data
My data collection methods were ethnographic, more precisely participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Within my two month stay in Uganda in Dec-Feb 2013 I did 21 semi-structured interviews out of which 5 were with Indians working or living permanently in Uganda and 16 with Ugandan Africans, mainly Baganda. Out of the 16 done with Ugandan Africans three were group discussions of three people, myself included. If the situation was relaxed enough the interview was usually more like a conversation and I tried not to fix myself to certain questions.
though chose the themes of the talks from those that arose continuously and seemed relevant based on the first interviews made. I noticed it was easier to get deeper, especially with people I knew in advance, if I was participating as well and not following too strict structures.

Besides semi-structured interviews I had tens of informal talks with Ugandans. These talks could happen in a packed taxi, in a private park, on Facebook, during dinner, power cuts or sometimes even whilst catching a stray chicken. Most of the interviews and talks took place either in Kampala or in Entebbe, in other words in the capital region- area that the Buganda kingdom has historically controlled. The reason why this study was narrowed to the capital region was partly due to resources, most of my old contacts were from Kampala or Entebbe and I had a limited amount of time in my use, but also because the area belonged to the traditional Buganda land.

Though interviews, informal talks and participant observation were the primary research methods used, there were also other complementary sources that helped me understand the context and the studied phenomenon more in depth. I followed local newspapers and Bukedde news, especially concerning Ugandan Indians and the Baganda and often together with my host family since the latter was in Luganda. I also visited some online chatrooms especially on independent newspaper Daily Monitor’s website where the topic of Ugandan Indians was frequently addressed. Following the local media gave me more insight on the how the Indians are presented and perceived in the Ugandan culture. I also reflected most of the collected data and observations to the previous experiences from Kampala back in 2009-2010.

In the beginning of my data collection period I was struggling to find Indian contacts who were not weary and suspicious of me. After few days I got a valuable tip: since the direct approach was not working in finding Indian informants I should try to interact with them by doing something together, for example cooking. Inspired by this priceless advice I started tracking Indian restaurants around my place of residence and managed to book myself cooking lessons from a local Indian restaurant with both Indian and African staff. The lessons eventually turned into more-or-less a day time job, paid with a meal per day.

Out of my seven week stay I spent three weeks working in this Indian restaurant. Whilst learning how to make naan, jeera rice and tikka masala I was able to observe, discuss with and/or interview most of the restaurant’s kitchen staff (app. 15 people), out of which three were originally from
India, one from Nepal and the rest from Uganda. I also made some valuable contacts through the restaurant by getting to know some of its’ clients.

At first the restaurant staff treated me with reserved curiosity. Though I had explained that I was in Uganda for research purposes and whilst doing my interviews et cetera I wanted to learn how to cook Indian food, most of my colleagues seemed to believe I was either going to open an Indian restaurant back home or that I was a spy hired by their employer. Most of the kitchen employees seemed somewhat amused that I wanted to learn skills from them.

When the restaurant workers realized I was not afraid to do “dirty jobs” such as washing the dishes or peeling potatoes they started to include me in their daily activities. Undoubtedly I as a foreign ‘Muzungu’ offered the kitchen staff some sort of everyday amusement and I believe the staff followed me almost as closely as I followed them. Nevertheless, after the clumpy start I was soon taken as a part of ‘the team’. Besides filling the work duties, we shared stories and experiences and talked about various topics from home sickness to homosexuality. We danced the traditional Buganda dance in the kitchen, made jokes, took pictures and sang songs – besides doing the actual work. I am forever grateful that I got the chance to get to know these people and that they felt comfortable enough to share their stories and everyday life with me.

I stayed the whole data collection period, besides a short stay in the north, in my local Ganda family. The mother of the family calls me her daughter and we have established possibly a lifelong relationship because of our similar sense of humor. However, like with every intercultural encounter, misunderstanding and frustrations did occur at times as well. I also had to question my
position as ‘a member of the family’ many times. Was I entitled to utilize the conversations we had whilst doing everyday activities? Where to draw the line between personal and research? In the end I came to the conclusion that as one of my methods was participant observation I could not turn the research mode simply ‘off’ whenever I was home. Since I had been open about what I was doing and the family members were willing to offer their insights I also realized there was no clear reason why I should.

Many people in the neighborhood of the family knew me in advance and when they found out what I was doing there this time they wanted to give their input to my research. I am beyond thankful to these people who once again made me feel welcome, were open and honest and showed their trust in me. I feel both very humbled and privileged for that.

**Informants**

The informants of the research were selected partly through snow balling effect but as mentioned also previous contacts proved to be handy. The interviews were conducted in places most convenient to each informant. Some were interviewed home, some at work, some in a public place. All of the interviewees were asked if the interview could be recorded and some refused so I took notes instead. I stopped doing interviews when I felt like there was not much new information covered in the talks.

The Ugandans I interviewed and talked with were mostly Baganda, in other words people from Buganda Kingdom, but I did not exclude anyone because of their background, kingdom or ‘tribe’. I was interested on what Ugandan Africans living in the capital area or in other words traditional ‘Buganda land’ thought of Indians in general and what sort of experiences and interactions these two groups had with each other. It was only after the data collection period that I realized that whilst describing ‘the other’ the Baganda interviewees came to reveal something interesting about their own societal positioning too.

The Indian informants were originally from the state of Gujarat, cities of Delhi and Mumbai or had been born in Uganda. They had been staying in Uganda for one year or more, up until decades. Most of the Africans I interviewed were Christians, mainly Catholics or Adventists, and some few Muslims. The Indians I interviewed were mainly Hindi and some also Sikh. More studies would be needed on how religions have influenced the interrelations between the Bayindi and Baganda but this study will not focus on that.
Out of around 30 discussions/interviews made approximately 4/5 where with men and 1/5 with women. The big part of men can be explained with the fact that men also played a key role in 2009 riots. The age of the informants varied between 24-74 years but mainly the informants were people between their twenties and forties. Social positioning of the informants was mainly low middle class or middle class. I interviewed mainly people who had education and/or a job but were nevertheless struggling financially.

**Analyzing the data**

The first steps of data analysis began already during the data collection period when I started drawing mind maps based on the interviews/talks I had had with the informants and by the observations I had made in the field. The constant reflection of the collected data to the research questions and theoretical concepts lead to a continuous process of defining and redefining the central concepts of the research (Hirsjärvi et al 2009; Alasuutari 1999). For example I only realized in a retrospect, after reading the data again and again & getting feedback from my peers, that whilst describing ‘the other’ the Baganda came to reveal something essential about their own societal position too. This lead to the fact I had to redefine many parts of the study again and again to keep the study inductive.

The actual analysis phase began when I had transcribed the collected data back in Finland. I began by constructing codes based on the themes that arose from the talks and placing colored labels on each theme. At first the themes were multiple and hard to control and it took time and several mind maps before I realized how I could proceed to uncover the Bayindi’s societal position. In the end I divided the descriptions into three main categories: social/cultural, economic and political. After this I started to reflect the data within each category to theoretical concepts and see whether a dialogue would be possible between them.

**Ethical considerations**

As some of the interviews for this thesis were political in nature confidentiality became a considerable part of the research process. Since some of my interviews were somewhat politically loaded I wanted to make sure my informants would know they could trust me. Whilst at the field, I protected the confidentiality of the interviewed by taking all my notes in Finnish and making sure no one else could access the recorded or the written materials. When I came back to Finland I changed the names of all informants and in some cases manipulated the interviewees’ backgrounds in order to make them unrecognizable.
During data collection period I also needed to be careful not to enforce ethnic categorization since it could make people underline only divisional factors - though in everyday life that would not necessarily be the case at all. I normally started my interviews with the Africans by asking “Who are the Bayindi?” At times it was difficult to stay in a neutral position and not start moralizing or taking too much part in the conversation but as soon as I realized I was interested especially on how the Baganda produced the Muyindi image this became an easier task.

In Uganda no matter what language I speak or what clothes I wear I am always seen as the ‘white’ foreigner – a Muzungu. A Muzungu is stereotypically highly educated and rich - in other words a person who could make your life a lot simple and lift your status quo in case you were struggling financially and/or socially. The constant attention has made me somewhat rough on the edges, especially when I am walking in the streets of Kampala on my own. Still, the status quo of a Muzungu could also open doors for me that would otherwise be left unopened. Sometimes the power of this position provided the authority that I would have lacked in other settings. This raised ethical questions. Am I entitled to take advantage of this position? For example once I was in a situation where a high level officer promised to get me a background document I had quested for, and I quote him: “no matter what”. As I realized this was not a normal procedure and that people could possibly be threatened along the way I stepped aside and asked for the person to forget the request. I also made sure every person I interviewed knew their participation was voluntary and that they could stop the interview whenever they wanted. However, at times when I felt I was not violating moral rules I did take advantage of this status since many people felt curiosity towards the foreigner. I believe that is also one of the reasons why I was able to start the cooking lessons at the Indian restaurant.

Besides being a privileged Muzungu I was ‘an outsider’ in relation to the studied groups. As has been described before, I was first struggling to find Indian contacts since I had no straight links to the group. However, since this study is about the encounter of the two groups in the end it proved to be an advantage that I belonged to neither group. It helped me maintain a neutral position and build relations with members from both groups.

All the interviews and talks I had were in English. In the beginning I thought language was not going to be a problem but I came to realize it was, especially with my Indian informants. Many Indians who I interviewed or discussed with did not speak fluent English. Also some Africans who spoke English fluently still left things unsaid because they could not express themselves in their mother tongue (in most cases Luganda). Sometimes I could ask the Baganda to use phrases in
Luganda if they had troubles expressing themselves and then we would translate the phrases together. This would not be the case with the Indian informants however since I did not have even the basic knowledge in any of their national tongues. Luckily with most of the Indian informants I did spent time much longer than just one interview and so we could communicate new things on daily basis. I would still say however that language is one of the biggest criticisms I have towards my study.

PART III UGANDA AS A CONTEXT

Uganda; a land-locked East African country neighboring Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and DRC; is a nation of both natural and cultural plurality. Even before building the actual national lines the area was best described as a heterogenic mix of cultures and people: in the 19th century there were at least 63 different languages spoken within the present boundaries of the country. In terms of socio-political structures Uganda contained at least 200 distinct political entities –ranging from centralized feudal kingdoms to more segmented societies, based on for example clan structures. The country can be divided into two major linguistic groups, Nilotic north and Bantu south. Although different groupings existed prior colonization, the ethnic division lines and ‘tribes’ are at least partially the product of imposed categorizations by the imperialists. (Jorgensen 1981 35-36; Mutibwa 1992 1; Mamdani 1996.)

In the southern part of present day Uganda there were centralized states and refined political systems already in pre-colonial times. These states did not only have kings but also parliaments and laws that governed the everyday relationships of people. Because of their primarily pastoralist livelihood, people of the north were used to more moving way of life and did not have as fixed societal structures. Many researchers declare there was a huge difference between the “developmental stage” of the south and the north in terms of society structures and education (see for example Mutibwa 1992 and Joergensen 1981) but, like Finnström (2008) points out, that depends on the measures used. It can be however agreed that there ways of live varied quite a lot between the south and the north of current Uganda.
The first European explorers arrived in the Great Lakes region in the middle of the 17th century. Besides natural resources, the explorers encountered many influential kingdoms in the area and got impressed. One of the most significant kingdoms was the Buganda by the shores of what we now call Lake Victoria (Chrétien 2003). Jorgensen (1981) points out however that though the strongest, Buganda was by no means the leader in every field when compared to other kingdoms. The other kingdoms of the area were Bunyoro, Toro, Ankole and Busoga (Tripp 2010 42).

Missionaries started arriving into the area in the 1870’s, soon after the explorers. Their arrival had an interesting beginning since the Kabaka had sent a letter addressed to Queen Victoria asking for the Queen to send missionaries to Buganda kingdom “to teach his people the Christian religion and western knowledge.” The letter was published in the London Daily Telegraph in 1875. (Chrétien 2003 211; Mutibwa 1992 1-2.)

First British Anglican missionaries arrived in Uganda in 1877 and where soon followed by French Catholic “White Fathers”. The British-French rivalry in converting the locals reflected the competition lines in Europe. The rivalry degraded into a civil war in 1892 which ended in triumph for the protestant faction and prompted the declaration of a British protectorate a few years later. Mutibwa (1992) notes: “Thus religion became a divisive rather than a unifying force right from the very beginnings of colonialism in Uganda.” This historical division reflects to the contemporary Ugandan society as well. (Mutibwa 1992 1-2; Chrétien 2003 211.)

Colonial times
As Germany was gaining more and more footage in Eastern Africa by the end of the 17th century, also Britain felt the need to take former trading areas under its administrational supervision (Rice, 1923 258). The largely unexplored areas of East Africa offered the Brits not only an asset for market competition but also an important geopolitical weapon: by controlling the source of the (white) Nile in Uganda one could influence the countries in the upper reaches of the Nile - Sudan and Egypt. This setting would keep the Suez Canal open for the British trade items. (Indian Diaspora 95; Jorgensen1981 40.)

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11 Explorers Speke and Grant visited Uganda in 1862 when they were looking for the source of the Nile. Later on the famous traveler Henry Morton Stanley came for a visit in the Buganda kingdom and later on delivered Kabaka’s letter to London (Mutibwa 1992 1.)
12 King of Buganda
13 At the time Buganda was faced with threat posed by Egyptian military forces and neighboring Bunyoro kingdom (Mutibwa 1992 1.)
14 The missionaries focused their work on the Kabaka’s court and the civil war was between the different factions in the Kabaka’s court, not only between the French and the British (Mutibwa 1992).
The European countries had signed an agreement on the division of “Dark Africa” already in 1890 but before they could take action they needed to make an agreement with local leaders. The Baganda elite proved to be a good negotiation partner as the Brits first made an agreement on land rights with them. Thought the negotiations with Baganda were peaceful, partly because the Baganda also gained from the agreement, Buganda’s 19th century arch-enemy Bunyoro kingdom proved to be more difficult and demanded fighting. This is where the Baganda verified their usefulness as the strategic assistants of the colonial expansion and the Brits awarded them with private land rights to Bunyoro land. The British Imperium declared Uganda as one of its protectorates in 1894 and the following extensions to Toro and Ankole were more peaceful. (Mutibwa 1992 2-3; Jorgensen1981; Chrétien 2003 224.)

Once the Baganda had become allies and they were disarmed it was time to set up some state institutions such as the police and army, as part of the British indirect rule. The Baganda were told they were inadequate in numbers and were instead encouraged to become civil servants or business men. In reality the colonialist did not want to make the group too powerful and able to defeat the Imperialist if disagreements were to occur. The recruits for security personnel were made from less educated areas, northern and eastern Uganda. The lower educational level made their grievances easier to control but to the public it was argued that northerners were naturally martial (Finnström 2008). This division policy created an army composed of suppressed northerners and it would be later on used by northern leaders to pay back to the south, especially the Baganda (Mutibwa 1992 6.)

**Economic affairs**

Economically Uganda was “the showpiece” of British administration. However, development was heavily dependent on the south and Buganda in particular. Coffee and cotton producers, which the protectorate relied on for revenue, were mainly in Buganda land. As a matter of fact the Baganda landowners were producing so well that the colonial government decided to support them rather than the British settlers own production. This placed the Baganda at the peak of Uganda’s primary production. (Mutibwa 1992 7.)

Uganda was part of a free trade zone that benefitted especially foreign traders. Barriers for international trade had been demolished but at the same time landowners had to face serious

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15 Not yet in Berlin’s conference 1884-1885 (Cheretien 2003).
16 This changed the power relations in Buganda since previously only the king Kabaka had owned land (Mutibwa 1992).
taxation. This was a benefit to the international merchants arriving from the other side of the Indian Ocean (see chapter ‘Ugandan Indians’) but a disadvantage to the local landowners, such as the Baganda. The Asians of Uganda formed a privileged class as middlemen between Europeans and Africans and in many ways they were seen as competitors by the Baganda - not politically but economically. The ownership of big sugar estates did not raise as much resentment as the immigrants roles as tradesmen. The Asians dominated both rural and urban trade which angered local people for it seemed to block their own efforts to run small businesses. This was because foreign goods had become more affordable than local ones. The local peasants produced the cotton and coffee that often the Asians processed into usable products and sold with generous gains. The economic juxtapositions led to Buganda riots against the Asian businessmen already in 1945 and 1949. (Twaddle 1975; Chrétien 2003; Mutibwa 1992 9.)

Building the Uganda Railway from Mombasa, the coastal city of current Kenya, to Kampala by the shores of lake Victoria, shortened the commercial journeys from little over two months to just two days. Because of decreased transportation costs, the products imported via the coast line became increasingly competitive. (Chrétien 2003 237; see also the following chapter ‘Ugandan Indians’)

By 1922 the main structural features of the modern Ugandan economy were in place. Based on peasant production of primary commodities for the world market, the newly unified economy was no longer self-sufficient but structurally dependent on the external economy for processing domestic raw materials into consumer and capital goods. In terms of colonial measures of progress [..] the Uganda protectorate was a successful colony. Jorgensen1981 63.

As Jorgensen notes, the colonial success was largely made possible by the Buganda-British collaboration (Jorgensen1981).

**Buganda’s role**

The Baganda saw themselves as natural leaders of the country. However, Buganda was not Uganda. Mutibwa 1992 9

The Buganda kingdom has been the leading force defining Uganda’s developmental path in modern history. The Baganda constitute around 17% of the country’s population making it the

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17 At the time the Baganda represented the majority of land owners in the capital region which is traditionally Buganda land (Mutibwa 1992).
largest single ethnic group. One of the official languages of Uganda is Luganda\textsuperscript{18}, and even the country name Uganda can be traced to the Buganda kingdom. Buganda has been regarded as the strongest, wealthiest and most educated kingdom of the country. This legacy has influenced the relationship between the Baganda and the rest of the country and remains a hot potato in the political scene of Uganda - even though the Baganda have not had direct political power as a group since the early independence (Chrétien 2003 226; Tripp 2010 42; Mutibwa 1992.)

Uganda’s first missionary schools located in Buganda land - as that is where the relationship between Britain and Uganda started. Also the Makerere University’s first graduate students were all Baganda. The net result of such educational policy was a further division of the country into educated south and non-educated north. (Mutibwa 1992 9.)

The Baganda were the agents of the British rule in many respects as they helped the Imperium to expand their territory by offering e.g. strategic assistance. Mutibwa refers to this phenomenon as ‘Buganda sub-imperialism’ (Mutibwa 1992 3). Mamdani (1996) notes that since the colonizers were placing the colonized “in a series of separate containers” this created a division of ‘citizens and subjects’. In many ways the Baganda could be included in the first category which mainly contained non-residents, whereas the rest of the indigenous people would be classified as subjects. This relationship between the colonizers and the ‘colonized’ seemed to benefit both parties as the Baganda gained power over non-Buganda areas, alongside with wealth and glorification, whereas the British were able to satisfy their needs for more resources. (Mamdani 48-49, 61; Mutibwa 1992.)

In the British protectorate the Baganda did not identify themselves as the subject of the Brits but as their allies and wanted to clearly separate themselves from the other ethnic groups, tribal people and kingdoms within Uganda. The country was clearly divided to the Baganda elite and the rest. (Chrétien 2003 226.)

One of the major features of the British rule was the creations of Buganda into a state within state. The manner in which missionaries were seen to have been invited and the enthusiasm with which the Baganda embraced Christianity clearly appealed to the sentiments of Victorian England. Secondly, the support which the Baganda oligarchy gave to the British inclined the British towards Buganda. Thirdly, the manner

\textsuperscript{18} Alongside with English and Swahili.
which the Baganda were used as agents to extend British rule outside Buganda made them into a privileged group. Fourthly, we should not forget that Buganda was the most powerful kingdom in the interlacustrine/lake area and was well-armed. It was imperative to persuade the Baganda to surrender their guns, but this could only be done by appeasing the Buganda oligarchy, making Buganda into a mini-state within the protectorate. *The consequence of this policy was to increase division and disunity in Uganda as a whole.* Mutibwa 1992 3, emphasis added.

The historical legacy of tribal based identities has sharpened the ethnic loyalties in the colonial and post-colonial Uganda. They still shape the relations within contemporary Ugandan society as will be shown later on.

**Edge of independence**

On the rise of independence Uganda was a crown jewel among the colonized areas: it seemed to have all the resources it needed for a successful future. However, the area was a heterogenic mix of different cultures and customs, languages and chiefs/kings. In the bigger picture Uganda was divided into the Bantu speaking south and Nilotic north. At a closer look the gap between the elitist Buganda kingdom and other kingdoms and cultural areas was enormous. (Chrétien 2003 290.)

The boundaries of Uganda were drawn, like with other African countries, not by the lines of peoples and cultures but by European desires for natural resources. This meant that people who belonged to the same ethnic groupings could find themselves in separate colonies and would soon be further separated by the introduction of new foreign customs, languages, rules and regulations. At the same time peoples with no previous contact or controversial relations were all of a sudden nationals of the same region (Mutibwa 1992 3-4.) This history laid down the ground for an internally fragmented state at independence.

Mandami notes that as a part of the indirect rule of the British, Uganda’s native authorities played a key role in implementing unhealthy structures into the society. The absence of accountability for these authorities, which were often tribally organized, turned into a license of exploitation. This created the basis for autocracy in the country, as in many other British colonies, and the institutionalized corruption and violence could easy spill over in times of discontent. (Mandami 1996 57-59.)
At the rise of independence the Buganda elite demanded to either get their own independent nation or a powerful status in the new independent country. At this time the Baganda formed around 54% of secondary school students and most of the college level students, besides producing approximately 52% of the GPD. The British gave ground to Bagandas’ demand since they believed they could have indirect leadership through Kabaka also in the independent nation. (Chrétien 2003 292-293.)

Since the colonial policy emphasized differences in order to implement their divide and rule policy it is not surprising that the peoples of Uganda remained divided in relations to each other. Conflicts, however, did not arise until the colonial power left the scene. (Mutibwa 1992 4.)

**Independence**
Right from the start of colonialism, nationalist movements that voiced out African objections were organized on tribal, not national basis – largely because there was no such thing as national unity or a nation. In the Ugandan context the British - and the Baganda - saw the politics of Uganda through the lens of Buganda. Therefore the first political uprisings against colonialists were initiated by ethnic division lines and there was no nationalistic movement. (Mutibwa 1992 12-13; Lancaster 2012)

The marginalized groups got their own advocate from Milton Obote who was originally from the north and had a humble background. He pointed out the paradoxes of moving towards independence when different regions were clearly in different levels of development, and therefore unequal when compared to one another (Chrétien 2003 295-296.)

*If the [colonial] government tries to develop this country on a unitary basis, how can it, in God’s name, develop at the same time another state within the state?* Milton Obote, 1958.  

The Imperialists wanted to continue stable and good business relations to the area and were therefore willing to meet the Buganda demands and so the king of Buganda, Kabaka Edward Mutesa, was appointed as the newly independent nation’s first president. (Chrétien 2003, 293-294.)

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19 Obote was from Lango, a non-kingdom area. (Mutibwa 1992)  
20 Cheretien 2003, 294
Obote’s Uganda People’s Congress (UPC), and its predecessor UPU, was the first Ugandan party to be formed and lead by a non-Buganda. At the same time Buganda leaders had formed a new strategy to secure the position of the Kabaka in the independent Uganda. Kabaka Yekka (KY, King Alone) was formed to fight anti-Buganda movements. UPC agreed that Buganda was a threat to the country’s unity but prior to independence it also knew it had to make a deal with the Baganda leaders in order to gain power. An alliance made the victory possible and before getting independence Obote’s party had agreed on Buganda’s demands on a federal, instead of unitary, government. Obote became the Prime Minister of the newly independent Uganda alongside with, mostly ceremonial, President Edward Mutesa, the Kabaka of Buganda. (Mutibwa 1992; Chrétien 2003 295-296.)

Uganda began its journey as an independent nation from a very shaky political base. First of all the KY & UPC coalition parties were in many ways each other’s opposites, especially when it came to a vision about future Uganda. The parties started drifting further apart when a referendum was given to the parts of Bunyoro that had been previously given to Buganda by the British. Buganda lost the vote and therefore the land. Problems did not end there. Religious lines had been dividing the country since missionary times and since Obote was a Protestant he could not get the Catholics behind him, many of whom gathered around the banner of the Democratic Party. Uganda was also a mixture of different language areas which posed a problem in terms of communication, education and further unity (Mutibwa 1992 26-27.)

As could be predicted the confrontation between Kabaka Mutesa and Obote took place soon after independence. This led to a constitutional crisis in 1966. The issue was, once again, Buganda’s relation to the central government but also financial matters hindered the mutual understanding.
of the two parties. In the claimed interest of national unity Obote suspended the 1962 Independence Constitution. This led to Buganda wanting to expel the government from its own land. In May 1966 central government troops, led by Obote’s lieutenant Idi Amin, attacked Kabaka’s palace. The Kabaka took refuge in England and Obote became the President of Uganda. The country had now been made “uniform”, at the expense of the Baganda. (Cheretien 2003 296; Mutibwa 1992 38-40, 60-62.)

The battle of Mengo became the first major violent battle in independent Uganda with approximately 2000 deaths. But it was not to remain the last. It appeared that violence had become institutionalized in Ugandan society. After the constitutional crises Obote tightened his grip of the county, especially the Baganda. He was unarguably the most powerful man of the autocratic country. In the 1967 new constitution the most notable change was the abolition of kingship and the establishment of a republic. There was no longer room for other centers of loyalty in Uganda than the central government. (Mutibwa 1992 38-40, 58-60, emphasis added.)

Late sixties till early nineties were uncertain times also economically speaking. Food shortages shot prices through the ceiling. This lead to political discontent of the most exploited segments of the society: the urban workers and the working peasants who treated Obote’s Move to the Left with cynicism. The economic crisis was clearly heading towards political crisis since the government lacked mass support. Its policies had alienated both the Indian and African traders. (Twaddle 1973; Lancaster 2012.)

The army’s role had been significant in the battle of Mengo and Idi Amin was soon promoted as Major General. The military was seen and identified itself as a big part of the politics in Uganda and soon the government needed the army’s protection more than the army needed the government. This lead to another coup in 1971 when Idi Amin Dada oust Obote. (Chrétien 2003.)

In the beginning Amin had a wide support both nationally and internationally. Dada enjoyed popularity among the Baganda since he overthrew Obote whom the Baganda regarded as their humiliator and ordered a state funeral for the Kabaka Edward Mutesa who had died in exile. Also the British had been objecting Obote’s movements towards socialism and waffles on deporting the non-Ugandan Indians from the country. In many ways Amin seemed like the man of peace and unity for Uganda. (Kyemba 1977; Mutibwa 1992 84-85; Lancaster 2012.)
Like most of the leaders who come to power through the barrel of the gun, Amin soon grew paranoid, not really knowing who to trust. Before Amin expelled the Indians residing in Uganda he showed the exit sign to the Israelis and turned Uganda towards the Arab world. Besides being against ‘white racists arrogance’ Amin had requested support for his army from both Britain and Israel but failed to get it. The oil-rich Gaddafi came the answer Amin’s financial problems and most probably influenced the coming expulsions too. By April 1972 all Israelis had left Uganda. This was only a rehearsal as the more numerous and historically rooted Indians were to be next in the line. (Mutibwa 1992 88-92.)

It is believed that 300 000 up to 500 000 Ugandans lost their lives during Amin’s regime and a significant part of the victims came from Obote’s ethnic group Langi (MRGI). Amin’s paranoid regime turned against itself in the end of 1970’s as his invasion to Tanzania was the closing moment for the neighboring relations. In April 1979 Tanzanian and Ugandan troops arrived in Kampala to liberate the country. After this Uganda was run by several short lived governments and the next years were, once again, best described by lost opportunities. Three administrations held office within a period of less than two years. In December 1980 Milton Obote and UPC were back in the political game - unwilling to hear what the country really wanted and needed. The second UPC government did not have the support of those who mattered, and it had a frozen relationship especially with the Baganda. (Chrétien 2003; Lancaster 2012; Mutibwa 1992 145-149.)

Some Ugandans refused to support the government that was in power through a fraud. One of them was Yoweri Museveni, described as an intellectual westerner at the time. Museveni and his supporters, together forming National Resistance Movement (NRM/NRA), started Guerilla war against Obote’s regime in 1981. NRM wanted to destroy the system that had been violating the rights of the people of Uganda and put an end to the institutionalized violence. (Mutibwa 1992 151, 154-155.)

Against this brief introduction to Ugandan history prior and after independence, let us now turn to look at the specific position of the Indians in Uganda before going into detail about the contemporary political scene in Uganda.

**Ugandan Indians**

What comes to the question of whether Asians developed or exploited East African states, the answer is ‘both’. Mutibwa 1992 92.
Indian traders have been a familiar sight on the East African coast for centuries. The trade relations just to be dominated by monsoons: ships sailed from West Indian coast to East Africa from November to March and returned as the winds changed their course from April till October. Popular trade items were cotton, ivory and spices. Though profitable, the commercial expeditions were also full of risks: pirates, storms and diseases. By the end of 19th century relatively few south Asian traders had settled in the area permanently. (Rice 1923; Oonk 2003 65.)

More extensive Asian immigration began when Britain took over the East African countries, now known as Kenya and Uganda, and started building a railway from the Kenyan harbors to Ugandan inland just before the turn of the century (Rice 1923). European labour force would have been too costly for the Imperium whereas Africans were seen to be too primitive, unreliable or inaccessible. British governed Indians, with relatively higher educational level but lower work costs, became the answer to this colonial dilemma. (Rice 1923; Bharati 1972; Jorgensen1981.)

The Uganda Railway 1891-1902 cost the British government £5,3 million. The human cost of the transport revolution in East African trade was the death of 2493 and disablement of further 6454 Indian indentured workers (Jorgensen1981 42-43.)

In the beginning the Indian indentured labour was primarily needed for physical work, but as the protectorate began to develop, further input was needed on the administrational side. The Indians began to operate more clearly in-between the Imperial power and its’ subjects. Furthermore, the growing protectorate offered small scale entrepreneurs, who had already gained experience in trade, an excellent commercial opportunity – especially since there were no limitations for the flow of Indian immigrants to East Africa. These Asian entrepreneurs mainly arrived from western India, particularly from the Gujarati and Cutchi speaking areas. Some of the tradesmen or their acquaintances had already gained experience in doing business in the coastal strip of East Africa and had settled in Zanzibar. From the East African point of view this was the first time the indigenous people encountered shops where many goods could be found at one place. (Motani 1975 ; Bharati 1972.)

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21 The use of Indian labour rather than African labour was dictated by the fact that Africans were, for presumably perverse reasons, ‘unable to discriminate between contract labour and slavery’, whereas India appeared to be bottomless source of this cheap form of labour, thanks to years of the British civilizing mission. (Jorgensen1981 43)

22 It is estimated that in the turn of 19th and 20th century approximately 10 000 Europeans and 30 000 Asians (out of which 23 000 Indians) were living in East Africa – compared to the 2,5-3 million Africans (Rice 1923.)

23 Most of the Indian workers had a few year contracts and they returned back home when the contract expired (Plural Society)
They sold goods “up” to the British and other European settlers and “down” to the Africans. Bharati 1972 10

As was described many of the merchant Indians that came to Uganda in the turn of the 19th and 20th century had already gained experience in trade and money economy and were therefore very prominent in making business in the growing protectorate. It is good to notice, however, that when one Indian may have succeeded there where others who failed in trying and returned back home. This is why it may have somewhat falsely looked like the Asians succeeded in where the Africans did not (Oonk 2006.)

When Uganda became independent in 1962 the Indians had already a significant role as urban merchants. Now they were also successively involved in the manufacturing sector. As the independent country wanted to ‘Africanize’ its administration most the remaining Indians shifted from public to private sector (Motani 1975; Mutibwa 1992 92.) Within a century a loyal diaspora community had become the engine of the Ugandan economy.24

Uganda would be nothing without us Asians. Vikram, 55 year old Ugandan Indian, male. Though very successful in the economic field, the minority did not enjoy local popularity. The Indians’ middle positioning, ethnic division lines, sense superiority and caste mentality had kept the majority Africans and the minority Indians socially apart, hindering the establishment of equal relations. Frustrations towards the Indians had risen even prior independence (see chapter ‘Buganda’s role’). These aspirations did not only arise because of economic reasons but reflected the ethnic division lines posed by the colonialists and social anxieties within the Ugandan society. (Twaddle 1973; Okayo-Lakidi 1973.)

Education wise the somewhat settled Indians, whose families were among them, did not really have a choice when starting a life in Uganda. Local missionary schools were addressed to African children and in order to pass some of their cultural heritage to the next generation the Ugandan Indians opted to start their own schools. (Motani 1975). This made the establishment of equal relationships with local Africans even more challenging since even the preventatives of the next generation did not intermix automatically. As is shown in the following comment in local eyes the Indians were placing themselves above the rest of the society.

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24 By the end of World War II the numbers of Indians living in East Africa had increased to 320 000 (Brueggemann 2000).
They [the Indians] really owned those houses all over the suburbs of towns. [They were] in charge of economy, in charge of banks, in charge of [their own] education. So they were making themselves like the first class. And so I think the president [Idi Amin] really thought that these people are not really African. Joseph, 34 year old NGO manager, male.

In 1972 Uganda’s President Idi Amin decided to take advantage of the situation and threatened to expel the Asians from Uganda. At first the threats were not taken seriously since already Milton Obote had made similar outcries but in the end the Indians, named as brown-skinned parasites, were given 90 days to pack their bags and leave. Around 70 000 Indians had to leave Uganda. (Kyemba 1977; Twaddle 1975.)

The imbalance of state finances had kept Uganda on its’ toes even prior to the 70’s but good cotton crops had saved the country from a financial collapse prior Idi Amin’s rule. As the President and Army Commander in Chief, Amin was concerned with the disunity of the country and the rising mistrust against his rule both nationally and internationally. He also had an interest to keep his soldiers satisfied by offering them money and amusements. The social isolation of the Asians which prevented intermarriages and equal relationships made them seem foreigners in their own country. Amin also knew that measures taken against Asians would bring the Ugandan Africans closer to him. (Twaddle 1975; Kyemba 1977; Mutibwa 1992.)

The expulsion of Indians seemed to be the perfect solution for the country’s economic and social problems as well as Amin’s desire to teach the patronizing westerners a lesson. The public was easily maneuvered into supporting the expulsion, since Indians, often holding British passports, only seemed to “milk the cow and not feed it” and avoided social integration (Listowel 1973; Marjomaa 2012, Mutibwa 1992 93.)

I am going to ask Britain to take over responsibility for all Asias in Uganda who are holding British passports, because they are sabotaging the economy of the country. I want the economy to be in the hands of Ugandan citizens, especially black Ugandans. – There is no

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25 Mainly Indians
room in Uganda for people who have decided not to take up local citizenship, especially people who are encouraging corruption. Idi Amin 4.8.1972.26

From here onwards a retired Ugandan Muslim businessman, let’s call him Moses, aged 74 will shed light on the expulsion of Asians from the local viewpoint. This is interesting because Moses not only gained some of the expelled Indians’ property to himself but also knew Indian Muslims prior-expulsion and has later on maintained business relations with some of them.

The expulsion was very abrupt. We just heard on the radio that Amin had had a dream that he should expel the Indians. And it was broadcasted on the radio that he was giving them ninety days to leave the country. The Asians were lost because some of them were born here and they had never gone outside at all. So actually they were convinced they were Ugandans, and they had invested here. But nonetheless the man insisted on expelling them. And they really suffered.

Some of the Indians were convinced that they would not stay out for longer than six months. And many of them buried their money somewhere in their shops or in their houses, and cemented it properly. And so they went. Hoping that sooner or later they would be coming back only to see us [time] roling by, roling by – and no coming [back] was there.

Moses, 74 year old Ugandan businessman.

The expelled Indians had 60 days to leave the country and they were allowed to take one piece of luggage with them. Their businesses were transferred into local hands often so that one person took over the business and a completely different person the storage of the same business. As a result the Ugandan economy collapsed (Kyemba 1977.) The dynamics of sharing the properties becomes intricately apparent in the narrative told by the previously quoted businessman.

There was no set way of doing the distribution of their businesses. I think Amin did not even have an idea of how it can be done. So he could just select a few officers and say: ‘Two, three, four, five [go] on that street and distribute the shops to whoever is lined up there.’ There was no way of deciding who was capable of running it or who had enough money or experience. They would just say: ‘Man, do you want this shop?’ You say: ‘Yes’ and it is given to you. And then they break the locks and you enter. The whole thing is yours.

90% of the people who got the shops did not know what to do with them. They didn’t know the prices, they didn’t know where to buy from [...] I remember one particular man called Kadingidi who was given a shop there opposite City Square. That was a shop which was selling VERY good shirts. Shirts like Real Brooks and so on. At that time they were costing 55 Uganda shillings. So for us who were a working class we went there to see what price he is going to charge now. This shop was very different, it was not like the shops which were showing prices for each item, you know. There were no prices at all. So he decided to check on the, he saw some writings on this [pointing on the back of his shirt] where the size of the shirt is, so 15; 14,5; 16. And that was the price he was charging. It was so funny for us who knew the prices. We bargained as much as we could. Because even with 14,5 you could say ‘Mr. Kadingidi can I give you 13?’ ‘Can I give you 12?’ [laughing hard] 74 year old Ugandan businessman.

The expelled Indians went mostly to the Commonwealth countries. At first Britain had claimed it by no means take such a big amount of refugees but since India had declined to take responsibility over Ugandan residents holding British passports it became compulsory to open up the British borders to the expelled. Approximately 30 000 of the expelled ended up in England and the rest in Canada, India or neighboring countries of Uganda. Very few Indians stayed in Uganda. (Twaddle 1975; Jorgensen1981)
[The Indians success in Britain can be explained] because they decided to work hard. As I told you when I went there [in Britain] in 1979 I was surprised: At Heathrow airport I went into the restroom - only to see, when I came out, an Asian lady going to clean. I said: ‘A-al Can this happen?’ [laughter] An Asian lady went to clean when I had come out! Now you know the reverse was there.

When I was just ten years old I started working [...] at the Asians’ shop and we were doing everything, they [the Indians] were kings and princesses and all that. But when they went to Britain they decided to work. They really worked, particularly in those jobs like cleaning, and working on the toilets [...] all these dirty jobs. Asians took them on.

And they were really enterprising, in 1970’s I could hardly see a shop in London which was open on Sundays. But then the Asians started from [nothing], they were standing there with brushes, if you want anything I can get it for you. On Sundays. Otherwise all the other shops were closed. Now when you go there you cannot believe it! [laughter] Except the big stores [...] all the shops are open.

So they have influenced. [...] In fact I met the man who owned the petrol station that I took over [...] He is a friend! Even these days. But he said his only regret was that nobody recognizes him in the UK. Because here he was rich and everybody admired him. And when he bought a new car and everybody said : ‘Eee! Satinda’s car! Satinda’s car!’ He said: ‘In Britain who cares!’ Moses, 74 year old Ugandan businessman.

The chaotic situation in central and southern Uganda started to settle when the current President, Yoweri Museveni, took over in the Kampala coup in 1986. 27 In 1992 he re-invited the evicted Indians back and offered compensation for their losses, regaining lost property (Brueggemann 2000). Slowly the Ugandan economy started to get back on its feet.

The expelled Indians have now gotten the right to continue their life where it was let off. However, many of the expelled have come back only to sell or modernize and rent their old property – not to settle. Most of the Indian new comers to Uganda have no relations to the expelled. They have just

27 Peace in southern and central Uganda but a civil war began in the north.
decided to try their luck in the Pearl of Africa. Currently there are approximately 30 000 Indians living in Uganda. (Indian Diaspora 95.)

Current politics
Soon after Milton Obote’s second government was defeated by a coup of the national army in 1985, Museveni’s troops entered Kampala on the 26th of January 1986, after five years in the bush. That started the rule of Museveni and the National Resistance Movement (NRM) in Uganda which has lasted nearly three decades. NRM wanted to change the development path of the country by eradicating corruption and introducing economic growth, security and democracy to the country. (Mutibwa 1992 180.) As the following quote from Moses shows, people around the capital were pleased and positively surprised when the current regime took over power - peacefully.

Finally when Museveni took over that was the highest happiness people ever got! Really people liked Museveni - very much, very much! I, for one, when the first Tanzanians came in in 1979 [to topple Amin], our shops were looted completely. So we were just working back to normality – I was running a petrol station. And then when Museveni took over, again we ran away fully knowing that everything would be taken. But we were very surprised: not a single thing got displaced in the shops when Museveni took over. Absolutely nobody claimed that he had lost a thing! But at that [previous] time they [the army of overlakers] were the people who helped the [ordinary] people to bring the classes of the shops down. They would even shoot at the padlocks. “Take the things, take the things!” But when Museveni took over nothing of that nature happened. And there were no killing of people so
people were very very happy when that takeover took place. Moses, 74 year old businessman.

When Museveni first came to power he was widely applauded - both home and abroad - as he brought peace and economic growth to southern and western parts of Uganda.\(^{28}\) Museveni’s decision to restore Uganda’s traditional kingdoms with cultural no political power made the President gain wide support also in the Buganda kingdom. (Goodfellow 2014.)

After the honeymoon years of the regime, delivering the promised changes led to a disappointment for the locals. By mid-90’s it had become clear that meaningful power sharing was no longer the center of focus for NRM rule (Tripp 2010 26).

The economic reforms of the NRM regime seemed to benefit mostly foreigners, especially the Asians. Besides different reliefs that were supposed to pull foreign investments to the country the expelled Indians gained the right to reclaim their lost property. In the international scene this was greeted as respect to human rights but in the local eyes the Indians still seemed to milk, not feed, the cow. This represented a dilemma for NRM support locally. (Mutibwa 1992 194.) For example the Baganda did not gain similar rights as a refund for the hatred they had faced and property they had lost since the country’s independence. This made the Indians, once again, to be seen as a privileged group of people who enjoyed the favors of the ruling, at least in the eyes of the Baganda. These favors, however, were not seen to become without a price (see more in following part IV).

**Paradoxes of Power**

Professor Aili-Mari Tripp calls modern day Uganda a hybrid regime. By hybrid she means that the National Resistance Movement regime consists both democratic and authoritarian elements - and therefore lays somewhere in-between a democracy and an autocracy. The regime of Yoweri Museveni, which has managed to maintain power for nearly three decades, has adopted many democratic reforms only to hinder the same reforms through legislation. (Tripp 2010; Goodfellow 2014.)

Like Tripp points out, one of the main constraints on democratization lays in the divisive politicization of ethnicity, religion, caste and other identities. In Uganda the division lines have

\(^{28}\) However, soon a rebel movement began in the north developing into a long civil war between National Resistance Army and Lord’s Resistance Army.
been cut deep in the colonial era and governments ever since have not been able to eradicate this disunion – on the contrary they have made the division even deeper. This has created a scene where populist movements can gain power based on narrow ethnic, clan or religious appeals. (Tripp 2010.) The NRM regime has not been any exception to this.

In Uganda at first Museveni’s goal was to build broad based government with a national consensus but as time went on leadership of the military and political elite began to draw heavily from Museveni’s home region in western Uganda. This represent one of the paradoxes of a hybrid regime – when power has been seized through violence the only way to maintain it is through violence. Opposing voices are often silenced by force which raises support but violates leadership based on merit. (Tripp 2010 25; Mutibwa 1992.)

As has been showed the roots of Uganda’s torment and ethnic division lines lie in the colonial era. British government’s intentional policy of making Buganda into a state within the state, treating the Indians with exclusive privileges and at the same time widening the historical division between the north and the south of the country have made the country divided between different groups and focused on fighting for their own rights - not for the good of the country. (see Mutibwa 1992 21 and Chretien 2003.)

**Relationship with Buganda**

Managing relations with the county’s historically most powerful and largest kingdom Buganda has been an excessive political challenge for all the post-colonial governments in Uganda. Especially since the restoration of the kingdoms in 1993 Museveni has had to balance between the rising demands of the Baganda and the rest of the country (Goodfellow 2014 9.)

The Baganda applauded the restoration of the kingdoms but expected larger political autonomy within the course of time. In the early 2000 Buganda raised voices on returning back to federalism and in 2003 the Baganda held a peaceful demonstration over the matter. Museveni saw this as manifestation of secretarism that needed to be undercut and answered with violence. Since the perception of the Baganda for larger autonomy was never realized the sense of betrayal grew over time within the group. (Goodfellow 2014; Tripp 2010.)

When claiming power NRM had introduced a ‘no-party system’ to avoid parties being split across ethnic lines. However the NRM agenda had changed over the years and in 2005 NRM introduced multiparty system which allowed Museveni to remain in power since presidential term limits were
removed (Goodfellow 2014). Paradoxically the introduction of multipartyism has lead to increased dominance of the parliament in legislative matters - once again a step towards democracy actually undermined some democratic institutions in Uganda (Tripp 2010; Goodfellow 2014.)

Tom Goofellow (2014) has studied the interplay between law making and violent protests in Uganda after multipartyism was restored in 2005. He finds that since the restoration the government of Uganda has drafted several new laws to protect its own position or to intentionally provoke and politically manipulate opposition – often the Baganda. This has led to a rise of urban protests and riots which have often developed violent and further on led to aggressive responses from the government’s side.29 In contemporary Uganda many of the legislative and political contradictories have become a question of pro-Museveni or pro-kabaka: whether people in the capital region choose the presidents’ or on the traditional kings’ side (Goodfellow 2014 9.)

![Kampala riots lasted for three days and took the life of approximately forty people. Hundreds were injured. Picture: Reuters](image)

The 2009 riots (see ‘introduction’) were largely caused by the polarization of pro-M730 and pro-Kabaka segments in the capital region. According to Goodfellow several controversial bills, aiming at narrowing the rights of the Baganda/Mengo, influenced this polarization that finally erupted as violence. As the Buganda radio station CBS began to spread rumors about Prime Minister of Buganda being physically rejected by the national police the pro-Kabaka supporters immediately went to the streets. The build-up tension and anger of the protestors rapidly escalated into violence and the response of the state forces was crushing: up to forty people died in the riots, and

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29 The number of social conflicts concerning the government has significantly increased since 2005. While in-between 1998-2004 there were 58 recorded violent conflicts in Kampala, in-between 2005-2011 that number was 141 (Goodfellow 2014).

30 Museveni is often refered as M7 in the Ugandan media.
hundreds were injured. (Goodfellow 2014 12-13; Daily Monitor 3 December 2011.) One of the injured was our coworker Joseph who later on passed away in Rubaka hospital in Kampala. He was a bystander killed by the security forces’ bullets.

According to Goodfellow the government efforts to antagonize and isolate the opposition through a number of provocative legal changes was deliberate and that this fueled directly - intentional or not - into the violence. As a consequence of the riots CBS radio was closed for nearly a year and most of the controversial bills were passed by the government, with some adjustments. Publically the kingdoms’ role as cultural leaders with no political involvement was highlighted. (Goodfellow 2014, 13.) However, the roots of contemporary conflicts between the Baganda and the government lay also deeply in the colonial division lines as the Buganda’s elite position has been deteriorating ever since the country’s independence.

PART IV: THE BAYINDI – HISTORICAL MIDDLEMEN AS THE EMBODIMENT OF POWER

The aim of this thesis is to unfold the middle position and understand the social image of the Bayindi in Uganda, especially from the perspective of the Baganda. This positioning has deep historical roots and is still clearly alive in today’s society. Whilst unfolding the Indians societal position I will also focus on how the produced narratives of the Bayindi reflects to Baganda’s own societal position as the descriptions of ‘the other’ uncover some of the Baganda’s own frustrations concerning their societal position in contemporary Uganda.

Like Ocay-Lakidi (1975) highlights it is clear that the African attitudes and views about the Asians arose largely out of the social, political and economic dynamics generated within the colonial context. Since the historical roots of ethnic division lines are proven to be deeply planted in the Ugandan society I will start this chapter with refreshing the reader’s memory about the Bayindi’s middlemen position in colonial Uganda. After that we will look at the construction of Muyindi image both by old and contemporary power elites of Uganda and the Baganda.

Following the conceptual approach we begin the actual analysis. The analysis part is divided into three main sections: the social position including concepts of sojourning mentality and solidarity, economic position with a special focus on competition and unequal society structures, and finally political position of the Bayindi framed with the minority’s buffer position.
In the analysis I will show how the role of the historical middlemen is still produced in today's Ugandan society. The sojourning mentality and expulsion of the Asians have led to social exclusion of the minority which is seen as a neglect to interact, let alone integrate, with the local population. This has kept the Indian and African segment of the society socially apart and created a vicious circle where negative stereotypes are feeding reluctance towards integration and furthermore maintained the colonially rooted sense of separateness between the ethnic groups.

Throughout the modern history of Uganda the master narrative of the Bayindi, which has been reproduced over the years by several power elites, has always had an element of the Bayindi being identified as business oriented people. This has not changed over the years simply because the Ugandan Indians have been and still are a very visible and vital part of the Ugandan economy – especially in the sector of small and medium scale enterprises. The economic position of the Bayindi as producers and tradesmen has made the minority benefit from East African free trade zone where as the Baganda as primary producers and land owners have suffered. The negative stereotypes of Indians being selfish exploiters are fed also by the inequalities of the society, such as limited employee rights and lack of unions. These conditions have made the Bayindi be seen as economic exploiters of Uganda’s African population. Furthermore, the economic juxtapositions have made the Baganda view the Bayindi as a threat challenging their colonially rooted position at the peak of the Ugandan economy.

In the end we will come back to the middle and buffer position of the minority as we tackle the Bayindi’s political image in contemporary Uganda and reflect it to the Baganda’s own societal position. Toward the end of this chapter I aim to show that the middle-position of the Indians is still very much alive, though now instead of the the British and the Africans the Bayindi are seen to be corrupted middle-actors in-between the unpopular NRM government and the Ugandan Africans, whereas the Baganda are deeply frustrated by not only the current political elite of the country but also all the previous regimes which have stripped the group from some of their former honor and power.

**Historical middlemen**

In the East African context instead of two colonial layers (the colonizers and the colonized) there were three colonial layers: In Uganda the Asians were ‘colonizing immigrants’ acting in-between the Ugandans and the British. Though the Indians themselves were colonized people, both in their
home countries and in East Africa, in many sectors of life the middlemen were dominating the indigenous population. (Ocayo-Lakidi 1975.)

In East-Africa the Indians outnumbered the colonialists and occupied jobs that made them a visible embodiment of power in local eyes. Starting with the provision of physical labour they also took many administrational jobs and created commercial enterprises in the protectorate — acting clearly in-between the British and the Africans (see chapter ‘Ugandan Indians’). In the eyes of the African middle and lower class when compared to the British the Asians came of worst in almost everything.

The white colonizers were mostly culturally arrogant, politically dominating and patronizing as well as economically exploitative. Yet in the end they were more highly regarded [by locals] than the politically powerless, culturally [...] arrogant, and economically weaker though equally exploitative Asians. Ocayo-Lakidi 1975

In relations to the Baganda the Bayindi were both socially and economically in somewhat comparable positions in the colonial Uganda. The Baganda identified themselves as the agents of the Brits and had a notable role economically, especially in primary production; whereas the Bayindi were a privileged group of middlemen with even more economic significance, most especially on trade and production side. The protectorate’s free trade zone favored the Bayindi who were involved in international trade and one of the factors that made the Baganda see the Bayindi in a bad light was the poor role of primary producers in open markets (see chapter ‘Uganda as a context’).

The role of the Ugandan Indians as historical middlemen has significantly influenced the relationship of the Bayindi and Baganda in contemporary Uganda. Prior the seventies expulsion the anti-Asian feeling was mostly of economic origin (see Twaddle 1975) but the aspirations towards the minority have now expanded into the political sector too, as we are about to see.

To read more about the Indians social position in Uganda please read chapter ‘Uganda as a context’ and more particularly ‘Ugandan Indians’.

The Muyindi image
In this chapter we will get an overview of the Muyindi image and narratives produced by the pre-expulsion and contemporary power elites and the Baganda. This is important because the
differences and similarities of these narratives uncover some of the social and political struggles and juxtapositions that are being negotiated in contemporary Uganda. We will analyze these narratives further in the coming chapters and begin this chapter by questioning the meaningfulness of ethnic categorization all in all.

Since the whole Indian minority in Uganda is a heterogenic mix of people with a variety of backgrounds, religions, goals and ambitions, I cannot highlight enough how often I was faced with the fact that my initial thought of ‘a shared Muyindi identity’ was rigid and over-simplifying. Dibyesh Ananda and Nitasha Kaulb, who have researched the Indian communities and their sense of identity in Zanzibar and Dar Es Salaam in 2011 highlighted the diversity of experience that lie behind the specific category of a Mhindi. According to them:

The apparent neatness of discrete categories is a product of violent inscription of markers of sameness and difference over people, an inscription that can provide a sense of affirmation in some context but can also facilitate a politics of fear and hatred [...] If we adopt the identity categories of Indian/African/European as unproblematic givens to understand a context, and not as categories that are always already problematic, arbitrary and thus under scrutiny, we miss out on the extremely diverse, rich, creative negotiations of identity that take place every day. These negotiations are characterized by consistencies and contradictions, by clearly discernible predictable patterns and by unexpected surprises, by stable identity and a fluid subjectivity. Ananda & Kaulb 2011.

It is important to notice that since this study is tackling the societal positioning and the perceptions of the Bayindi in Uganda, we will not focus on the actual heterogeneity and hybrid identities of the Indians - nor the Baganda. Instead in this chapter we will concentrate on the Bayindi narratives produced by power elites and the Baganda, as the alterations of these narratives bare some of the social and political struggles that are being fought in contemporary Uganda.

As Hammack (2008) points out, the master narrative of a group may not have much or anything to do with the actual individual or collective identities of the people. In the case of the Ugandan Indians, the individual narratives of identity are likely to differ from the pre-expulsion and even contemporary master narratives a great deal. Like Ananda & Kaulb (2011) note the apparent

31 Swahili for a Muyindi
neatness of the ethnic categories can provide a sense of affirmation in the context where it is produced but can also facilitate politics of fear and hatred as a whole.

Since the re-invitation of the Indians, the current NRM power elite has reformulated the pre-expulsion master narratives produced of the Bayindi. The Indians who used to be identified as arrogant, isolated and selfish group of people are now described as foreign investors and developers of the Ugandan economy. However, the Baganda still produce sense of separateness to the minority through the pre-expulsion lenses and have almost completely ignored the current master narrative. As we will see in chapter ‘Political position’ the Baganda informants challenge the new NRM produced outlook of the Bayindi, seeing it more as government propaganda hiding true motives of the NRM than the actual ‘truth’ about the Bayindi in Uganda.

This is not to say that the NRM would be producing a ‘better’ narrative with their somewhat more ‘positive’ outlook of the Indians. As was argued the apparent neatness of simple categories is always problematic and harmful to be adopted as such and therefore these narratives should not be judged according their ‘value’.

So, who are the Bayindi of Uganda in the eyes of people living in the capital region?

Though I was very familiar with the word Muzungu, a white foreigner, I heard the word Muyindi, an Indian/Asian, the first time I actually asked the local Africans something about the Indians living in Uganda. Muyindi, or Bayindi in plural in the Luganda language, is an ethnic concept that distinguishes people who themselves or whose ancestors have come from Southern Asia – mainly India, Bangladesh, Pakistan – from people with ancestral roots elsewhere.

Bayindis [...] when I was a little boy, they were light skinned people, I used to call them Bazungu [white] because I couldn’t separate this one is from Europe, this one is from Asia. But I knew that they were here in Uganda. [...] Then [after the early years of childhood] I got to know that this is a Muyindi. Depending on the way they talk and their appearances because for them they are not too brown. They are actually different. And most of them they learn English; their English is similar to us Africans, not like Europeans. Daniel, 25-year old university graduate, male.

As can be seen from the quote by Daniel also children are socialized to learn the deeply rooted ethnic division lines in Uganda. The Bayindi are separated from Africans and Europeans though
some of them may have spent their whole life living in Africa and / or Europe. Physical features of the Bayindi being “light skinned people” place them somewhere in-between the ‘white’ Bazungu and the ‘black’ Badugavu\footnote{Badugavu refers to an African in the Luganda language.} whereas their level of English and education places them closer to the latter group.

Ever since the colonial times the master narrative of the Indians has been business related and this has not changed nor been challenged over the years. Since the Bayindi have played a significant role in the Ugandan economic scene historically, they are commonly seen as business oriented people.

*A Muyindi is a person who has originated from India. And you associate a Muyindi to business. When they talk about a Muyindi you know definitely it is about business. That is how you can describe a Muyindi.* Richard, 42 year old supermarket owner, male.

There are many popular sayings about the Bayindi in the Luganda language, such as:

- *Abayindi bemanyi boka* \textit{The Indians only know themselves}
- *Abayindi bassosola* \textit{The Indians are discriminatory}
- *Abayindi batutteko emirimu* \textit{The Indians take our jobs}

We will start analyzing the societal position and narratives produced of the Bayindi in the following three sections. Next we will uncover the social, economic and political position and image of the Bayindi as part of the Ugandan society. This is done from the perspective of the Ugandan Africans living in the capital region. In the end we will also reflect the images produced to the Baganda’s own societal position in Uganda.

1. Social position
In this chapter we will tackle the social interrelations between the Bayindi and the Baganda. As many Ugandan Indians have come to the country with the intension to work and save money I will utilize the concepts of sojourning and social exclusion, both introduced within middlemen minority theory and labour diaspora definitions (Bonacich 1973 and Cohen 2008). In the context of Uganda,
where the expulsion and political tensions have made the settlement of the minority increasingly risky these concepts prove to be especially useful.

Social exclusion and sojourning mentality are also likely to stiffen the majority’s attitude towards the minority. A vicious circle, where the negative stereotyping feeds into the reluctance towards settlement, can be established. This setting keeps the minority and the majority socially apart and a sense of separateness alive between the groups.

Sojourning & solidarity
Kumar cleans his hands and takes his phone from his pocket. He searches for a picture that means a lot to him. “I have painted that myself” he says when he shows me an image of the door to his house. Blue lettered ‘Welcome’ stands there inviting people to enter his home, thousands of miles away from here.

Feeling of emptiness has been filling Kumar’s time for the past 548 days. That is how long he has been working in Uganda without his family. He’d still have to wait nearly two years to meet his wife and two children again.

He says traveling is too expensive so he’d rather send the saved money home. One of his coworkers has mentioned to me that their employer tends to seize the migrant workers’ passports when coming to the country and that the identification is only returned when the contract ends. Kumar does not mention this.

Kumar tells me he dreams about opening up his own restaurant one lucky day. Back home, close to his house and family. But first he has to work - hard.

In middleman minority theory the minority’s exceptional middle-placement is explained by sojourning mentality which means the intention to return back home, not settle, in the host community. According to Bonacich this intention makes an individual sacrifice some of his/her current welfare for the sake of the future (see Bonacich 1973 or chapter ‘Theoretical framework’). In Kumar’s case his future, wife and two children, were waiting for him in India. This made him work six days a week around the clock and send 90% percent of his salary back home. At the same time this limited his interactions with the Ugandan population. On his little free time he used to spent time calling home, watching Indian movies or following cricket in Indian restaurants nearby.
Though he had worked in the capital region for over a year he had not really gotten to know the place and could still ask me advice on how to find places in downtown Kampala.

As Cohen points out in his labour diaspora definition, the sojourning mentality can lead to social exclusion in relations to the surrounding society and solidarity towards other diaspora members (Cohen 2008). Sojourning and social exclusion will likely lead into limited interactions with the local population and can therefore be perceived as negligence to integrate into the Ugandan society. As the following quotes shows, in the eyes of the people living in the capital region, the Bayindi are perceived as discriminatory and isolated group of people with a clear visitor mentality.

_The Indians, the true Indians I know they want to be alone. They don’t associate with these Ugandans. They are always with themselves, they feel themselves. Always together. They cannot even allow us to marry their girls._ Immacuel, 25 year old entrepreneur, male.

_They [the Indians] are so segregative. As in you cannot find a Muyindi with Bagandas. Where there is Muyindi staying there are many other Bayindis staying. They don’t buy plots or what houses what what.. They will just rent. The reason being what happened last time as they were chased away. So now they are just renting. They don’t leave assets behind. And why I say they are segregative: it is rare to find a Muyindi in these schools of ours. So like you can find most of them in one school, in those big schools like Aga Khan, it is full of Bayindi. But [in] our schools they are not there._ Daniel, 25 year old university graduate, male.

The social exclusion of the Indians and lack of equal relations beginning from childhood were a frustration to many Ugandan Africans I interviewed. As migrants were often educated in separate institutions, due to the fact that first missionary schools were targeting mainly African population, the somewhat natural integration of next generation had become more challenging in the Ugandan context. Also, male informants found it frustrating that intermarriages were still basically non-existent between the minority and the majority. Indian men were seen to exploit Ugandan women whereas Ugandan men could not establish relationship with an Indian woman.³³

_They enjoy our women and then they don’t want their women to be loved which is bad._ Peter, 34 year old NGO manager, male.

³³ In Kenya a marriage between a Kenyan man and an Indian backgrounded woman raised a lot of positive media attention in 2014: #mybusukulover.
When collecting my data, I did acknowledge the Indians I interviewed were holding themselves back from integrating with the local Africans on an equal level: free time was hardly ever spend together with Africans, local transport was rarely used, African women were considered as a night/weekend entertainment, and so on. Partly this lack of equal relations could be explained by the intention to make & save money and return back home. Jorgensen (1981) also points out a geographical fact that since East Africa is relatively close to India and the flow of migrants has not been restricted, it is fairly easy to maintain close relations with the mother land. Moreover, in the Ugandan context where the Indians have once been expelled and lost most of their possession and political tension tends to increase hatred between ethnic groups, settlement is partly considered too risky.

The sojourning or visitor mentality makes equal relationships, let alone building intercultural friendships difficult and challenging. When I asked the African employees of the Indian kitchen why they did not spent their free time together with the Indian employees they commonly mentioned language barrier. Most of the Indians they worked with had not really learned English at school and did not know Luganda if they were new comers. This reflected to the limited communication between the two groups.

However, language was neither the only nor the most significant hindrance to the establishment of relationships within the restaurant. The African employees felt they were maltreated, overused and abused by their Indian manager and other Indians workers were seen to belong to the same coalition. If disagreements arose with anyone from the ‘Indian segment’ the African employee could assume trouble was ahead. It was not only once that a disagreement between an Indian and a Ugandan lead to the dismissal of the latter. As is shown in the following quote, the segmentation of the workplace to different power regimes (Indian - non-Indian) influenced the interactions a great deal, keeping the Indians and Africans socially apart.

*I don’t have any [Indian friends] and I do not feel like having any. Yeah, I have worked with them and become familiar with their characters, very well – they are not all that of help. You are only a friend when you are working with them. You see, I’m just here, anything simple can get me dismissed. So I don’t feel like creating any friendship with them. I do not admire [them].* Matthew, 25 year restaurant employee, male.
Three months after the interview Mathew sends me a message saying he got fired from his job due to misunderstandings with the Indian manager. Matthew had been working for the restaurant for nearly one year. He had been conscious about spending any of his free time with his Indian co-workers or boss, especially if they had been drinking. The poor rights of employees are discussed further in the following economic chapter.

**Disloyalty**

From the African perspective sojourning mentality may be seen not only as unwillingness to interact with the local population but as neglect towards the surrounding society. In the wider picture the majority population can see the sojourning minority as disloyal towards the host society. As can be seen from the following quote the Baganda informant looks at the Indians as first and foremost loyal to their own ethnic group, not the country as a whole. This can easily lead to conflicts between the majority and the minority, especially in times of political tension.

*They are not too much associating with Ugandans. They don’t call themselves as Ugandans. They don’t represent Uganda in sports [...] Cricket they play for themselves but not for the country.* Daniel, 25 year old university graduate, male.

Many Baganda informants perceived the Bayindi having an exploitative attitude towards the country as a whole and this increased their negative feelings towards the minority. However, since the political arena of Uganda is fragmented the questions of loyalty have become increasingly about pro-Museveni - pro-Kabaka divides within the capital region. As we are about to see in the following chapter ‘Political position’ the Baganda value the loyalty of the minority increasingly based on this juxtaposition. Ironically, like Bonacich (1973) points out, the majority’s hostile attitude is likely to stiffen the isolation and increase the hopes of returning back for the minority. Vicious circle is established and the mutual reluctance towards one another is likely to grow deeper.

The sojourning mentality, expulsion of the Asians and political tensions dividing the society in terms of ethnic division lines have fed into the social exclusion of the Indian minority in Uganda. In local eyes the social exclusion is seen as neglect to interact, let alone integrate, with the local population. This has kept the Indian and African segment of the society socially apart and created a vicious circle were negative stereotyping feed the social isolation. The social separateness of the
Indians and Africans in the capital region has kept the colonial division lines and the disruptive labelling alive in contemporary Uganda.

Unchallenged narrative
As the visitor mentality and negative stereotyping prohibited equal relations being formed between the two groups, it is not surprising that the Baganda informants still produced the ‘otherness’ of the Bayindi through the pre-expulsion master narrative of the Indians being selfish, isolated and arrogant group of people. Quotes defining the Bayindi as secluded and discriminatory group of people who “only know themselves” clearly show how among the Baganda the Indians are still perceived at least partly through the lens of the pre-expulsion master narrative. It is good to notice, however, that the reasons behind this are not purely social but also economic and political.

Among my nearly twenty Baganda informants there were four people who clearly challenged the pre-expulsion master narrative reproduced in today’s Ugandan society. Two of them were women and two male who had years of international experience. The following quote emphasizes how deeply the negative image of the Bayindi is rooted in the minds of the people of Buganda.

   Even I just to see them [the Indians] badly but then I asked myself ‘what have they ever done to me?’ There are both good and bad Bayindi [..] like in every group [of people]. Rose, 32 year old entrepreneur, female.

The collection of data was not as comprehensive that I could say challenging the way in which the Bayindi image was produced among the Baganda was because of the informants’ gender or because of their intercultural experiences. However, as previous quotes from Immacuel, Matthew and Daniel indicate, among my Baganda male informants the pre-expulsion master narrative was clearly dominant whenever they prescribed the Bayindi.

On 29th September 2014, just before finishing this thesis, Kumar posts on Facebook: “Good evening my all friends. I am going India today.” The long wait has ended - only to begin again after few weeks of holiday.

2. Economic position
Kampala road is busy. Business people crossing the street with their suitcases, kids selling chewing gum to by-passers, unemployed wonderers chatting with each other, students stressed about their next exam, street vendors selling magazines, paper and pens, very few tourists, and a mixture of
taxis, private cars and bodabodas blocking the road. On the sides of the streets there are many small and medium scale shops selling electronics, stationary equipment, photos, books, you name it. When you step inside these shops more often than not you find an Indian behind the counter. You can smell curry dishes from a restaurant nearby and see two Hindu temples framing the city center. Indian culture and people are clearly a part of this hybrid capital.

Historically the Indians influence to the Ugandan economy has been unarguably significant. Though there are no statistics indicating which branch is the most occupied by Indians in Uganda, the minority’s economic position especially as traders, producers and industrialists is visible even to a foreigner. The master narratives of the Bayindi, reproduced over the years by different power elites, have identified the Bayindi as business oriented people throughout the modern history of Uganda. This has not changed over the years. Therefore it is natural that in local eyes Indians tend to be described as people with commercial interests.

[Indians] They are good in business. They are business oriented people. And in business they are very strict. Matthew, 25 year restaurant employee, male

What however has changed over the years of independence in the produced master narrative is that in pre-expulsion times, both Obote and Amin regimes, the Bayindi were identified as selfish and isolated group of people whereas the current Museveni regime has reproduced the old master narrative now focused more on the Indians role as foreign investors and boosters of the Ugandan economy. However this new narrative has not been adopted by the Baganda.

For one the negative stereotypes of the Bayindi are fed, besides the already discussed social vicious circle, by the inequalities in the Ugandan society, such as lack of employee rights and unions. This has made the exploitation of workers possible and often beneficial to the employers, both Ugandan and foreign background. As the following quotes show the Ugandans feel they are abused and misused by Indians.

Now, for ordinary people, who don’t know much about politics, they look at them [Indians] as people who mistreat them in their own country. And they tell them: ‘If you continue mistreating us we shall deal with you as Amin did!’ Peter, 34 year old NGO manager, male.
At first they seem friendly but then they start mistreating you, me I know. They pay you too little and complain about your work. Other Indians who come and work at the same place with no previous experience or knowledge get better salary than you though you know the work. Moses, taxi driver, age unknown.

Second thing that has made the Baganda produce the old narrative of the Indians is the two groups somewhat competing positions in the economic field. As producers and tradesmen the Bayindi have benefitted a great deal from East African free trade zone area. Also, after the leftist government of Obote, Museveni’s decision to remove some barriers for free market trade has favored international businesses. At the same time the Baganda role as primary producers and land owners has not improved as the producers of unprocessed primary goods do not get their hands to real profits in international markets and the taxation of land has increased in Uganda.

The factors benefitting the Indian businessmen and deteriorating the Baganda’s own economic position have made the Bayindi be seen as competitors and a threat to local entrepreneurs and work force throughout the modern history of Uganda. These economic juxtapositions have made the Baganda view the Bayindi as opponents to their own colonially rooted position at the peak of the Ugandan economy. Against this background it is only natural that the Baganda would refuse to adopt the new master narrative of the Bayindi as boosters of the Ugandan economy. However, as we are about to see the produced narratives of the Bayindi have not remained stagnant among the Baganda either as the Bayindi are perceived increasingly as political middlemen in contemporary Uganda.

3. Political position:
The political position of the Indians in Uganda has become increasingly obscure in the eyes of the Baganda. In pre-expulsion times the Indians raised resentment mainly due to economic inequalities but now the relationship between the Bayindi and Baganda is also politically stained.

**Puppets of an unpopular government**
The car door is opened for me; as I step in I feel how the leather seats cool my sweaty skin. Smartly dressed driver starts the engine in front of me and next to him a security guard holds his gun firmly on his lap. The man sitting next to me, let’s call him Vikram, talks without a break. It is obvious he has not had anyone to talk to for a while. We are headed to a quiet restaurant to have lunch.
Vikram does not want to be seen in public because a threat of getting poisoned. According to his passport he is both a Ugandan and a British citizen but the locals still call him a Muyindi.

Vikram has close relations to the country’s political elite and he does not hide his support to them. When we start discussing the 2015 presidential elections he says he has no worries about Museveni’s position since ‘everything has been planned in advance.’ However Vikram has prepared himself just in case and is not planning to be in Uganda in time of the election: ‘I have a plane ticket on the side, just in case. I don’t tend to stay here and wait to see what happens.’

According to Cohen (2008) auxiliary diaspora members are often in a buffer position in the surrounding society. Ocayo-Lakidi (1975) calls the colonial buffering middlemen as ‘the embodiment of power’. By this he means that since the Ugandan Indians tended to be the ones implementing the rules set by the imperial power in the local eyes they became the embodiment of the (often quite vicious) power and therefore also the target of resentment towards the power elite. It is clear that historically Indians have been acting in-between the British colonialists and the Ugandans. What is interesting is that this position is still alive in today’s society. Only now Indians are seen as middle actors in-between the not so popular government and the local African population. It needs to be highlighted this is primarily from the perspective of the Baganda.

Quoted Vikram’s position in Uganda is a somewhat stereotypical middleman between the power elite and the common people. He does not hide his support to the government. However, most of my Ugandan Indian informants had no relations to the Ugandan power elite though in the eyes of the common Baganda they were still perceived as corrupted middle actors.

As Mutibwa (1992) and others (see chapter ‘Uganda as a context’) have pointed out, the Baganda have played a key role in Uganda historically. Like Goodfellow (2014 9) noted managing relations with the country’s historically most powerful kingdom has been a great political challenge for all the post-colonial governments in Uganda. Since the 1966 coup the Baganda’s political ambitions and federation requests have been shouted to reluctant or even deaf ears. This is because of the fragile relations between the most powerful kingdom and the rest of the country and the deeply rooted ethnic division lines within the society. Political frustration and feelings of unjustifiable inferiority have grown within Buganda since the independence of the country.
When Uganda’s horrific years of fighting and paranoia ended and NRM took power the Baganda have become more verbal in demanding their rights. Museveni has seen these demands as proof of the Baganda still clinging onto the unhealthy colonial division lines. However these division lines are so deep-rooted in the Ugandan society that after the early years of the NRM rule even Museveni’s regime itself has become increasingly west oriented (see Tripp 2010 & Mutibwa 1992).

Due to NRM practiced clientalism and corruption, non-existing dialogue and harassment of the opposition, and undelivered promises, the government of Uganda is no longer seen as legitimate in the eyes of the Baganda. National Resistance Movement is now perceived as a synonym to corruption and violence, the cause for unemployment and suffering of the local people.

Within the two and a half years I was away from Uganda the Baganda’s attitudes towards the government had noticeably stiffened. People no longer hid their criticism and where not afraid to be outspoken about their discontent towards the government. On one occurrence me and two informants were sitting in a park in Entebbe as the presidential convoy happened to pass by. My Baganda informants looked weary and said that even the telecom lines were now being disturbed whenever the presidential convoy would by-pass. According to them this was to prevent Museveni’s opponents from informing each other about the president’s movements. The long wait for the power relations to change in the country was making Museveni cautious and paranoid.

According to my informants this was because: “He is afraid of us.”

Whilst Museveni’s government has become the frustration and to some extend even the enemy of the common Baganda people the regime seems to benefit foreigners. Public perception is that especially Indians get tax holidays for vague and illegitimate reasons. Besides reliefs the Asians right to regain property since Museveni came into power has not been looked at neutrally, especially among the Baganda. In fact Museveni’s warm relationship to the Asians is seen to hold both counterparts in their current position in the Ugandan society – as the corrupted, illegitimate elite and as the falsely privileged middlemen.

> Now most of them [Ugandans] say, they [Indians] work for government. They work for Museveni and if Museveni goes their future will be very bad here. Because like last time when there were elections most of them [Indians] they ran away thinking that Museveni is

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34 Museveni is from western Uganda
going to leave power. So most of them ran away. [...] So . . . their future here is not good. I think if Museveni goes, most of them they will go. They will fall. Just because sometimes those big big people in the government they hide them behind them. [...] Some big people in the government use them. They can bring them as investors but when actually their business is not theirs. They get tax holidays as any investor would get . . . benefits. But people know it’s not their business [...] That is why when there are some riots here most of their things are stoned. Immacuel, 24 year old entrepreneur, male.

The Indians position as the right hand of the power elite used to be something the Baganda identified with. They used to be the allies of the British, not their objects, gaining a notable elite position themselves. In many ways the Indians current political middle-position reveals sore spots of the Baganda identity and the political and social frustrations they have gone through over the past half a decade. Though Museveni has re-established the traditional kingdom’s culturally they still don’t have the political or economic power which the Baganda and the Mengo35 have yearned.

Besides positioning themselves close to the government the perceptions about the Ugandan Indians tell a story about deeper frustrations concerning the inequalities in the society. When the kingdom’s were abolished in Uganda the Buganda/Mengo lost the ownership to some of their traditional land. For example in Kampala most of the land used to belong to the Buganda kingdom. Reconciliation has been offered to Indians, after the hardships during Amin’s times, but not to Baganda – who feel they have suffered and lost a lot more than the Indians.

The Baganda who dominate here [...] most of their things were taken during Idi Amin’s time, I mean Obote and Amin. And some of the properties of the Indian’s were taken also. But their properties have been returned [by the Museveni government], but for the kingdom they have not been what? – returned. That also increased hatred. Immacuel, 24 year old entrepreneur, male.

Like has been discussed before, the master narrative of the Bayindi has changed over the years. However, the Baganda are still producing the narrative of the Indians in pre-expulsion terms partly because the Indians are seen to challenge and threat their own position. It is good to notice that neither the narratives produced by the disempowered Baganda nor by the power elites are stagnant. Since the re-invitation of the Indians the Bayindi have been perceived increasingly

35 The palace of the Kabaka.
through their political position as middlemen in-between the NRM government and the local population where as in pre-expulsion times the Bayindi raised criticism mainly due to their economic position. Now-a-days the Bayindi are seen as political puppet of the Museveni government. These political linkages have made the Indians position in the Ugandan society increasingly vulnerable because political anxieties between Buganda kingdom and the government have become increasingly questions of pro-Museveni vs. pro-Kabaka and the Indians are identified to support the first rather than the latter. As the quoted informant says: “If Museveni goes their future will bad here.”

Conclusions
In contemporary Uganda the Bayindi are still perceived as the middlemen of the society. Historically they used to act in-between the British and the Africans whereas today they are perceived as buffers between the corrupted NRM government and the locals, at least in the capital region.

The sojourning mentality and expulsion of the Asians have fed the social exclusion of the minority which is seen as neglect to interact with the local population and has kept the Indian and African segment of the society socially apart. This has created a vicious circle where negative stereotypes feed the reluctance to integrate and furthermore maintain the colonial sense of separateness between the ethnic groups and hinders future integration.

The economic position of the Bayindi as producers and tradesmen has made them the beneficiaries of East African free trade zone whereas the Baganda as primary producers and land owners have suffered. The negative stereotypes of the Bayindi as the exploiters of Ugandan and Ugandans is also fed by inequalities of the society, such as limited employees’ rights and lack of unions. The economic juxtapositions have made the Bayindi be seen as a threat challenging the Baganda’s historical position at the peak of the Ugandan economy and mistreating the Ugandan workforce.

The Baganda themselves have been stripped from some of their former glory and power. They have not had direct political power as a group since the early years of independence. In the eyes of the ruling the role of Buganda has always been problematic since the kingdom has been seen as arrogant and elitist. Up until today the power elites of Uganda have not been able to create a
sense of unity in the country or find solutions on how to integrate Buganda to Uganda. Instead each regime has started to favor their own ethnic group – sooner or later.

The Buganda kingdom has suffered several humiliations in the past half a decade. Since the traditional kingdoms were re-established by the NRM government their hopes for a move towards long-awaited federalism have come back alive. However, the dreams of Buganda have not been fulfilled. This has increased the frustrations among the kingdom and its people, and polarized the political scene of Uganda into pro-M7 and pro-Kabaka segments within the capital region.

As has been showed the Bayindi and the Baganda have been and still are in somewhat competing positions in the Ugandan society. This used to be dictated by economic terms but is now increasingly political. Museveni’s re-invitation to the Indians has not been look at neutrally. NRM regime seems to benefit the ‘foreigners’ more than the indigenous population.

Despite the decreases of direct power, the Baganda are still the biggest and unarguably a dominant group in Uganda. Like the Buganda riots in 2009 showed Museveni regime takes very seriously any uprisings in the kingdom. So far Museveni’s answer has been to put a cover on top of the boiling pot.
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