

# An Evaluation of Predatory Governance in Uganda and Indonesia

Fred Bidandi<sup>1,\*</sup>, John J Williams<sup>1</sup> & Jeremy Waiswa<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Government, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa

<sup>2</sup>Uganda Christian University, Kampala, Uganda

\*Corresponding author: School of Government, University of the Western Cape, Robert Sobukwe Road, 7535, Bellville, Cape Town, South Africa. E-mail: bidandif@gmail.com

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## Abstract

The first part of this article theorises predatory governance in general and acmes some exceptions to the process. Subsequently, it reviews the characteristics of predatory governance literature in Africa and East Asia with emphasis on Uganda and Indonesia. The study shows how leaders utilise state resources and institutions for their self-interest and exclude the masses or tax payers who sustain such regimes. We show that, the extent to which regimes, influence policies on the general population politically or otherwise, creates inequality, poverty, unemployment, and bad governance. We, therefore, theorise that predatory governance is hinged on the idea that the state usually has limited capacity to protect citizen rights, the political and socio-economic spaces are usually controlled by the elites either through coercion, corruption or the use of violence.

The impact of predatory governance and the developmental state as an approach for economic development has been discussed and we observe practical realities of vote-buying to win elections being a common practice in Uganda and Indonesia. In this understanding, both case scenarios portray an image of predatory behaviour. The study utilised secondary data to evaluate what predatory governance, its characteristics and impact. Findings show that predatory governance affects economic outcomes of a country, produces corruption, violence, nepotism, poverty, unemployment and shrinking democratic space and deficiencies to name but few.

**Keywords:** predatory governance, Uganda, Indonesia

## 1. Introduction

We have observed that in some parts of the contemporary world, several nations are faced with critical encounters of democratic deficiencies, constitutional amendments to remove age and term limits to suit the interest of incumbent regime, political violence, institutionalised corruption, abuse of human rights, electoral fraud, nepotism, and the prospect of using terrorism to silence those who seem to have different ideological views. Countries that fall under this category include among others, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Zimbabwe, Togo, Uganda, Rwanda, Taiwan, Indonesia, Philippines, and Thailand. Thus, leaders of these countries have created a complex (shenanigan) political environment which does not provide room for open political space but rather making it difficult for opposing parties to have genuine participation in democratic dispensation (Khisa, 2019). Under such regimes, free and fair elections cannot happen because, it is debated that the political parties would detract the development efforts made by the incumbent regime (Haynes, 2013). Moreover, in such regimes if not all, democratic freedoms are denied, including freedom to assembly, expression, and organisation (Elau, 2019; Stockton, 2001). The practical example is the ‘Public Order Management Act’ has technically destroyed freedom of assembly in Uganda (Elau, 2019). This unfortunate reality provides room for top leaders to hold office by way of creating fear or threats to contain citizens. In such circumstances, the electoral process does not seem to work and has in some cases resulted in the popular uprising as we have witnessed in countries like Egypt, Senegal, Tunisia, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry and lately Tanzania (Howard & Hussain, 2011; Minteh, 2016).

In some cases, leaders never left power through the electoral process but (Sudan, Zimbabwe, Mali and lately Guinea Conakry) forced out through popular uprising or military coup, while others have frustrated oppositions groups using state resources. Thus, in such instances leaders use repression as a tool to suppress opponents. Even some who claim to be democratic seem to follow a similar trajectory, for example, the just concluded elections in Tanzania (Onyango-Obbo, 2020). While leaders are responsible for the wellbeing of their citizens, it is also observed that governments manipulate and exploit the very people they are supposed to protect and serve. Literature show that such states are described as predatory (Ebbe, 2003; Bavister-gould, 2011). The government in such states abuses power, and the head of state rules by decrees, very much as organised syndicates, using corrupt individuals to loot the state (Bae & Ott, 2008; Ebbe, 2003; Galbraith, 2008; Ruth et al. 2015). In this way, the state expenditure, for example, is largely skewed, institutions are polarised and serve mostly the interest of the elite or top leadership. As these regimes are subject to popular resistance by ordinary citizens as witnessed during and after the recent elections in Uganda...even though these have, seemingly been violently squashed/quelled, we draw insights from particular experiences where dictatorial regimes are in power by manipulation of citizens and donors. This in a sense has led to the dominance of a small group of elites who monopolise state power and resources, thus persistently claiming to be working for the good of the country and people, when in actual fact it is an exhibition of a false picture to the external world, particularly those from whom they borrow money for development projects (Kadyrzhanova, 2004). Kadyrzhanova (2004) in addition theorizes that monopolising state institutions is about controlling the political space,

business, and socio-economic environment simply to suppress or weaken the masses. It is argued that "in a predatory regime, nothing is done for public reasons or good. Indeed, the leaders in charge do not recognize that public purposes exist" (Galbraith, 2006:31).

This gives us a clear understanding of the concept and also perhaps the characteristics of predatory governance especially its uniqueness from other forms, such as dictatorship, authoritarianism, inequality, political violence, corrupt and brutal governance, failed state or any other.

However, the predatory government is regarded as:

The extreme opposite of a developmental, accountable, or responsive form of governance. Additionally, predatory governments/ regimes are not often completely predatory, but maybe more or less predatory in practice, although it is usually still possible to recognise the presence of some of their characteristics (Bavister-gould, 2011:1).

Ebbe (2003) and Galbraith (2006), allude that those leaders of predatory governments use development and contribution to political power, a means to rule and usually resorts to wholesale abuse of power, where the head of state uses state resources to violently abuse the rights of those who question their deeds.

Nonetheless, no studies have been carried out on predatory governance in recent times particularly on the African continent. It is therefore based on this gap that we were inspired to interrogate this issue by reviewing extant literature on this specific topic.

With the view to understand predatory forms of governance and its attributes, ie, imposing age limits on voting, political violence, abuse of human rights, electoral fraud, corruption, nepotism, and the prospect of using terrorism as a weapon to silence critiques appears to be the biggest challenge some countries are confronted with in contemporary times (Bidandi, 2018). Further, state institutions, legislature, line departments, and individuals aligned to the ruling party are clandestinely used as a tool to coerce the masses to support the dictatorship. In such a government, checks and balances are symbolic or simply don't exist (Khisra, 2019).

As the literature indicates, leaders in some cases use economic development on one hand as a yardstick to satisfy western partners from whom they borrow for political, and socio-economic reasons, while on the other is about political scores (job creation, peace and observing the rule of law etc.) in the domestic environment. By and large, it is all about prospects for extending their rule which is usually accompanied by looting state resources. For example, political corruption, financial mismanagement, and discriminatory tendering (Arthur, 2004; Rackley, 2005). In this way, leaders become predatory, threatened and are most likely to become violent to protect their power base. Hence, holding on power for fear of catastrophe and losing what they have stolen vis-a-vis reprisals from the opposing group. The case in point is Uganda, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, to name but three. The question is, how does predatory governance affect a state? Drawing from Uganda and Indonesia perspectives, this article theorises predatory governance, examines its characteristics, and impact on both the political and economic development of these two countries. The reason for choosing two countries is to

gain some practical and theoretical insights on how predatory governance comes into existence and what are the potential steps that could be taken them to counter predatory forms of governance and encourage more substantive, democratically constituted forms of governance.

This manuscript utilised secondary data from sources such as in print or electronic form, books, peer-reviewed journals, online computer database and newspapers to carry out the research (Vartanian, 2010). Secondary data sources according to Tyrrell (2016) contributes to data development bearing in mind important questions without limitations to original research. It is also a pragmatic exercise and methodical in terms of procedural and evaluative steps, same as collecting and evaluating primary data. Vartanian (2010) affirms that secondary data generates new assumptions for which a researcher finds answers to questions that are different from the original research. The reason of using secondary data sources in this study was to allow us to look at trends and changes related to predatory governance over time and also to outline factors associated with it in Uganda and Indonesia with a view of generating specific testable conventions for further studies. The use of secondary sources or data provided a comprehensive understanding of predatory governance at large but with specific reference to Uganda and Indonesia. Question this study seeks to answer include: How is predatory governance understood?

## **2. Theorising Predatory Governance**

We argue that predatory governance is hinged on the idea that the state (a political division of a body of people that occupies a territory defined by frontiers) usually has limited capacity to protect citizen rights. However, we challenge the state-centered approach by analysing the interrelationship of state, the political and the socio-economic spaces are usually controlled by the elites. Leeson and Williamson (2009) opine that despite the elite's control of the political and socio-economic spaces, they tend to commodify public goods, as well as portray the image of economic development as a pretext for good governance seen in countries such as North Korea, Rwanda, Uganda, Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand among others. Thus, this is not an ideal political system but rather predatory political governance. As Leeson and Williamson (2009) further argue, many predatory governments have damaged their citizens' welfare than enhancing it. We presume that, when the state fails to satisfy the institutional conditions required for an ideal political system, you then experience the following: political violence, electoral fraud, corruption, nepotism, regular constitutional amendments, divide and rule, fostering distrust and enmity between local communities, creating fear, terror allegations, and constrained political environment becomes a norm. This is to say precisely that the state abuses the law and uses police to subjugate the masses whenever they demand equitable distribution of public goods and level political space. Departing from these situations produces disorder and satisfying them produces predatory political governance (Bidandi, 2018; Leeson & Williamson, 2009).

Davies (2011) in his work, the 'Challenging governance theory' illustrates that predatory governance is about influencing and creating conditions that are beneficial to the ruling elites. This is thus a consensus-oriented practice geared towards making a clientele political system

entrenched in society purposely to protect the interest of the ruling elite. This tendency manifests the day-to-day politics of governance networks, enacting the interactions of the integral state.

It must be stated that in such governments, the common features are commoditized/flawed electoral process (voter bribery), corruption, intimidation of opponents, skewed development, nepotism, political violence, dysfunctional state institutions, fronting tendencies for tender allocation, over-reliance on external borrowing while local revenue is hardly utilised to address domestic needs. In turn, human rights abuses, electoral fraud, checks and balances hardly exist, broken state institutions, dictatorship, divide and rule, high unemployment, over-reliance on external support, and abuse of state resources are also common problems in a predatory government in our view (Bidandi, 2018).

Schools of thought such as Marxist and neo-liberal show that predatory political leadership affects economic outcomes (Arthur, 2004). This can be assumed that the leaders tend to own state institutions thereby allocating lucrative job placements to those who support the ruling elites. We show that, the extent to which regimes, influence policies on the general population politically or otherwise, creates inequality, poverty, and unemployment. This is also based on the idea that people can be governed when they are poor (Besigye, 2011). Meaning that they would inevitably succumb to the conditions made by dictatorial regimes.

### **3. Characteristics of Predatory Governance Explained**

It has been argued that in a predatory government, a leader works through a patronage and graft system entrenched into a local community environment purposely to build political power base (Bae & Ott, 2008; Bidandi, 2018). Examples of this kind of system are common in Uganda, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Indonesia. Institutional frameworks in these countries are authoritarian and constructed around utopia elections and decentralisation policies (Hadiz, 2007). For example, voter bribery, violence and elitism are common in these countries as empirical evidence from extant literature has shown (Besigye, 2011; Bae & Ott, 2008). Moreover, the uniqueness of each of these states is that leaders use development and sometimes insecurity as a pretext to manipulate the electorate and hence the extended stay in power.

Nonetheless, according to Bae and Ott (2008), whereas leaders may tend to manipulate the electorate, the country remains in the fiscal deficit, high inflation, and economic stagnation. In this way, state institutions are run by the head of state, government programmes usually advocated for by the head of state, while limited involvement or power is given to line ministries and local government structures. Bae and Ott (2008) further argue that giving limited powers to line ministries and local government structures is an exclusion that may lead to poor economic performance which in itself seem to threaten the leader's hold on power. While this may be true, the author fails to provide a detailed account of grassroots driven political engagement with the view to empirically ground socio-economic-political forms of democracy and country.

However, Nakisanze (2016) avers that a predatory state creates a political dilemma in which the incumbent leaders is seen as the saviour on one hand, while on the other distributing state resources to his close associates to help keep the loyalists happy (so they will finance campaigns, canvass neighbourhoods, intimidate rivals) while avoiding economic hardship that may alienate the rest of society and destabilize the government. This has led to the failure of having distributive governance especially building an economy that benefits all despite the existing challenges of corruption, poverty, and high unemployment.

Literature (Hadiz, 2007; Besigye, 2011; Khisa,2019) shows that most African leaders have emphasised the distributive aspects of governing, disregarding the economic fallout, that is to say, they have practised predatory rule. Though predatory governance is difficult to measure directly, leaders reveal it through a pattern of actions taken over time, for example, corruption, poor human rights record, abuse, or absence of rule of law, nepotism, political violence, polarised state institutions, dictatorship, manipulation, divide and rule as well as using the pretext of democracy and development among others. Based on the narrative above, state resources are used without clear accountability to citizens of how revenue is collected, and the money borrowed from external entities are utilised. We note, that when citizen questions the state's utilisation of resources, such individuals will be either be probed to keep quiet or seen as an enemy of progress(Besigye, 2011). A typical example is Uganda's Yoweri Museveni who according to Nakisanze (2016) has a tendency of rewarding political office bearers with lucrative work placements in different directions, depending on the institutional setting purposely to buy their loyalty and continued support despite the authoritarian rule, poor economic performance, human rights abuse, and broken state institutions. Further, sectarianism, bloating parliament, foreign and domestic decentralisation as good governance have been used as a tool to destroy local coalitions of predatory governance using money to buy opponents from the opposing side (Nakisanze,2016).

The above governance trends are seen to point to similar dynamics in Indonesia where for example, the decentralised electoral democracy is based on class interests in the county's political environment presumably to sustain the incumbent leadership (Hadiz, 2007). The decentralised electoral democracy " is a class-based interest in opposition to the brand of predatory capitalism that has survived the demise of the new order; and foreign and domestic supporters of decentralization as good governance that threaten local coalitions of predatory power deploying money politics and developing greater economic and political aspirations and ambitions" (Verdi, 2007:1). While the rise of electoral democracy has meant broader political participation, political contestation remains confined to what appears to be competing coalitions of local predatory interests (Hadiz, 2007). Local predatory interests are usually driven from top leadership through well-organized network made up of dedicated party cadres who mobilise/grassroot peasants exclusively to monopolise political power without necessarily understanding the socio-political ills of society but the aim here is simply to contain the citizen whom they (the ruling party) fear as enemies on one hand and the other as good citizens (Sharma, 2009). As such they have enemies and friends and the rest of society is prey as Rackley, (2005) has illustrated in his work, 'Predatory governance in the Democratic Republic of Congo'. Rackley alludes that to control those with divergent views, the state uses violence.

Using DRC as an example, the author further shows that violence decimates the population and destroys state institutions such as health, judiciary, education, and transport systems due to bad governance. The above narrative reflects the general trends experienced elsewhere in other countries, for example, physical violence, coercion, and deprivation are common problems which have an impact on a country in multiple ways.

To sum up, we observe that predatory governance is typically one that exhibits the following features: dictatorship, abuse of rule of law, manipulation, electoral fraud, corruption, patronage, settle/political violence, and corruption extra.

#### **4. Impact of Predatory Governance**

We show here that, the likelihood of predatory governance is based on the conduct of the political office bearer, especially the head of state, who may be positive about the extent to which a regime values the future of a country on one hand, while on the other people at the lower echelon of society are marginalised and experience income inequality difficulties. Bae and Ott (2008) in their study, 'Predatory behaviour of governments: the case of mass killing, Defence and Peace Economics' allude that in a predatory state, income levels are usually low, inequality in society is exponentially high and policy choices exclusionary. Moreover, political patronage influences public policy discourse, natural resources exploited by the elite, including land whereas ordinary people continue to suffer from social-economic distress (ibid). In Mahasun's (2021) analysis, predatory practices of elites make public goods function like tools and items for personal transactions. As Galbraith (2008) argues, nothing is done for public reasons. Notably, public institutions serve the interest of the elite and their supporters.

In light of the above, public institutions according to Galbraith are undermined to serve private individuals or institutions. The author argues that these private individuals and their institutions run the state, not for any ethical project, but simply to make money for themselves. Based on this conception, leaders misuse state resources for themselves and their supporters. Ebbe (2003) describes such leaders as entrepreneurs whose objective is to retain and exercise power and in so doing, they optimise capital creation, like increasing the financial output that can be used to reward supporters. Such a leader according to Besigye (2011), has a vision of himself which indeed has a devastating impact on society generally.

Thus, according to Rackley (2005) and Besigye (2011), predator leaders are unable to meet the economic needs of their people, yet they use the limited resources to appease their supporters, while employing violence to exploit and abuse ordinary citizens. Corruption, dictatorship, poor service delivery, food insecurity, unemployment, and bribery appear to be a normalised exercise. In such conditions, the country cannot function effectively in the face of a predatory government, and its devastating concerns for human development and wellbeing.

## 5. The Ugandan Perspective

Uganda government has portrayed an image of good leadership from the West's (donor) perspective, while also playing political games with them and society at home especially the falsehood regarding the delivery of services and democratisation reforms ( Khisa, 2019; Rackley, 2005). Further, Khisa (2019) allude that while Museveni presides over a corrupt and incompetent regime with massive youth unemployment, patronage and ethnic divide, the West especially the United States of America and some European countries continue to support the regime they too well know is problematic to its citizens. Byekwaso (2010) argues that while Uganda' economic performance is portrayed as a role model in reducing poverty, to be emulated by other African countries because of its economic reforms, the situation has is changing to the worst and as such something statically could have been wrong.

Nonetheless, Museveni's government similarly plays shenanigan games with the opposition groups, donors, and Ugandan citizens at large to win elections and stay in power. When he came to power in 1986 after a five-year civil war, he embraced structural adjustment reforms which earned him huge sums of money in foreign assistance from the west (Khisa, 2019). He then like other African leaders, used political power to create wealth around himself, his family and close associates so that money and connections would buy him a convertible stay in power. Moreover, he emphasised to rebuild the economy he claimed had collapsed in the 1960s and 70s. Based on this rhetoric, the United States of America under the leadership of George W. Bush visited Uganda. Unfortunately, nearly 35 years on, Museveni has failed to improve democratic reforms for his country, instead, he continues to manipulate the electorate under the illusion that without him, the country will descend into civil war (Nakisanze, 2016). He has created fear among the Ugandan population even if he fares poorly in terms of economic reforms, corruption, high unemployment, and failure to embrace electoral reforms.

Nonetheless, to sustain his continued stay in power, Museveni has divided Uganda in small chiefdoms, allowing him to have more constituencies and legislators who would support policies that go his way of thinking (Besigye, 2011; Khisa, 2019). For example, Uganda before 1986 had 120 legislators and today the number has exponentially swelled to over 500 (The Parliament of Uganda, 2018). We observe that the expanded legislative assembly members are used as a rubber stamp to make policies that suit the interest of the ruling National Resistance Movement government and the elites. For example, contentious constitutional amendments like the removal of presidential age and term limits have been passed by the parliament in favour of the president and his NRM government (see Opiyo et al., 2013). This partisan handling of issues in essence has a devastating impact on public administration, and service delivery given the budgetary constraints.

Besigye (2011), expounds that Museveni has created a messianic vision of himself and usually reminding Ugandans that he brought peace that saved the country from tyranny and poverty and brought development. However, the development claimed does not reflect much from his 35 years of rule, what is experienced instead is violence aimed at supressing the very people claimed to be the beneficiaries of 'peace'! The ruling NRM government usually uses misguided narrative for continued stay in power, including reminding citizens how it brought peace and



stability Ugandans enjoy today. Though the NRM may have brought peace as claimed, they continually violate citizens' rights to assembly, expression, and speech (Rackley, 2005). This in fact goes against the claim about peace. As we all know peace is accompanied by the freedom to assemble, rights for expression and speech. Without these, dictatorship exists in its naked form.

According to Nakisanze (2016), Museveni has crafted the art of voter bribery (politicians pay voters with money and gifts including food, drinks, salt, soap, mattresses, plates and cooking pans) to keep him in power. To keep his grip on power, Museveni uses the strategy of high highhandedness, electoral fraud, and intimidation. The inner cycles of his ruling NRM have become corrupt and have sold state enterprises/entities to themselves including banking institutions. Arthur (2004) and Rackley (2005) notes, family members are involved in a series of shady transactions, including smuggling of minerals in the DRC. While the state was involved in illegal activities in the DRC, it has failed to lead the country into prosperity (Besigye, 2011; Khisa, 2019). Slogans such as 'prosperity for all' have become a normative attitude to raise hopes about the bright future in terms of economic development, societal wellbeing, and economic development. What is taking place though, is the increasing level of patronage (Nakisanze, 2016), handing out cash hand-outs to MPs for example, the removal of age and term limits (£5,243). This includes paying individuals (brown envelopes) who seem to challenge his leadership. While this unfortunate character is going on, public services, in particular education, health, and transport remain poor. In this way, corruption and mismanagement of public resources remain a problem, with far-reaching consequences on the development of the countries concerned. Ukwandu and Jarbandhan (2016) argue that the engrained interests of the ruling elite and poor governance in sub-Saharan Africa are undermining development efforts in this region. This is because, poor governance has jeopardised the development efforts in the region, implying that in absence of good governance, it would be difficult to overcome poverty and underdevelopment in this region.

Robinsony (1999) in his work 'When is a State Predatory' notes that the distribution of political power in society create incentives for a state to become predatory. This is precisely the situation in Uganda where incentives define the social economic and political landscape. Aside from what is said above, the state fails to promote holistic economic development, but rather do so selectively to areas where the head of state supposedly comes from or where he has a relative support base. What is common in this case is that the predatory behaviour tendencies raise when the leader does not want to relinquish power, embezzles money meant for public investment (human capital), abuse of state resources, and limited accountability from the public domain, dictatorship, and rule by the gun. Rackley, (2005) argues that predatory governments could be measured based on the following characteristics: illegal taxation by unsalaried civil servants, state's inability to meet the economic needs of its people, including state corruption associated with illegal financial manoeuvring, well as bending the law to favour the few powerful elites in government. Perhaps important to mention, western imperial powers and multinational appear to be behind leaders like Museveni for resource benefits even if things go wrong in the country.

## 6. The Indonesian Perspective

After the collapse of Suharto's authoritarian regime in 1998, Indonesia experienced a new era of democratic governance, including reforms operating in a more liberal manner (Durnev & Fauver, 2008). Literature show that reforms were practical in nature and the rebirth of political party life (including multi-party system), good electoral laws, and various legal and institutional reforms related to governance (like decentralisation of state administrative authority) and the market were realised (Durnev & Fauver, 2008; Kusman & Istiqomah, 2021) *ibid*). Nevertheless, in the post-New Order (after 1998), this euphoria of reform quickly faded, as oligarchical and predatory power systems took hold and grew (Mahsun, 2021; Kusman & Istiqomah, 2021), characterised by the capture of political reform and democratic institution building by predatory alliances and state forces (Kusman & Istiqomah, 2021). They argue that the survival of these predatory and oligarchic forces has been facilitated by their adoption to elusive democratic institutional arrangements and establishment of new and ubiquitous social and political alliances.

Gerke (2000) and Fernald, Kariger, Hidrobo and Gertler (2012) aver that while Indonesia portrays a predatory image similar to what is taking place in some African countries, in particular Uganda. Extant literature show that state power and its institutions are controlled by local elites alongside global powers under the pretext of good governance (Hadiz, 2007). Under such conditions, predatory behaviour is applied because of the rent-seeking (practice of manipulating public policy or economic conditions as a strategy for increasing profits) nature of economic activities (Gerke, 2000). Ironically the associated process of the local economy is rooted in an attempt to form decentralised policies that promote projects within the scope of good governance. Like it is, in the African situation, good governance is primarily an initiative driven by World Bank to encourage borrowing for social-economic development activities, but political office bearers largely use such funds in most cases for political purposes and localised business alliances with investors (Richard & Manor, 1998).

In light of the above, it should be argued that leaders by and large use social-economic development (usually defining key performance indicators in the annual report) as a yardstick to satisfy the western partners, investors and sometimes locals for political scores (Arthur, 2004; Rackley, 2005). It should also be stated that, while this may be true, state institutions such as the police, military, finance, and planning to name but four, use violence to extend leadership prospects (Arthur, 2004; Rackley, 2005; Hadiz, 2006). In this way, leaders become predatory because they feel threatened, and will use state resources for continued stay in power.

Studies show that leaders are aware of the catastrophe of predatory behaviour if one leaves power. For this reason, many of them have the perception of holding onto power by creating alliances with local political elites, multinationals, or even western imperial powers as a safety net (Bavister-Gould, 2011; Besigye, 2011; Rackley, 2005). Though, Indonesia seems to embrace good governance by usurping neo-liberal reforms reflected through local business investments vis-à-vis external investors (Michael, 2003), the country seems to portray an image of blending international business community with local entrepreneurs in exchange of good governance, equality and possibly respect to rule of law. Though, this process signals the

empowerment of local communities, it is unfortunately difficult to measure its outcomes or impact (Ji Giles, 2003; Gavin, 2004; Olle, 2002). According to Gavin (2004), the situation in Indonesia has allowed predatory elites to transform themselves into political actors with a candid stake in the sustenance of country's highly flawed democracy. Flawed democracy is a combination of money politics, electoral fraud, and corruption. This outlay continues in an office with leadership spending millions to satisfy the interest of political elites and their lieutenants in the public sector. According to Suhardiman & Mollinga (2017) this modern day upeti system (a mimic of an old political system of gift giving) forms the basis of institutionalised corruption, whereby the career advancement of government officials is attained through upeti delivery to high-ranking officials in return for desirable bureaucratic positions.

Quite explicit, the Indonesian experience exhibits some of the most tangible limits to technocratic power. For example, three sets of interests exist, one being class-based which is bent on predatory capitalism and the other, being foreign and domestic supporters who believe in good governance but are threatened by predatory power deploying money politics, greater economic development, political aspirations, and ambitions (Gavin, 2004; Hutchcroft, 1998; Richard & Manor, 1998). While the rise of electoral democracy (Bidandi, 2019; Ebbe, 2003; Nakisanze, 2016; Richard & Manor, 1998), has meant wider political participation, but political contestations remain confined to local predatory interests. It is argued therefore that in the Indonesian experience, government has direct control of state institutions and resources, thus, the main beneficiary has been predatory government elites who have no abiding interest in rule by technocratic philosophies of good governance (Richard & Manor, 1998). The current state of affair in Indonesia, show that the process of deepening democracy is far from expectations, because many of the local elites display a predatory than democratic character (Mahsun, 2021).

Evans and Heller (2018), in their work 'The state and development' argue that despite massive revenues from natural resources, Indonesia has failed to replicate the dynamism of developmental state vision. According to Mahsun (2021) this state of affair can be attributed to the presence of patronage and cronyism networks which make public goods to be controlled by predatory elites. Mahsun observes that practices like the establishment of deposit fee for development projects not only confirms, but also perpetuates the practice of predatory state. As such, the capture of the budgeting and tendering processes especially at local government level by the elites through patronage and cronyism networks, creates unhealthy conditions for market competition, and consequently leads to the enjoyment of the prosperity and progress of the business sector by a few people.

We observe that Indonesia's current political environment has become a domain for rich and powerful political elites who use money and connections to manipulate the electorate (Hutchcroft, 2002; Paul, 1998; Richard & Manor, 1998). In most cases the resources used in electioneering is diverted from key government sector for personal gains. One of the sectors that has been negatively impacted by these predatory practices is the education sector where poor learning outcomes have been recorded. Rosser, King, & Widoyoko (2021) opine that this learning crisis mirrors the political dominance by predatory elites who use the country's education system to amass wealth, maintain patronage networks, muster political support, and

exercise political dominance rather than focusing on the quality of the education system and its graduates. Rosser and colleagues observe that the elites have pursued a number of distinct agendas with regard to education policy and its implementation. A case in point, elites ensure that public funding for the education sector are only permitted in areas that offer better opportunities to accumulate rents. As such, agendas pursued by the predatory elites have little concern with improving the quality of education.

A similar situation has been witnessed in other sectors like mining. As'ad (2017) in a study conducted in one of Indonesia's resource rich provinces—South Kalimantan Province, establishes that the decentralization policy has created opportunities for local actors and mine predators to hijack local power through transactional politics. For example, during the election of the local head and legislative member, local actors and mine predators finance political activities as a strategy of building patronage networks with local political leaders and gaining predatory monopoly of natural resource management. Consequently, the province's natural resources have not translated into significant improvements at community level, but instead the predatory political economy established around the mining sector has led to among others extensive environmental damage, over exploitation of resources, and impoverishment of the local people. As such, As'ad describes the province's experience as a resource curse, whereby, natural resource wealth has promoted the rise of the predatory state over the developmental state, either by actively encouraging the former through corruption linked to resource rents, or by undermining the latter by reducing policy and administration efficiency through the use of revenue flows associated with resource extraction. Therefore, we contend that predatory practices inhibit the development of the country.

## **7. Comparing and contrasting Indonesia and Uganda's Predatory Governance Experiences**

Though political dynamics may differ, both Uganda and Indonesia portray an image of predatory governance in many ways. The ruling NRM government in Uganda has fronted insecurity as an antidote to manipulate citizens, while also playing utopia political games on democratisation reforms. Corruption, massive unemployment, patronage, nepotism, and political violence have become pandemic, and the regime has failed to find a cure.

The president and elites from the ruling NRM have used state resources to create wealth around themselves while the majority of citizens are wallowing in poverty and poor service delivery.

We observe that the NRM government has expanded legislative assembly with the aim of having more members of the legislature who can make policies that suit the interest of the party and the elites. Last but not certainly least, the NRM has crafted the art of voter bribery (politicians pay voters with money and gifts including food, drinks, salt, soap, mattresses, plates, and cooking pans) to keep the party in power.

For Indonesia, the current political environment has become a domain for rich and powerful political elites who use money and connections to manipulate the electorate. In most cases the resources are used in electioneering are diverted from key government sector for personal gains.

Political environment is dominated by predatory elites who use the country's education system to amass wealth, maintain patronage networks, muster political support, and exercise political dominance rather than focusing on the quality of the education system and its graduates. In addition, wealth from natural resource has promoted the rise of the predatory state over the developmental state, either by actively encouraging the former through corruption linked to resource rents, or by undermining the latter by reducing policy and administration efficiency through the use of revenue flows associated with resource extraction. Findings in both cases show that predatory governance affects economic outcomes of a country, produces corruption, violence, nepotism, poverty, unemployment and shrinking democratic space and deficiencies are a clear reflection of predatory governance.

## 8. Conclusion

We have observed that predatory governance is multifaceted but has also similar characteristic though they differ in interpretation. This is to say inevitability that several nations in the contemporary world are faced with problems of democratic deficiencies, constitutional amendments to remove age and term limits to suit the interest of incumbent regime, political violence, institutionalised corruption, abuse of human rights, electoral fraud, and the prospect of using terrorism to silence those with ideological views different from that of the incumbent regime. Voting buying and shenanigan electoral processes are also issues found to be typical of a predatory government across countries mentioned in this study. This of course is without mentioning patronage, utopia political participation, and predatory interests of local political elites and the creation of local fiefdoms to hold onto power. These predatory practices have far-reaching implications for the socio-economic-political development of developing countries. This is because the much-needed resources for the development of these countries are diverted to meet personal needs of a few people. As such, there is need for a socio-political revolution....ideally, so by ensuring substantive people-centric grassroots-driven development programmes monitored and revised if needed, on a regular basis ...by, for example, community/people's fora, constituent assemblies, and so forth through organised progressive social movements driven by people's desire for improved state governance. Mudhoffir and Alamsyah (2018) cautions that to guide against pro-democratic activists being absorbed by the flames of predatory practices there is need for backup from organised movements. Organised social movement can help to dismantle established predatory structures and return these countries back on the path democracy and good governance.

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