

Political Theory and Classical Modern Political Thought in the Ugandan Context: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review looks at how political theory and classical modern political thought are understood, interpreted, and contested in Ugandan political discussions and academic fields. It is based on 165 unique scholarly sources found through thorough database searches and a close study of the 30 most relevant papers. The review shows that political theory in Uganda is a complex area of ideological conflict, not a settled agreement. The evidence indicates that classical modern political thought, especially liberal, republican, and Marxist ideas, has been selectively used, critically reinterpreted, and strategically applied by Ugandan scholars, nationalists, and political figures since the colonial era. Key findings include: (1) Makerere University was the main institution for sharing and altering Western political theory between 1949 and 1968. It created a dominant curriculum that shaped elite political views; (2) nationalist leaders approached classical modern concepts through selective use and postcolonial rethinking, rather than full adoption; (3) current Ugandan political discussions involve active conflicts among liberal, Marxist, post-colonial, and hybrid regime theories. Each theory is used to support different ideas about governance, development, and sovereignty; and (4) while the involvement of elites and academics with political theory is well recorded, evidence about how the wider society understands it is still limited. This review helps us understand how political theory is shared, changed, and contested in postcolonial African settings.

Keywords: Political theory; classical modern political thought; postcolonial political discourse; ideological contestation; higher education and political socialization; nationalist intellectual traditions; Uganda

INTRODUCTION

The understanding and debate of political theory, especially classical modern political thought from the European Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment traditions, is crucial in non-Western contexts. This topic is especially relevant in Uganda due to its colonial past under British rule, the strong nationalist movement, the creation of Makerere University as a key intellectual center, and a complicated postcolonial political path filled with authoritarian rule, civil conflict, and ongoing discussions about democracy and governance.

This systematic literature review explores two connected research questions: (1) How are political theory and classical modern political thought understood in Uganda? (2) How are these theoretical traditions interpreted or contested in Ugandan political discussions and academia? These questions matter for debates about the universal nature of political ideas, the chances of decolonizing political theory, and the links between intellectual traditions and political actions in postcolonial countries.

The review combines findings from 165 scholarly sources. This includes historical studies of colonial and nationalist times, current analyses of Ugandan politics and governance, theoretical works on African political thought, and empirical studies in specific policy areas. The analysis shows that political theory in Uganda is not

uniformly understood or simply misunderstood. Instead, it is a contested space where various interpretive communities—academic elites, nationalist intellectuals, political figures, international observers—use, critique, and reshape theoretical frameworks for different political goals.

Background and Theoretical Context

Political theory as a field of study and as a tool for political discussions began in Uganda through colonial educational institutions, especially Makerere University. This university started as a technical school in 1922 and became a university college in 1949. The introduction of Western political ideas to Ugandan students and thinkers happened in a specific historical period: British colonial rule from 1894 to 1962, the growth of nationalist movements pushing for independence, and the Cold War tensions that influenced postcolonial politics in Africa.

Classical modern political thought included thinkers like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, and Karl Marx, who offered frameworks for talking about sovereignty, social contracts, rights, representation, property, and justice. These ideas came to Uganda not as neutral tools for analysis but as part of colonial governance ideas and as resources for anti-colonial criticism. To understand how Ugandan scholars and political figures interacted with these traditions, we need to look at how they translated, adopted, challenged, and changed these concepts.

Key theoretical frameworks for understanding this interaction include postcolonial theory, which highlights the power struggles involved in creating and sharing knowledge; theories of intellectual history that show how ideas move and change across different contexts; and comparative political theory, which aims to create dialogue between Western and non-Western political ideas. This review uses these frameworks while focusing on concrete evidence about how political theory has been taught, discussed, and used in Uganda.

METHODOLOGY

This systematic literature review is based on thorough searches in several academic databases, including SciSpace, Google Scholar, and specific full-text repositories. Search strategies combined terms relating to political theory, classical political thought, individual thinkers (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, Mill), and Ugandan contexts (Uganda, Makerere, East Africa, postcolonial). The initial search produced 165 unique relevant papers after removing duplicates and conducting a preliminary relevance screening.

To facilitate systematic analysis, two specialized analytical categories were added to the paper database using language model-assisted extraction: (1) “Theoretical Frameworks,” which identifies the schools of thought, ideologies, or theoretical traditions present in each paper (for example, Marxism, Liberalism, Post-colonialism); and (2) “Classical Modern Reception,” which tracks references to classical modern political thinkers and their concepts. This enriched data allowed for structured comparative analysis across the collection.

In line with systematic review protocols, papers were ranked based on their relevance to the research questions, and the top 30 papers formed the main evidence base for this review, along with additional information from the wider collection. This method ensures the review emphasizes the most relevant scholarship while also considering the broader intellectual landscape. The papers cover various historical periods, from colonial-era analysis to current studies, and include different disciplinary perspectives such as political science, history, philosophy, and development studies, along with methodologies that range from archival research to theoretical analysis and empirical case studies.

This review has some limitations. There is a concentration of English-language scholarship, which may neglect theoretical discussions in Luganda or other local languages. The focus is on published academic works, which might overlook oral traditions, popular political discussions, or unpublished intellectual contributions. Additionally, the reliance on available digital sources may introduce biases based on time and institutional access in the evidence base.

The Institutional Formation of Political Theory in Uganda

Makerere University as Hegemonic Site (1949–1968)

The development of political theory in Uganda closely ties to the history of Makerere University College during the key years of 1949–1968. This period marked the shift from colonial rule to independence and the early postcolonial state. Research shows that Makerere acted as a central site for spreading and changing Western political thought. It shaped a curriculum that significantly influenced how Ugandan elites understood and used political theory [1].

The curriculum at Makerere engaged with liberal, republican, and Marxist ideas, exposing students to various traditions in Western political thought. However, this engagement took place in a specific teaching and political context. The university was both a colonial institution aimed at producing administrative leaders for British rule and a hub for nationalist awareness and anti-colonial activity. This dual nature meant that political theory was never seen as neutral knowledge; it was always part of discussions about colonialism, nationalism, and the future political landscape [1].

The dominant nature of Makerere's political theory curriculum had several important aspects. First, it positioned Western political thought as the main reference for elite political discussions. This created a scenario in which debates about Ugandan politics often relied on European concepts and thinkers. Second, it shaped a generation of political leaders and intellectuals with a shared educational background, which promoted certain types of political communication and may have sidelined other intellectual traditions. Third, it established pathways within institutions that made certain interpretations of political theory authoritative, influencing future academic and political discussions [1].

Elite Education and Political Leadership Formation

The link between elite education and the rise of political leadership in late colonial Uganda shows how political theory moved from the classroom into practice. Students at Makerere and other elite schools did not just learn political theory as abstract knowledge; they actively engaged with, debated, and applied these ideas in student politics, nationalist organizing, and new political movements [8].

This way of learning about leadership through interaction with political theory had several important effects. It created networks of educated elites who went on to hold key roles in postcolonial government, academia, and civil society. It established patterns of political conversation that mixed Western theoretical terms with local political issues and expressions. It also led to tensions between different groups; some saw Western political theory as a tool for modernization and state-building, while others viewed it critically as part of the colonial system needing fundamental change [8].

The evidence shows that elite Ugandan students approached political theory not as passive learners but as active interpreters. They selectively adopted ideas, challenged popular interpretations, and tried to express political visions that reflected Ugandan realities. This pattern of involvement, rather than mere transmission, defines how political theory was received in Uganda [1].

Nationalist and Postcolonial Reinterpretations

Selective Appropriation of Classical Modern Thought

Ugandan nationalist thinkers and political leaders interacted with classical modern political thought through selective appropriation instead of complete acceptance or rejection. This is clear in how key ideas like social contract, sovereignty, rights, and representation were brought into nationalist discussions and early postcolonial debates.

The idea of the social contract, especially linked to Lockean liberalism, appeared in talks about political

legitimacy and national involvement in East Africa. However, this engagement did not simply replicate Lockean theory; nationalist thinkers used social contract ideas to explore the relationship between colonial subjects and the colonial state, the foundation for postcolonial political authority, and the conditions for national membership in newly independent state [3].

Likewise, liberal and republican ideas regarding representation, citizenship, and political participation were referenced by nationalist leaders. However, these concepts were reshaped to match the specific historical and political situations of Uganda's decolonization. This selective appropriation illustrates both the strategic use of Western ideas to support nationalist claims in international settings and the genuine intellectual effort to translate political theory across very different social and historical contexts [5].

Key Nationalist Thinkers and Their Theoretical Engagements

Some nationalist thinkers played important roles in connecting Western political theory with Ugandan political discussions. Research on figures like Ignatius K. Musazi, Eridadi Mulira, and Abu Mayanja shows how these leaders connected Western liberal and republican ideas while also expressing a postcolonial vision that aimed to go beyond colonial categories [5].

These nationalist thinkers faced a key challenge. They needed to use Western political ideas to take part in global discussions about decolonization. They wanted to make claims for independence that colonial powers and international audiences could understand. At the same time, they aimed to express unique African or Ugandan political ideas that were not merely imitations of European models. This challenge led to innovative theoretical work that blended Western political thought with local political ideas, historical accounts of precolonial African political systems, and critiques of colonialism [5].

The postcolonial political vision of these nationalist leaders focused on imagining new kinds of political community, authority, and participation suitable for postcolonial Uganda. This included critiquing colonial political systems while also thinking constructively about alternative options. The evidence indicates that this theoretical work was thoughtful and engaged, showing a strong grasp of Western political theory alongside critical reflection and creative reinterpretation [5].

Contemporary Theoretical Contestations

Liberal and Republican Frameworks

Recent discussions in Ugandan politics engage liberal and republican frameworks, but these discussions often involve disagreement and criticism. Liberal ideas like individual rights, the rule of law, constitutional government, and market economics are central to policy debates, donor-led governance changes, and opposition rhetoric. Still, the status and understanding of these ideas remain disputed [7].

The idea of "liberal peace" has been especially significant in international interactions with Uganda. It reflects efforts by donors and international organizations to promote liberal democratic institutions and market-related economic reforms. Research on this idea shows notable tensions between international liberal recommendations and Ugandan political realities. This raises questions about whether liberal peace frameworks effectively deal with the complexities of Ugandan politics, conflict, and development [7].

Republican principles about civic virtue, political participation, and the common good also show up in Ugandan political discourse, though often in conflict with liberal individualism and other community-oriented or collective frameworks. Evidence indicates that while Ugandan academic and political elites understand liberal and republican concepts, these ideas are actively debated rather than universally accepted as the final authority [1], [3], [5].

Marxist and Critical Political Economy Perspectives

Marxist and critical political economy perspectives play a significant role in political theory discussions in Uganda. They focus on issues like economic development, land ownership, and the influence of international

capital. Research highlights ongoing debates between Marxist and capitalist views on Ugandan finance. Scholars use Marxist frameworks to explore structural inequalities, class formation, and the dynamics of dependent development [2].

Applying Marxist theory to Uganda's land question shows how classic political thought is relevant in today's policy discussions. Scholars have utilized Marxist ideas about property, accumulation, and class struggle, along with other critical frameworks, to analyze the political economy of land. They challenge liberal property rights views and emphasize concerns about justice, dispossession, and the impact of knowledge in land policy [4].

These Marxist and critical political economic discussions reflect a deep understanding of classical political thought, especially Marx's critique of capitalism and historical materialism. However, they also highlight disagreements on how to adapt these ideas to Uganda. There are ongoing debates about the significance of class analysis in societies with diverse ethnic and regional backgrounds, the link between international and local capital, and the potential for socialist or different development paths [2], [4].

Hybrid Regime Theory and Movement Democracy

One unique aspect of Uganda's political experience in political theory is "Movement democracy" or "no-party democracy." This concept shaped Ugandan politics from 1986 to 2005 under President Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement government. This system banned political parties but claimed to allow broad participation through a "movement" structure. It sparked intense debate among theorists [9], [10], [13].

Researchers have looked at movement democracy from different angles, including theories of competitive authoritarianism, semi-authoritarianism, hybrid regimes, and neopatrimonialism. These studies show disagreements on how to categorize and understand Uganda's political system. Is it a true alternative to multiparty democracy as its supporters argued, or just a type of authoritarian rule masked in participation language? How does it connect to traditional theories of democracy, representation, and political parties? [14], [15], [16]. [18]

The debate on Movement democracy highlights that political theory in Uganda not only takes in Western ideas but also creates new theoretical challenges and forms that question current frameworks. Ugandan scholars and international observers have interacted with traditional democratic theory, theories of authoritarianism, and comparative regime types to understand this unique political system, resulting in a wealth of theoretical and empirical research [9], [10], [13].

Post-colonial and Decolonial Critiques

Post-colonial and decolonial theories have gained more attention in Ugandan academic discussions. They focus on criticizing Western-centered views of development, governance, and knowledge. These theories question the idea that Western political theory offers universal or neutral tools for analysis. Instead, they show how political ideas are tied to colonial power dynamics and differences in knowledge systems [11], [12].

Research on Ugandan views of Westernization and neo-colonialism highlights how these ideas serve as social critiques. They help Ugandans express concerns about cultural changes, economic reliance, and political independence. These critiques use post-colonial theory to challenge the conditions under which Western political concepts are applied in Africa. They also validate other knowledge systems and political practices [12].

Discussions about sexuality education policy in Uganda demonstrate how post-colonial and ethno-nationalist frameworks oppose rights-based liberal approaches. Scholars examine how ideas of sovereignty, cultural authenticity, and resistance to Western influence appear in political discussions [11]. Likewise, studies comparing leadership styles look at the conflicts between traditional African leadership and Western democratic models. Researchers use post-colonial theory and political culture theory to explore these tensions [19].

This post-colonial and decolonial discussions represent thoughtful theoretical work. They show a strong grasp of Western political theory through critical examination of its claims, boundaries, and impacts on power. They

also aim to create alternative theoretical frameworks based on African intellectual traditions and political experiences [19], [20].

Thematic Analysis: Key Domains of Theoretical Application

Land, Property, and Justice

Land policy is an important area where political theory is actively debated in Uganda. Research on the political economy, justice, and knowledge perspectives regarding Uganda's land issue shows how different theoretical frameworks, including Marxism, critical theory, post-structuralism, and liberalism, are used to analyze and critique land policy [4].

This scholarship looks at traditional modern political thought on property, referencing thinkers like Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, and John Rawls to investigate issues of land ownership, dispossession, justice, and the link between property systems and political power. The analysis highlights how liberal property rights frameworks, which stress individual ownership and market transactions, face challenges from Marxist views that focus on accumulation and dispossession, post-structuralist methods that explore knowledge and power in land governance, and justice-oriented frameworks that question the fairness of current land distributions [4].

The land question is thus a space where theoretical understanding is shown through its application to real policy problems. The competition among these frameworks reveals deep disagreements about property, justice, and the state's proper role. This complex engagement indicates that scholars studying land issues have a strong grasp of political theory, despite differing opinions on which frameworks are the most relevant or insightful [4].

Democracy, Governance, and Regime Types

Debates about democracy, governance, and regime types have sparked significant discussion in Ugandan scholarship. The Movement democracy period led scholars to explore classical democratic theory, theories of authoritarianism, and new frameworks for understanding hybrid regimes.

This body of work shows engagement with various political theories, from classical liberal democratic theory, which focuses on competitive elections and party pluralism, to theories of authoritarianism, competitive authoritarianism, and neopatrimonialism. Scholars have argued about whether Uganda represents a unique kind of democracy, a hybrid regime that blends democratic and authoritarian aspects, or just authoritarianism masquerading as democracy.

Research envisioning democracy in Buganda highlights how political culture influences democratic goals and actions. It draws on theories of political culture and democratization to assess local views on democracy. Studies of Uganda's political settlements and various institutions investigate how regime survival, state-building, and democratization interact, using theories of political settlements, neopatrimonialism, and institutional analysis.

This extensive discussion on democracy and governance shows that political theory is actively used as a tool in Ugandan scholarship. However, the disagreements among frameworks and debates on how to categorize Uganda's political system also reveal that theoretical understanding does not achieve agreement; different theoretical commitments lead to varied interpretations of political reality.

Sovereignty, Nationalism, and Identity

Questions around sovereignty, nationalism, and identity form another significant area of theoretical exploration in Ugandan scholarship. Research into ethnicity, federalism, and decentralization looks at how ethnic identity and territorial organization connect to political power and national unity, drawing on theories of federalism, ethnic politics, and institutional design [9], [13], [14], [16], [18].

Studies of Uganda's ethnic-based decentralization program assess the creation and dismantling of policies intended to address ethnic diversity through territorial autonomy. These studies reveal tensions between

acknowledging ethnic identities and achieving national unity. Research on grassroots perceptions of ethnicity and federalism provides insight into how everyday Ugandans understand these ideas, contributing to discussions about the connection between elite political theory and popular political awareness. [17].

Debates over sexuality, sovereignty, and national identity show how post-colonial, ethno-nationalist, and religio-nationalist perspectives challenge liberal individualist views. Here, sovereignty is used to push back against international pressures regarding sexuality policies. Research on Westernization and neo-colonialism as forms of social critique illustrates how Ugandans use these ideas to manage social change and claim cultural and political independence. [15].

This scholarship reflects engagement with traditional modern political thoughts on sovereignty, nationalism, and identity, including social contract theory, liberal theories of rights and citizenship, and theories concerning nationalism and self-determination. However, it also reveals that these ideas are debated and transformed within Ugandan settings, with post-colonial and decolonial critiques questioning Western-centric frameworks [11], [12], [19].

DISCUSSION

Understanding and Contestation in the Ugandan Context

Patterns of Theoretical Reception

The evidence reviewed in this systematic analysis reveals several clear patterns in how political theory and classical modern political thought are understood and engaged in Uganda:

Elite and Academic Understanding: Ugandan academic elites, political thinkers, and educated political actors have a strong grasp of political theory. The reviewed scholarship shows a deep engagement with liberal, republican, Marxist, and post-colonial theories, including detailed knowledge of specific thinkers and ideas. This understanding is thoughtful and not just surface-level; it involves critical interpretation and innovative application [1], [2], [3]. [4], [5].

Selective Appropriation: Ugandan engagement with classical modern political thought shows a pattern of selective appropriation instead of full adoption. Nationalist leaders and contemporary scholars draw on certain concepts and thinkers to tackle Ugandan political issues while ignoring or critiquing others. This selectivity reflects both the strategic use of theory for political goals and genuine judgment about what is relevant and useful [2], [5].

Active Contestation: Political theory in Uganda is actively debated and not uniformly accepted. Different groups argue over the best frameworks to explain Ugandan politics, including liberal, Marxist, post-colonial, and hybrid regime theories. Scholars and political actors use various theoretical resources to support their competing political agendas. This ongoing debate shows that understanding exists but takes on many conflicting forms [2], [4], [7], [9], [10], [14], [15].

Institutional Mediation: The spread and change of political theory in Uganda have been shaped by specific institutions, particularly Makerere University, which has created a dominant curriculum that influenced elite political thinking. This institutional impact means that knowledge of political theory is uneven, concentrated among those who access elite education [1], [9], [7].

Postcolonial Transformation: Ugandan engagement with political theory includes not just reception but also transformation, critique, and the development of alternative frameworks. Post-colonial and decolonial scholarship challenges Western ideas and aims to highlight African intellectual traditions and political experiences. This transformative approach shows a deep understanding of Western political theory through critical examination of its limitations [11], [19], [20].

Gaps and Silences in Literature

While the evidence shows significant engagement from elite and academic circles with political theory, several key gaps and silences hinder our ability to fully address the research questions:

Popular Understanding: The literature reviewed offers limited insights into how political theory and classical modern political thought are understood outside of elite academic and political circles. Some research focuses on grassroots views regarding specific issues like federalism and ethnicity [27], but systematic evidence on popular political awareness and engagement with theoretical concepts is lacking. Claims about whether ordinary Ugandans grasp the available evidence fall short when it comes to classical modern political thought.

Non-English Language Discourse: Most of the literature is in English, which may overlook the theoretical discussions happening in Luganda or other Ugandan languages. Political discussions in indigenous languages may engage with political theory in ways that English-language academic work does not capture, affecting our understanding of how theory is interpreted and debated.

Oral and Informal Intellectual Traditions: Focusing mainly on published academic literature may miss vital areas of theoretical engagement, such as oral traditions, popular political education, religious discussions, and informal political debates. These areas may be essential for understanding how political theory spreads and evolves beyond formal academic settings.

Specific Classical Thinkers: The literature reveals engagement with broad theoretical traditions like liberalism, Marxism, and republicanism, but there is relatively little direct engagement with specific classical thinkers such as Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Mill, or Machiavelli in the reviewed sources. Most papers address theoretical frameworks or schools of thought rather than providing detailed analysis of canonical texts. This may reflect the practical, problem-focused nature of much Ugandan political scholarship rather than a lack of understanding. Nonetheless, it limits our capacity to evaluate how specific classical texts are interpreted [1], [3], [4].

Temporal Gaps: The literature is most comprehensive regarding the colonial and early postcolonial periods, as well as contemporary politics since the 1980s. However, there is less coverage of the 1970s and early 1980s, the periods of Amin and Obote II. This gap may result from disruptions in academic institutions during these times and the difficulties in researching politically sensitive recent history.

The Politics of Theoretical Interpretation

The debate over political theory in Uganda goes beyond academia; it is deeply political. Different theories support various ideas about governance, development, and social organization. This political nature of theory interpretation has several key aspects:

Legitimation and Critique: Political theory legitimizes existing political setups and critiques them. The Movement government used theories of participatory democracy and African political culture to support its no-party system. At the same time, opposition scholars and activists used liberal democratic theory and theories of authoritarianism to critique the same system [9], [10], [13], [14], [15].

International and Domestic Audiences: Theoretical frameworks are often used strategically for various audiences. Liberal democratic and human rights frameworks may be highlighted in discussions with international donors and organizations. In contrast, frameworks focusing on sovereignty, cultural authenticity, or African values may be used in domestic political conversations [7], [11], [12].

Disciplinary and Institutional Positions: Theoretical commitments often reflect disciplinary and institutional stances. Political scientists may lean toward regime typology and institutional analysis. Philosophers focus on normative political theory, historians emphasize intellectual history and context, while development scholars concentrate on political economy frameworks. These disciplinary differences shape understanding and application of political theory [1], [4], [15].

Generational Shifts: There is evidence of generational changes in theoretical engagement. Post-colonial and decolonial frameworks are becoming more prominent in recent scholarship, reflecting wider trends in African studies and political theory. Younger scholars may be more inclined to critique Western-centric frameworks and to highlight African intellectual traditions [19], [20].

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This systematic literature review shows that Ugandan academic and political elites grasp political theory and classical modern political thought. However, this grasp is marked by active debate, selective use, and critical change instead of simple acceptance or copying of Western ideas. The findings reveal a deep engagement with liberal, republican, Marxist, and post-colonial theories. Ugandan scholars and political figures use these frameworks to analyze specific political issues, support or criticize political arrangements, and express visions for political possibilities.

The history of political theory in Uganda, especially Makerere University's role in shaping the curriculum from 1949 to 1968, influenced how later generations of elites understood and used political ideas. Nationalist leaders explored classical modern thought through selective use and postcolonial reworking, blending Western concepts with local political ideas and anti-colonial critiques. Today, Ugandan political discourse features ongoing debates among liberal, Marxist, hybrid regime, and post-colonial frameworks, each used to tackle issues like democracy, development, land, sovereignty, and identity.

Key findings include:

- 1) **Elite Understanding:** Ugandan academic and political elites have a solid grasp of political theory and show advanced knowledge of various theoretical frameworks and specific thinkers.
- 2) **Contestation Not Consensus:** This understanding does not create agreement. Different theoretical beliefs lead to competing views of Ugandan politics and different political agendas.
- 3) **Selective Appropriation:** Uganda's engagement with classical modern thought involves picking useful ideas instead of fully adopting Western frameworks.
- 4) **Postcolonial Transformation:** Modern scholarship increasingly highlights post-colonial and decolonial critiques. It challenges Western-centered views and aims to highlight African intellectual traditions.
- 5) **Limited Evidence on Popular Understanding:** Although elite engagement is well documented, there is little evidence on how people outside of academic and political elites understand political theory.

Future Research Directions:

Several important directions for future research emerge from this review:

- ❖ **Popular Political Consciousness:** Systematic empirical research on how ordinary Ugandans understand political concepts, including surveys, focus groups, and ethnographic studies of political discourse in non-elite settings.
- ❖ **Indigenous Language Discourse:** Analysis of political theory debates conducted in Luganda and other Ugandan languages. This may reveal patterns of engagement not visible in English-language scholarship.
- ❖ **Oral and Informal Intellectual Traditions:** Research on sites of political education and debate beyond formal academic institutions. This includes religious organizations, civil society groups, and popular media.
- ❖ **Comparative Analysis:** Systematic comparison of Ugandan patterns of political theory engagement with those from other East African countries and other postcolonial contexts. This will help identify distinctive features and common patterns.

- ❖ Intellectual Biography: Detailed studies of key Ugandan political thinkers and their theoretical work. These studies should include both prominent figures and lesser-known intellectuals.
- ❖ Pedagogical Research: Investigation of how political theory is currently taught in Ugandan universities and secondary schools and how curricula have changed since the Makerere hegemonic period.
- ❖ Decolonial Theory Building: Constructive work that articulates political theories grounded in Ugandan and African political experiences and intellectual traditions, moving beyond critique to positive theoretical innovation.

This review contributes to broader discussions about the universality and particularity of political concepts, the possibilities for decolonizing political theory, and the connection between intellectual traditions and political practice in postcolonial contexts. The Ugandan case shows that political theory evolves and transforms in complex ways, shaped by institutional histories, political struggles, and the creative intellectual efforts of scholars and political actors who engage with, critique, and reimagine theoretical frameworks to address their own political realities.

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