

## **Gender, Cultural Values, and Political Participation: A Comparison between Teachers and University Students in Uganda**

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### **Abstract**

*This study explored the influence of gender and cultural values on youths and adults participation in political activities. Schwartz's 1992 values survey was administered to 294 teachers and 434 university students during the 2011 presidential and parliamentary elections in Uganda. Results showed significant gender differences in political participation with male respondents being more involved in political activities than the females regardless of age groups. Males also significantly rated higher than the females on mastery and affective autonomy values while females rated higher on embeddedness and egalitarianism. Teachers were more involved in political activities than the students; and rated higher than students on mastery and hierarchy. The major reason for teacher's participation in political activities was 'to maintain the prevailing peace in the country' and for the students was 'to cause change in leadership'. Respondents that had registered to vote rated higher than those that had not registered on mastery values.*

### **Introduction**

Active and instrumental participation of women in the electoral process and governance in Uganda has been commended. The country is seen as a model in relation to women's involvement in politics (Ahikire, 2006). This is because the affirmative action policy which encourages 30% representation of women on local government councils, and a woman representative for each district in parliament has been introduced. Although this may numerically be evident, women's participation in key political activities is still low. Women are still marginalized, and most of those that actively contest for political

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positions vie for gender specific positions such as women representative, or secretary for women at local councils. Those that take up key political positions testify that politics deposits a heavy load on their families resulting in either reduced participation in the same, or neglect of their families (Baguma, 2011). There is minimal participation of women in political party activities, the electoral process, and voting. This may be attributed to the cultural values differences between men and women; and society's expectations of women.

Coffe and Bolzendahl (2010) argue that many of the hindrances to women participation in politics are rooted in the gender socialization process. Women are socialized to be passive, rule-abiding, private, and compassionate while men are socialized to be leadership oriented, autonomous, and self-reliant (Brownmiller, 1984 cited in Coffe and Bolzendahl, 2010). It is differential socialization that hampers women's involvement in political activities which are most often characterized by competition, assertiveness and dominance (Kibanja, 2006). These differences in gender socialization are considered in part to be the sources of variations in the political behaviors of men and women. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to explore the cultural and gender differences in political participation in Uganda.

### **Schwartz's Cultural Values Theory**

To adopt a cultural system, individuals go through the complex process of socialization. Through this process, the new generation of children is instructed the appropriate specific cultural rules to follow (Lonner and Malpass 1994); and in each culture, men and women are expected to fulfill different social roles and also to behave according to the role expectations. Basing on this, it can be argued that the differences in the political behaviors of men and women partly stem from their differences in socialization that traditionally assigns them different gender roles.

This paper adopts Schwartz's (1994) cultural values theory to explain differences in political participation. The theory is preferred because it portrays a structure of cultural values that are common to diverse cultural groups suggesting a universal organization of human motivations; and it also considers processes through which values are influenced and through which they influence action (Schwartz, 2006). Values are standards used to judge behavior and have been found to be the basis on which political views and positions are organized (Jennings, 1991 cited in Flanagan, 2006). Values

do guide and influence behavior (Bardi and Schwartz, 2003); and these values are acquired both through socialization and through the unique learning experiences of the individual. The agents of political socialization are in most instances the peers, family, teachers, mass media, and the church. Schwartz's cultural value theory identifies seven cultural values namely; embeddedness, hierarchy, egalitarianism, mastery, harmony, affective autonomy and intellectual autonomy, which he organises into three basic dimensions of cultural values (Schwartz, 2006) as follows:

***Embeddedness versus Autonomy***

This dimension concerns the issue of the relationship between the individual and group, the extent to which persons are seen as embedded parts of groups versus autonomous entities. Cultures that emphasize embeddedness values (e.g. tradition, conformity) emphasize maintenance of the status quo, propriety, and restraint of actions or inclinations that might disrupt the group solidarity or the traditional order. In these cultures, people seek meaning in life largely through social relationships, through identifying with the group in which they are embedded and participating in its shared way of life (Kibanja, 2011). In cultures that emphasize autonomy (e.g. stimulation, hedonism), the person is viewed as an autonomous, bounded entity who finds meaning in his or her own uniqueness, who seeks to express his or her own internal attributes curiosity, creativity, and independent intellectual ideas (Magnusson and Wilson, 2008) and is encouraged to do so. This implies that cultures high at embeddedness are less likely to participate in political activities since such activities disrupt group solidarity as opposed to those high at autonomy. Their high ratings on embeddedness (Kibanja, 2006) could be one reason why most women don't participate in politics.

***Hierarchy versus Egalitarianism***

This dimension emphasizes the legitimacy of unequal distribution of power and resource allocation versus motivating people to forfeit selfishness and consider others' welfare. In high Hierarchy (i.e. power) cultures, a hierarchical system of ascribed roles assures socially responsible behavior. High Egalitarianism (i.e. benevolence) cultures portray individuals as moral equals who share basic interests as human beings. People are socialized to internalize a commitment to voluntary cooperation with others and to feel concern for everyone's welfare. Findings by Munene, Schwartz, and Kibanja (2005) revealed that Ugandan men are higher at hierarchy than women meaning that they are more inclined to seek positions of responsibility (i.e.

political power) as opposed to the women and thus socially expected to be more participative in politics than the women.

***Mastery versus Harmony***

This dimension emphasizes the active mastery of the social environment versus harmony with nature (Ng, Lee and Soutar, 2007). In high Mastery cultures (i.e. achievement ), people actively seek to master and change the natural and social world, to assert control, bend it to their will, and exploit it in order to further personal or group interests. High Harmony cultures (i.e. security, universalism) accept the world as it is, trying to preserve rather than to change or exploit it (Kibanja, 2011). Social groups high at mastery are expected to be more involved in politics because of their disposition to manipulate the environment to their benefit. Political behaviors involve tactics that disempower the opponent and use of threats in order to persuade others. This is peculiar with those high at mastery and retracted from, by those high at harmony.

**Gender Differences in Cultural Values**

There is evidence that gender differences in value priorities do exist (Kibanja and Munene, 2011; Gibson and Schwartz, 1998). Schwartz's value surveys have consistently shown that men rate higher than women on the values of power, and achievement and women rate higher than men on the values of benevolence (Ng, Lee and Soutar 2007). These differences are likely to stem from the socialization process and after they have been acquired, they remain stable (Myyry and Helkama, 2001). The different roles that boys and girls are socialized into instigate them to give greater importance to particular values and minimal attention to others. For example, the nurturing roles of women cause them to pursue harmony values and to give minimal importance to mastery values, and the competitive roles of men cause them to pursue autonomy values and give less attention to embeddedness values (Kibanja and Munene, 2011).

In most countries, women have been found to have more egalitarian views than do men (Williams and Best, 1990). Munene, et al (2005) found out that Ugandan men give greater importance to mastery and autonomy values and women give greater importance to embeddedness and egalitarianism values. Thorson (2009) also found out that Ugandan women rated higher than the men on harmony. Harmony and affective autonomy values were high in ethnic groups with high support for the ruling party (National Resistance Movement) and intellectual autonomy was rated low in these groups.

### **Gender Differences in Political Participation in Uganda**

Political participation refers to the various ways in which individuals take part in the management of the collective affairs of a given political community (Martiniello, 2005). It includes voting, protesting, attending political rallies, communicating with political leaders, contesting in elections, signing petitions, participating in political internet forums, mobilizing electorate for parties /candidates, providing financial support (facilitation) to candidates, and many other forms. Globally, the challenges to women participation have been categorized as ideological factors i.e. patriarchy, the nature of politics in the country, socio cultural factors i.e. the gender status quo, financial deprivation, and limited social capital (Bari, 2005). Patriarchy transforms males and females into men and women respectively and constructs the hierarchy of gender relations where men are privileged (Eisenstein, 1984). In this system, women are confined within the private arena of home as mothers and wives and men in the public sphere. This is argued to be one of the vital factors that shape the level of women's political participation globally (Coffe and Bolzendahl, 2010).

Global findings on gender differences in political participation show that men are more participative in political activities than women (Inglehart and Norris, 2000). However, other scholars argue that women do not participate less than men in political activities but rather they simply participate differently (Coffe and Bolzendahl, 2010). Women's nature of participation in political activities has been found to vary across countries (Bari, 2005). A survey by Bratton, Lambright, and Sentamu (2000) showed that compared to Nigeria and Ghana, Uganda has a participant political culture with men expressing twice as more interest in politics than women. More men than women reported that they think they can use the vote to elect leaders of their choice. The educated people and residents of western Uganda expressed a stronger sense of political efficacy than other citizens. Coffe and Bolzendahl (2010) in their study to investigate the gender gap in political participation found out that although women have made substantial gains in wielding political influence, they still participate less in formal politics. For instance, they were found to be less likely to belong to political parties than the men. Political participation in Uganda has traditionally been influenced by gender, ethnicity, and religion (Kibanja, Kajumba and Johnson, 2012). For instance, Thorson (2009) found out that voting (form of political participation) in Uganda is based on cultural values and beliefs shared within the ethnic groups in the country.

Although several writers criticize the measure of women's political participation basing on number of women in public offices or decision making positions; this is inevitable because it's those women in decision making positions that have the capacity to influence policies. Writers argue that women also participate behind the scenes by supporting male candidates (Rop, 2013; Lintenbrink, 2009). Even though this is not disputable, in a patriarchy society, rarely would a woman influence a man's decision making process on issues of public office. This paper has therefore focused on women participation by considering the observable attribute of holding a decision making office, belonging to a political party, and registering to vote. This is because, these are the obvious participations that can easily be validated.

In Uganda, several writers have reported discrepancy in political behavior between men and women (UWONET, 2011; Ahikire, 2006; Johnson, Kabachu, and Kayonga, 2003; Nassali, 1998). Since the colonial rule, Ugandan women have been hindered from attaining political offices and also marginalized as voters (Nassali, 1998). Even with the current affirmative action policies, participation of women in politics has been engendered. Article 78(b) of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda provides for one woman district representative in parliament and article 180 (b) of the same constitution provides for reservation of one-third of the members of each local government council for women. The affirmative action policy provides for reservation of a seat for Woman Member of Parliament for each district and at least one-third of the local council seats for women (Ugandan Constitution, 1995) and these are the positions most women vie for leaving key political offices for men. In this way, a new gender pattern is reconstructed.

Uganda is a country with 34.9 million people of whom 52% are women and 65% are youth. Due to this, it is not surprising to find that the current average age of an MP is 43 years lower than that of most legislators in the developed countries (Byaruhanga, 2011). This is because young people have increasingly joined politics to find employment. Women constitute 30% of the 9th parliament (2011 -2016) with the majority being female district representatives (Ssemujju, 2011). Only 10 women are open constituency representatives compared to 15 in 2006 which is a decline in the number of female legislators joining parliament directly through regular constituencies. This shows that it's not easy for women to actively compete with men.

Although female legislators in non-gender specific positions are on the decline, their numbers in gender specific positions (i.e. women representatives) are steadily increasing. Women district representatives were 56 in 2001, 69 in 2006 and currently are 112. District women councillors were 607 in 2001, 653 in 2006, and currently are 921. City division women councillors were 166 in 2001, 171 in 2006 and currently are 249. Sub county women councillors were 4,741 in 2001, 4,976 in 2006 and currently are 6,600 (The Electoral Commission, 2011). This drastic increment in women numbers in public decision making positions is attributed to the increase in the number of districts in the country from 56 in 2001 to 112 by 2011. Percentage composition of women in the Ugandan cabinet has also increased from 19.4% in 2006 to 25.3% in 2011 (see details in table 1 below).

**Table 1: Trend of Women Composition in Cabinet and Parliament**

	1996		2001		2006		2011	
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female
Cabinet Ministers		9.4%		32.3%		19.4%		25.3%
Overall number of MPs	276	18.8%	284	24.4%	333	31.6%	378	30.0%

As reflected in the table above, the percentage of women in both cabinet and parliament has its peak not exceeding 32.3%. This is because when the percentage in cabinet reached 32.3% in 2006, it then reduced in the subsequent years; and when the overall female Member of Parliament composition reached 31.6% in 2006, it also then reduced in 2011. This may show a reflection of the 30% composition of women leadership positions as stipulated in the 1995 constitution. It seems appointing authorities especially for cabinet positions make effort to see that women at least fall in the range nearing 30%. Even then, this drastic increase in the number of women is largely due to an increase in the number of districts, (Uganda Parliamentary Elections, 2011).

In spite of the fact that the Ugandan parliament is constituted by 30% women, at the grass root level, women's voices still remain low (Asiimwe, 2012). Women participate less in most political activities due to both mechanisms in the public arena and dynamics at the private and family level

(Uganda Parliamentary Elections, 2011). These include patriarchy challenges, lack of support networks and positive role models, lack of awareness about their rights, lack of self confidence, self-esteem and the skills to challenge and confront existing power structures and power holders or their leaders (UWONET, 2011).

Ugandan women activists assert that women's lack of skills, poverty, illiteracy, and the dominance of men in political parties are the obstacles for women full participation in politics (Mubangizi, 2012). They emphasize that due to male dominance in political parties, party members usually prefer to nominate candidates who will be able to compete favorably with candidates from other parties and in most cases these would be the men (Mubangizi, 2012). This is because Ugandan society still looks at the open constituency seat as a preserve for men; and women who contest in these seats are repeatedly asked 'why they are competing against men when they have their own women slots (echoed Asiimwe, in Mubangizi, 2012:22). This is supported by the civic volunteerism model of participation. This model emphasizes the importance of resources (finances and time), level of education, and socioeconomic status in political participation (Verba *et al.*, 1995; Brady *et al.*, 1995; Parry *et al.*, 1992 cited in Pattie, Seyd, and Whiteley, 2003).

On the other hand other writers reveal culture to be the biggest obstacle to women's full and equal participation in politics (Tamale, 1999). This is because culture is one of the predominantly patriarchal notions that contradict laws and policies that seek to protect women's rights (Akumu, 2011). For instance, female and male politicians are evaluated on the same standards yet women are still expected to meet societal expectations of what a 'real woman' should be: calm, timid, motherly, nurturing and dignified (Akumu, 2011:7). Individual's sense of efficacy also influences political participation with those feeling that their opinions and actions are likely to have an influence on the outcome of decisions being more likely to engage in political action (Pattie, Seyd, and Whiteley, 2003). Political efficacy - the feeling that political actions can have an impact on the political process (Campbell, Gurin, and Miller, 1954 cited in van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2010) plays a great role in political participation. When individuals feel that their participation is less likely to enable them achieve their desired goal, they may not participate.



The voter population in the 2011 elections was 15,002,720 people and out of these, 8,272,760 (59.3%) turned out to vote (Electoral commission report, 2011). Voter turnout was affected by intimidation, violence, and assumption that results had already been rigged. This is contrary to the factors that many writers had anticipated to determine the voting results (Kakuba, 2011). Election rigging and multi-practices also discourage citizens from voting. For instance, after the February 2011 elections at least 100 election petitions were filed in the Uganda courts of judicature disputing the outcome of parliamentary and local council elections (Wesaka, 2011).

Considering the above literature, this paper hypothesizes that:

1. Men are more involved in political activities than women
2. Youths are more involved in political activities than the adults
3. Men give greater importance to mastery values than women.
4. Men give greater importance to autonomy values than women.
5. Mastery and hierarchy values are associated with high political participation
6. Embeddedness and egalitarian values are associated with low political participation

### **Methods**

The study adopted a quantitative research methodology utilizing a cross sectional survey design. A sample of 728 respondents (294 secondary school teachers and 434 year one university students) was randomly selected in early February 2011 just before the 18<sup>th</sup> February presidential and parliamentary elections in Uganda. Of these, 358 were males (173 teachers, 185 students) and 370 were females (121 teachers and 249 students). The teachers were selected from secondary schools in the four regions of the country and students were selected from Makerere University. Overall, 19.6% and 13.9% of the sampled students and teachers respectively had not registered to participate in the February 2011 elections; and 23.3% and 13.7% of the students and teachers respectively did not belong to any of the political parties in the country. A questionnaire with sections measuring background information of the respondent and cultural values was used for data collection.

**Cultural Values:** Cultural values were measured using a survey designed by Schwartz (1994) containing 57 single value items that can be grouped into seven cultural values. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each

of the value items as ‘a guiding principle in their lives’ on a 9-point scale running from 7 (of supreme importance) to -1(opposed to my values). This instrument has been found to be a reliable measure of cultural values basing on the previous research done in Uganda (Munene et al, 2005) and elsewhere (Magnusson and Wilson, 2008).

**Political Participation:** Political participation was measured using three attributes. These are, whether the respondent had registered to participate in the February 2011 elections; if he/she belonged to any of the political parties in the country; and if he/she had a preferential candidate for the 2011 elections. These aspects relate to voting which is the most common type of political activity in the country.

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Scientists (SPSS version 18). The independent t-test was used to test the gender differences in cultural values, Chi- Square test to test gender differences in political participation, and Point biserial correlation was used to test the relationships between cultural values and political participation; and cultural values and the demographic variables of age and gender.

### Results

Results are presented in relation to the hypotheses of the study as follows:

*Hypothesis 1: Men are more involved in political activities than women*

**Table 2: Gender Differences in Political Involvement**

Political activities	Gender	Those that agreed	Chi-value	p
Registered to vote	Male	86.0%	5.49	0.02
	Female	79.5%		
Have preferred presidential candidate	Male	90.0%	26.49	0.01
	Female	84.3%		
Belongs to political party	Male	84.3%	22.45	0.01
	Female	77.1%		

Table 2 shows a significant difference between the male and female respondents in their involvement in politics. More male than female respondents were registered to vote, had preferential presidential candidates for the February 2011 elections, and belonged to an active political party.

Results lead to the acceptance of the hypothesis that men are more involved in political activities than women.

*Hypothesis 2: Youth are more involved in political activities than the adults*

**Table 3: Political Involvement across Age Groups**

Political activities	Category of Respondents	Those that agreed	Chi-value	p
Registered to vote	Students	70.8%	28.71	0.01
	Teachers	85.3%		
Have preferred presidential candidate	Students	84.8%	10.11	0.01
	Teachers	91.5%		
Belongs to political party	Students	77.2%	14.83	0.01
	Teachers	87.0%		

Results in table 3 showed a significant difference between youth (university students) and adults (teachers) in their participation in political activities. More adults than youth were registered to vote, had preferential presidential candidates for the February 2011 elections, and belonged to an active political party. The teachers are more involved in political activities than the university students. For the university students, the major reason for political participation was to ‘cause change in leadership’ and for the teachers ‘to maintain the prevailing peace in the country.’ Results lead to the rejection of the hypothesis that Youth are more involved in political activities than the adults.

*Hypothesis 3: Men give greater importance to mastery values than women*

There is a significant difference between the male and female respondents in their ratings for mastery value ( $t = -4.40$ ,  $p = .01$ ) with males rating the value higher than the females. Results lead to the acceptance of the hypothesis that men give greater importance to mastery values than women.

*Hypothesis 4: Men give greater importance to autonomy values than women*

There is a significant difference between the male and female respondents in their ratings for autonomy value ( $t = -1.94$ ,  $p = .05$ ) with males rating the value higher than the females. Results lead to the acceptance of the hypothesis that men give greater importance to autonomy than women.

**Table 4: Gender Differences in Cultural Values**

Cultural Values	Sex	N	Mean	t	df	p
Embeddedness	Female	370	4.54	2.07	726	.04
	Male	358	4.46			
Egalitarianism	Female	370	4.35	3.57	726	.01
	Male	358	4.18			
Mastery	Female	370	3.81	-4.40	726	.01
	Male	358	4.00			
Autonomy	Female	370	2.83	-1.94	726	.05
	Male	358	2.98			
Hierarchy	Female	370	3.31	-1.43	726	.15
	Male	358	3.40			
Harmony	Female	370	4.26	1.71	726	.09
	Male	358	4.19			

Students and teachers significantly differed in their ratings for egalitarianism ( $t = 3.92$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ), harmony ( $t = 3.50$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ), mastery ( $t = -2.86$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) and hierarchy ( $t = -4.31$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) values. Students rated higher than the teachers on the values of egalitarianism and harmony; and teachers rated higher than students on mastery and hierarchy values.

**Table 5: Differences between Teachers and Students in Cultural Values**

Cultural Values	Sex	N	Mean	t	df	p
Embeddedness	Students	434	4.50	1.07	726	.28
	Teachers	294	4.46			
Egalitarianism	Students	434	4.33	3.92	726	.01
	Teachers	294	4.17			
Mastery	Students	434	3.87	-2.86	726	.01
	Teachers	294	3.98			
Autonomy	Students	434	2.87	-1.53	726	.13
	Teachers	294	2.97			
Hierarchy	Students	434	3.27	-4.31	726	.01
	Teachers	294	3.52			
Harmony	Students	434	4.29	3.50	726	.01
	Teachers	294	4.16			

Respondents that had registered to vote and those that did not register significantly differed in mastery values ( $t = 2.82$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) with the former rating higher. Respondents that do not belong to any political party and those that belong to opposition parties rated higher than those that belong to

the ruling party on intellectual autonomy(  $F = 5.26, p = 0.01$  ). There were also significant regional differences in cultural values with respondents from the western region rating significantly higher than those from other regions on mastery which cultural value was found to influence political participation. This suggests ethnic influence in political participation and specifically in the February 2011 presidency elections.

**Relationship between Cultural Values and Political Participation**

Point biserial correlation was used to test the relationship between cultural values and political participation; and cultural values and demographic variables. The results are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Relationship between Cultural Values and Political Participation**

Variables		Embeddedness	Mastery	Autonomy	Egalitarianism
<b>Political Participation</b>	1. Registered to vote	-.05	.09**	.01	-.05
	2. Belongs to political party	-.01	.05	-.02	.03
	3. Preferred presidential candidate	-.02	.07*	-0.01	.02
<b>Demographic variable</b>	4. Gender	.08*	-.17**	-.08*	.14**
	5. Age	-.04	.10**	.03	-.10**
	6. Category of Respondent	-.04	.09**	.05	-.13**

\* Relationship significant at .05

\*\* Relationship significant at .01

*Hypothesis 5: Mastery and hierarchy values are associated with high political participation*

There is a significant positive relationship between mastery values and being registered to vote ( $r_{pbi} = .09, p < .001$ ), and having a preferred presidential candidate ( $r_{pbi} = .07, p < .05$ ). This means that the higher the importance given to mastery values, the more likely one is to register for voting, and have a preferred presidential candidate he/she is supporting. Results lead to the acceptance of the hypothesis that mastery values are associated with high political participation.

There is no significant relationship between autonomy value and political participation. This implies that the importance given to autonomy values, does not in any way relate to one's involvement in political activities. Results lead to the rejection of the hypothesis that autonomy values are associated with high political participation.

*Hypothesis 6: Embeddedness and egalitarian values are associated with low political participation*

Results showed no significant relationship between embeddedness values and political participation; and no significant relationship between egalitarian values and political participation. This implies that the importance one gives to embeddedness values, or egalitarian values does not in any way relate to one's involvement in political activities. Results lead to the rejection of the hypothesis that embeddedness values and egalitarian values are associated with low political participation.

#### **Relationship between gender and cultural values**

Results show that there is a significant negative relationship between mastery and gender ( $r_{pbi} = -.17, p < .01$ ), and a positive relationship with age ( $r_{pbi} = .10, p < .01$ ). This means that male respondents are higher at mastery values; and that the older the respondent, the higher the scores for mastery. There is a significant positive relationship between egalitarianism and gender ( $r_{pbi} = .14, p < .01$ ), and a negative relationship with age ( $r_{pbi} = -.10, p < .01$ ). This implies that female respondents have higher ratings for egalitarian values; and that ratings for egalitarianism reduce with age. There is a significant positive relationship between embeddedness and gender ( $r_{pbi} = .08, p < .05$ ). This means that female respondents have high ratings for embeddedness values. There is a significant negative relationship between autonomy and gender ( $r_{pbi} = -.08, p < .05$ ) meaning that male respondents are higher at autonomy values. This is consistent with the independent t test results that showed significant gender difference across these cultural value types.

#### **Discussion**

There are gender differences in cultural values and consequently in political participation. Female respondents scored higher than males on embeddedness values. This finding is consistent with Munene et al (2005). Embeddedness values concern issues of relationships such as respect for

tradition, self-discipline, politeness, obedience, and social order. The high ratings for females on this value emphasizes their concern to build meaningful relationships during their interactions with others and their desire to maintain these relationships. This makes women less active in political activities that are usually characterized by hostility with no permanent friends.

Male respondents scored higher than females on mastery and autonomy values. Mastery values motivate one to manipulate the environment for purposes of personal benefits. The values focus on the desire to be successful, ambitious, and influential. The high ratings of males on this value suggest that during political activities men tend to be dominant and assertive in order to obtain as much as possible from the process. They are therefore likely to use competitive strategies that are self-serving in order to manipulate the process to their own satisfaction (Kibanja, 2006). Correlation results showed that high ratings on mastery values were associated with high political involvement. This may perhaps be attributed to the ability for one to manipulate any situation for purposes of self gain.

The differences in cultural values lead men and women to perceive political involvement differently and to participate differently in such activities. The higher importance women give to embeddedness causes them to be cooperative and empathic and therefore shy away from anything that requires stiff competition. The higher importance men give to mastery and autonomy values causes them to manipulate every opportunity by being aggressive and competitive so as to benefit as much as possible from any political activity. Findings support Thorson (2009) that political participation in Uganda is based on cultural values.

Independent t-test results showed significant gender differences in the importance given to mastery, autonomy, and embeddedness values. This is consistent with the findings of Munene et al (2005), Kibanja (2006) and Thorson (2009). These writers found out that Ugandan men gave more importance to mastery and autonomy values than the women and the latter gave more importance to embeddedness values than the former. This has been linked back to the way men and women are socialized in Uganda.

Teachers and students differed in their political participation levels with teachers being more involved in political activities than the university students. For the university students, the major reason for political

participation was to “*cause change in leadership*” and for the teachers “*to maintain the prevailing peace in the country.*” These reasons are contrary to the factors that Kakuba (2011) had anticipated to determine voter’s choice in the in 2011 elections. Kakuba had proposed that infrastructure development, discovery of oil, coalition of political parties, and creation of new districts would be the key factors that would most probably favour the incumbent president. Although the incumbent president was favoured, voters considered the prevailing security he had maintained in the country and anticipated insecurity in case he lost the elections. Security issues superseded developmental issues in the determination of the 2011 election outcomes.

Respondents that had registered to vote and those that did not register significantly differed in mastery values. Inability to register when one is of voting age may signify reluctance to participate in political activities. However, in the Ugandan case, many people neither register to vote nor participate in voting because they think that their votes will not make any difference since votes are rigged even before actual voting takes place. This also partly explains why the opposition parties never perform well in the elections because most of their supporters never vote (Wesaka, 2011).

Respondents that do not belong to any political party and those that belong to opposition parties rated higher than those that belong to the ruling party on intellectual autonomy. Schwartz (2006:140) asserts that “*intellectual autonomy encourages individuals to pursue their own ideas and intellectual directions independently*”. Individuals high at intellectual autonomy (being able to express one’s own uniqueness and creativity, broadminded, curious) cannot peacefully be part of a political party which labels members whose views differ from those of the leadership ‘*Rebels*’.

### **Conclusion**

Basing on the findings and discussions, this study reveals that gender and cultural values significantly influence participation in political activities. Readiness to participate in political activities is prevalent in cultures high at mastery and low in cultures high at embeddedness and egalitarianism. This is because in embedded cultures, meaning in life is realised through living collectively and having social relationships. These are maintained through respecting tradition and staying peacefully with others. This is possible where political activities are managed in a democratically free and fair manner which is not the case in most developing countries.



Women rated higher than the men on the values of embeddedness and egalitarianism thus their low involvement in political activities. Gender differences in cultural values culminate from the differing socialisation patterns of boys and girls by parents, teachers, peers, and other socialization agents. Unless parents and teachers endeavour to adopt the same socialization patterns for girl and boy children, the two sexes will continue to differ in cultural values priorities. They will therefore continue perceiving phenomena differently and hence not get equally actively involved in many forms of social behavior including political activities. Change in socialization pattern will in the long run lead to change in society's expectations of gender roles which will address issues of gender stereotypes and prejudices so as to minimize gender differences at an early age in life. When socialization agents reflect a picture that is free of gender bias by treating boy and girl children in same way; girls will know that they can competently do anything boys do including participating competently in politics.

The teachers (older people) were found to be more actively involved in political activities than the youth (University students). This is a worrying trend in a country where 65% of the population are youth. However it has been found that the older people were higher than the youth at mastery values thus emphasising the role of cultural values in political participation. It is, therefore, important for government and civil society to implement programmes that provide knowledge and skills that instil values of mastery among the children and youth so as to promote political participation in the future generation.

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