In 2012, Uganda celebrated 50 years as an independent state after having been colonized for more than half a century. Since Independence, Uganda has experienced a period of political turmoil and civil war within its constructed colonial borders. Given these historical experiences, what do students find important about their nation's history, what history do they relate to when asked to explain their contemporary society and what do they envisage for their future?

School history is often associated with a transmission-oriented instruction that transfers a content of heritage and uncritical narratives: best described as a progressive story of the nation. But, what do students find significant to retell? This study explores 73 Ugandan students' narratives of their country's history, their society's contemporary situation and what pasts they find important to themselves and their family. The thesis argues that a retrospective approach to history, departing from the contemporary situation, influences students' narratives. For example, value judgments were more common with a retrospective approach to history. Furthermore, the thesis shows differences among the narrations depending on the geographical origins of the students. The students identified themselves as African as often as Ugandans, which raises questions in relation to national school narratives as well as Uganda's colonial past.
Significant history and historical orientation

Ugandan students narrate their historical pasts

Ulrik Holmberg
Significant history and historical orientation - Ugandan students narrate their historical pasts

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Abstract

Title: Significant history and historical orientation – Ugandan students narrate their historical pasts

In 2012, Uganda celebrated 50 years of independence. The postcolonial era in the country has been marked by political turmoil and civil wars. Uganda, like many other postcolonial states in Africa, cannot be described as an ethnically or culturally homogenous state. However, history education has globally been seen as a platform for constructing national identities in contemporary societies. At the same time, it is assumed that specific historical experiences of countries influence historical understanding. This study takes its starting point in the theories of historical consciousness and narrativity. A narrative could be viewed as a site where mobilization of ideas of the past to envisage the present and possible futures is made and hence the narrative expresses historical orientation. Through the concept of historical orientation historical consciousness can be explored, i.e. what history is viewed as significant and meaningful. The aim in the study is to explore in what ways students connect to their historical pasts.

The study explores 219 narratives of 73 Ugandan upper secondary students. Narratives elicited through written responses to three assignments. Designed to capture different approaches to history: either to start from the beginning and narrate history prospectively or to depart from the present narrating retrospectively. The colonial experience of Uganda affected the sampling in the way that students were chosen from two different regions, Central and Northern Uganda. The comparison was a way to handle the concept of ‘nation’ as a presupposed category. Narrative analysis has been used as a method to explore what the students regarded as historically significant and what patterns among the narratives that point towards particular historical orientations.

The empirical results show how different approaches to history, a prospective or a retrospective approach, influence the student narratives. For instance, valued judgments on past developments were more common with the retrospective approach. The results also show differences in evaluating past developments according to regional origin. Students from northern Uganda were generally more inclined to tell a story of decline. Also, it is argued that the student narratives were informed by a meta-narrative of Africa. It was as common to identify oneself as African as it was to identify as Ugandan.

Keywords: historical learning, history education, History education in Uganda, historical consciousness, historical orientation, upper secondary school, narrative, national narrative
Foreword

The process of writing this thesis has been all but linear. It has been frustrating, exhausting but also very stimulating. A lot of the time it has been lonely, especially conducting research in another country, another continent, far away from friends, colleagues and family. At the same time, I got new friends and colleagues and the family has been extended. A process is seldom independent of others. Neither is the process of becoming a researcher. It is dependent of other people and inspired by them. People to whom I would like to extend my gratitude.

First and foremost, I would like to thank all the schools, principals and the student informers in Uganda, who opened both their classrooms and hearts to welcome me. It has been a great privilege getting to know you all. You will forever hold a special place in my heart. A special thanks to Makerere Institute of Social Research at Makerere University and Pamela, where I got an affiliation which contributed to the approval of my research by UN CST, Uganda National Council for Science and Technology.

I would like to extend my deep gratitude to Karlstad University and the Centre for Social Science Didactics (CSD). To educate teachers giving them the chance to become researchers on education is very important. I hope more teachers will be given this opportunity. At CSD I would especially like to thank my supervisors Martin Stolare and Kenneth Nordgren, who patiently supervised and challenged me over the internet. I would also like to thank all my fellow teachers who, in the beginning of 2012, also started their path towards becoming researchers. Especially the historians; Martin Estenberg, Henrik Friberg, Susanne Liljedahl, Rickard Nordkvist and Joakim Wendell. Thanks for all your help.

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Uganda and Kampala will forever be a part of me, but especially the people. To mention a few I would like to thank Lightness, Eunice, Peter, Esther and Jessica for initial and insightful discussions on the Ugandan school from a student-, teacher and principal perspective. Betty, Ruth, Hassan, Tabu, Kenneth, Betty and Irene, you have been inspiring and I wish you and your families all the best in the future. Edo and Alex, a special thanks to you for showing me Ugandan life.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and love to my family. To my mother, Margit and brothers, Pelle and Johan with families. To my sons Vilgot and Ivan, you inspire me every day. My wife, Cecilia, thanks for all your love and support. This text would not been there if it was not for you. Finally I would take the opportunity to send my late father a thought. Dan, who proudly followed the work but did not see the completed text. Dad; du är med hela tiden!

Lo, 5th of November 2016
Ulrik Holmberg
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Chapter 1: Introduction

On October 9th, 1962, the state of Uganda was born during a ceremony that took place on Kololo airstrip in Kampala. For more than half a century, the people of what was to become known as Uganda had been under British colonial rule, and were now to become a nation: The land that had been colonized belonged, not to one distinct people, but to several kingdoms and ethnic groups (or tribes). As Mahmood Mamdani put it: “Europe did not bring to Africa a tropical version of the late-nineteenth-century European nation-state. Instead it created a multicultural and multi-ethnic state.”

When drawing the national boundaries, the colonialis did not pay attention to the ethnic groups living in the area. “The past is a foreign country,” to use the overquoted phrase of L.P. Hartley, was, to Ugandans, entirely true.

In 2012, the nation of Uganda celebrated 50 years of Independence. The half century of Independence in Uganda has been a time of numerous power struggles and civil wars, figuring infamous characters like Idi Amin and Joseph Kony. How does History taught in school handle a history like the one Uganda has had? Uganda celebrating its 50 years of Independence is not only a young state, but also a young nation consisting of a young population with a median age of 15.9 years, according to 2014 data. The general objectives of History at Advanced Level (A-Level) in upper secondary schools in Uganda are to: provide sound knowledge and understanding of history; help students to develop the ability to relate historical events to the present; and encourage students “to develop systematic appreciation of the major economic and social issues being tackled by the present day governments” (UNEB, 2008:22). The objectives take their point of departure in the contemporary situation and approach the past

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1 Mamdani, 1996:287.
2 Throughout the text has a capital 'H' been used to talk of the subject studied on academic level or at school, e.g. School History, and a lower case, ‘h’, of history/past events generally.
3 Human development report 2015, 2016:236. In 2014, the population was 38.8 million. With an annual population growth of 3.3%.
4 The six general objectives of Advanced Level History in Uganda are to: 1) provide the students with a sound knowledge and understanding of history; 2) encourage historical research and use of a wide variety of source materials; 3) help students to develop the ability to relate historical events to the present; 4) encourage students to develop systematic appreciation of the major economic and social issues being tackled by the present day governments; 5) stimulate thought and discussion by the use of historical case studies; and 6) further the development of the student's skills in expressing historical ideas in a more coherent and logical manner (UNEB, 2008:22).
5 Senior secondary school in an American context. Throughout the text has though upper secondary school been used.
retrospectively: a normative approach to history, especially when the objectives emphasize *appreciation*, which aims towards cohesion and national identity.

A retrospective approach to history is to focus on a usable past. But usable for the state or the individual? What historical perspectives on contemporary society do Ugandan students have and what relation do these perspectives have to School History and a national narrative?

To Ugandan History students, history does seem to be more than just the study of the past. One Ugandan student wrote the following after being asked what he or she associated with history:

> Every time I hear about history, I think of something in the past that may help me understand the present and maybe enable me understand better why things are the way they are now for example the education system, religion and above all the politics.\(^6\)

This quotation from an upper secondary student in Uganda takes a personal view of history – a view of history as something that may enable better understanding of the present. Furthermore, it suggests that history is connected to, or even stems from, everyday life, through personal connotations. The quote attempts to illustrate that history can enable us to understand contemporary dimensions of politics, religion, and education and may even contribute to guide future actions and decisions. Historian Jörn Rüsen uses the concept of “historical consciousness”\(^7\) to describe this symbiotic relation between interpretations of the past, understandings of the present, and perspectives on the future where historical consciousness is a prerequisite to justify action.

The above quotation from a Ugandan student suggests that history is not only a matter of remembering the past, but it is also a means of understanding the present. It suggests that interpreted history gives a temporal orientation to the student. Giving perspectives on contemporary life and on the future and being driven by normative objectives can be difficult to accommodate all at once in History education. This suggests controversy regarding the objectives that School History ought to have. Little is known about the way in which Ugandan students connect to their national history, and how they orientate themselves temporally using the past. This study explores Ugandan students’ narratives of

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\(^6\) Student narrative 1ACU35.

\(^7\) Rüsen, 2005:24-25.
the past to find patterns among them that point towards particular historical orientations.

School History has globally, for a long time, been associated with transmission-oriented instruction as well as with being highly political: The transmitted content has consisted of both heritage and an uncritical narrative best described as the progressive story of the nation. School History has, because of this, been seen as a major platform for the construction of collective memory in contemporary societies.\(^8\) This situation has drawn the attention of educationists to discuss, on a policy level, what History education in schools ought to be. Opponents of what has been called Memory History claim that this approach to history stands in the way of what history is really about. For instance, Peter Seixas argues that the focus on national history and its progressive narrative threatens the critical potential of History education.\(^9\) Reforms aiming to replace Memory History with a disciplinary approach, which are usually seen at universities, have become more common globally in recent years. Nevertheless, teaching History in schools is, for many scholars, still associated with the transmission of collective memory and the construction of individual identities.

On the African continent, there has been wide interest in curriculum research, especially national curricula. Uganda is no exception.\(^10\) National curricula have been extensively studied and debated, especially in countries like South Africa and Rwanda, mainly because of their own particular history of apartheid and genocide, respectively.\(^11\) Since apartheid came to an end in 1994, South Africa has introduced no fewer than four different national curricula in History. However, studies on national curricula often neglect the importance of the study of the classroom and student perceptions of history. Research on curricula is done on a policy level and does not elucidate what information students actually receive through their History education.

Research has shown that student narratives sometimes match those of History textbooks in schools, but often they do not.\(^12\) Rather, they appear as a counter-narrative to the official story, which suggests that history is not only learnt at

\(^8\) Carretero et al., 2012:1; VanSledright, 2011:22-23; Barton, 2009:266; Seixas, 2007:19; Steams, Seixas, and Wineburg, 2000:2.
\(^10\) See, e.g., Takako, 2011.
\(^11\) See Bundy, 2007:74-76 and 86.
\(^12\) Conrad et al., 2013:139; Wertsch, 2000; Létourneau and Moisan, 2011.
school. As Barton and McCully put it, with reference to Northern Ireland, “History, it seems, is too important for students just to accept what they are told.”\textsuperscript{13} Hence, history appears to permeate further than the classroom in which it is taught. In Europe and North America, surveys on historical consciousness have been conducted and knowledge on more popular uses of history has increased considerably. Margaret Conrad et al., in Canadians and Their Pasts, remark that “In the twenty-first century, surveying the historical consciousness of ordinary citizens has developed into an academic industry.”\textsuperscript{14} Ursula van Beek’s longitudinal study of South African youth and historical consciousness is one example of research that focuses on the concept of historical consciousness and youth. In her study, apartheid was the main point of interest, as it explored the impact the abolishment of the apartheid system had on the historical consciousness of South African youth.\textsuperscript{15} Another example is Barca’s study of identity and temporal orientation among Portuguese-speaking students in Portugal, Cape Verde, and Mozambique, which concluded that national identities were stronger than global ones.\textsuperscript{16}

Regarding identity formation and national history, Grever, Pelzer, and Haydn found that the majority of students in England and the Netherlands might be resistant or indifferent to attempts of socialization through a national narrative.\textsuperscript{17} The researcher James Wertsch, reports how Estonians in the newly independent Estonia held two different narratives about the Soviet Union: one official version taught at schools, and one drawn from family, friends, and more informal sources such as underground literature, and it was the latter that they actually believed.\textsuperscript{18} Wertsch’s study is important because it demonstrates that people can hold, and account for, several narratives at once. The researchers Létourneau and Moisan argue that it is important that teachers accept that their students have been recipients of history for a long time before they sit in the classroom facing the teacher.\textsuperscript{19} They further note that although textbooks may be “good” and many-voiced, in terms of presenting several different stories and interpretations, young people (in their case, young people in Quebec, Canada) do often stick to one story (in this case, the story about Quebecoises as victims

\textsuperscript{13} Barton and McCully, 2012:373.
\textsuperscript{14} Conrad et al., 2013:138.
\textsuperscript{15} Van Beek, 2000.
\textsuperscript{16} Barca, 2015:30-31.
\textsuperscript{17} Grever, Pelzer, and Haydn, 2011.
\textsuperscript{18} Wertsch, 2000:38.
\textsuperscript{19} Létourneau and Moisan, 2011:122.
first of France and later of Great Britain).\textsuperscript{20} They found that both students and teachers tend to ask for a socially accepted and legitimized story.\textsuperscript{21} Despite the multidimensional stories of Canadian textbooks, it was the stories that were known to students and teachers that received attention in the classroom, and consequently those stories stuck with the students.\textsuperscript{22} In addition, a revision of the study found evidence that the students categorized the past into homogeneous categories and, hence, framed their stories into certain modes of present day orientations. The researchers suggested that these actions had their origin in the bilingual nature of Canada and the coexistence of “nations within.”\textsuperscript{23}

These findings suggest that the preconceptions students bring into the classroom are crucial to what they will gain from their formal History education. Further research into this area is vital, in order to gain more knowledge about the narratives students bring with them and, consequently, how objectives on a policy level are received. The quotation of the Ugandan student at the beginning of this chapter gives rise to questions about what connotations to the past Ugandan students make in order to interpret their contemporary society and gain perspectives on the future. Even though historical consciousness has been extensively studied globally in recent years, little is known about the way in which Ugandan students connect history to their everyday life. Drawing on the specific objectives of School History in Uganda, and, further, on students’ descriptions of History as a subject giving perspectives on contemporary society (quotation above), it is interesting and valuable to explore in what ways students in Uganda connect to their historical past.

Normatively formulated policy objectives regarding Ugandan School History and the difficulty to accommodate these, as well as the student’s view that history gives perspectives on contemporary society, have generated this study’s research interest to explore narratives of Ugandan students from different regions of the country. This knowledge is vital to History teachers teaching History, as well as constructing national curricula in History.

\textsuperscript{21} Compare this with James Wertsch’s research on specific narratives and schematic narrative templates. The Quebecois youths’ victimization-based narrative can be described as a schematic narrative template and as such can be used as a frame of reference.  
\textsuperscript{22} Létourneau and Moisan, 2011:110-114.  
\textsuperscript{23} Létourneau and Moisan, 2011:156.
Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to explore what Ugandan upper secondary students find important in history and what historical references they use to understand their contemporary society and formulate perspectives on the future. This study will examine how Ugandan students narrate the history of Uganda. Patterns of historical orientation, if present, will be identified. To do so, the following two questions will be addressed:

1) What references to the past do Ugandan students use in attempting to understand their contemporary society?
2) What patterns, in terms of historical orientation, can be found in the students’ stories?

The study object of this thesis is Ugandan students’ narratives about the past, specifically regarding the questions above. These narratives have been elicited through the following assignments that were given to the students:

1) Narrate the history of Uganda since its beginnings, as you perceive it, remember it, or know about it.
2) What from history, do you think, affects contemporary life in Uganda? Motivate your answer.
3) What from the past do you find important to you and your family, and worth retelling?

Considerations regarding these assignments will be elaborated in the chapter on Research design (Page 21). The following chapter will address the theoretical framework of the study. Key concepts, such as historical consciousness, historical orientation, and narrativity, will also be discussed.
Chapter 2: Narrativity – a Theoretical Framework

What does a narrative tell us about the narrator’s historical orientation? The question contains two rather abstract concepts: “narrative” and “historical orientation.” Historical orientation as a concept has been borrowed from Jörn Rüsen, and his paradigm of narrativity has been used as a theoretical framework for this study.24 This chapter will explore these concepts.

Historical learning and the paradigm of narrativity

The function of a historical narrative is to tell us something about the past and give orientation in the present, which in turn gives perspectives for the future. Historical learning should not be confused with the study of History in schools. Historical learning should, rather, be understood in a much wider sense, where the past is used to comprehend our daily life. Historical learning, according to Jörn Rüsen’s paradigm of narrativity, consists of five different steps: 1) question; 2) experience; 3) interpretation; 4) account; and 5) orientation. The meaning making of history is via these steps and is achieved on four different levels: a) perception of contingency and the sense of altered time; b) interpretation of perception through a narrative connection; c) orientation in the present through patterns of interpretation and experiences of the past; and d) actions motivated by this orientation.25

Historical learning, in short, can therefore be described as a process where experience of time develops into narrative competence. Meaning making in history is, hence, achieved through a narrative explanation of an interpreted experience of either continuity or change. There is no hierarchy between the different steps in the paradigm of narrativity. One step does not always precede another,26 with question perhaps lending itself as the first step, since all historical learning begins with a “historical” question.27

27 Rüsen, 2011:81. Körber also sees the historical question as a competence, an inquiring competence, in line with Rüsen who states that all meaning making in history starts out with a historical question (Körber, 2012:149).
Meaning making in history

All stories have meaning, a meaning incorporated in the bodies of the narrator and the audience, but not necessarily a historical meaning. If a story does not have a preexisting meaning the narrative becomes useless or dysfunctional to the receiver.\(^{28}\) According to Rüsen, it would be wrong to say that narratives can produce non-existent historical meaning.\(^{29}\) It could be argued that the audience of a narrative must feel a change or that time has altered to connect to the historical meaning presented by the narrative.

The activity of meaning making in history can therefore be triggered in two different ways: either through genetic questions or through genealogical questions. A genetic question stems from a felt presence of the past. Traces from the past render questions through a felt experience of a change that has occurred. In contrast, genealogical questions depart from the present and that which is contemporary, and are most often triggered by a breach of continuity in the present situation, which needs answers.\(^{30}\) The past precedes the narrative since it is present in the memory before it gains representation, which in turn depends on the historical question put and, hence, the one who seeks understanding or meaning.\(^{31}\) The past is to be understood as prenarrative and through this state it will trigger the narrativity of the historical consciousness, simply because it cannot stay factual in its temporal mode.\(^{32}\) The concept of experience is therefore “preceding”, that is, before, any methodological influences on the experienced.

Historical interpretation connects traces of the past to each other in a meaningful chronological order. A consequence of this is that the course of time also becomes tangible. Historical narratives can therefore be interpreted as explanations. To communicate the interpreted experience, an account must be developed. This can be an oral or written account, a scientific report, or a novel. The meaning making of history does not, however, end until the communicated account gives orientation to the questions that started the process. Historical learning can therefore be described as a process whereby experiences of the

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\(^{28}\) This description is, however, contested. For the contrasting views regarding whether there exists something such as prenarrative experience or whether experience is organized from the beginning, see Carbaugh and Brockmeier, 2001:14-15.

\(^{29}\) Rüsen, 2004:120-121.

\(^{30}\) Meaning making on level a) as described on page 9 of this thesis.

\(^{31}\) Rüsen, 2004:127-128.

\(^{32}\) Rüsen, 2004:125-126.
past are interpreted through a narrative, which in turn gives orientation to time and motivates future actions. Narrative representation of historical interpretation enables orientation. Sociologist Margaret R. Somers considers narrativity both as an ontological and as an epistemological category. Ontological because of the assumption that identity and meaning are narratively created; epistemological, because we gain knowledge through narrating and narratives.

**Historical consciousness**

To Jörn Rüsen, historical consciousness functions as a specific orientation mode occurring through life’s experiences. In other words, individuals tend to interpret the present and have expectations for the future based on a past experience. In this way, historical consciousness is connected to both the values and the actions of the individual.

It is not the extent of knowledge that is important to recognize in regard to historical consciousness, but the operating framework in making sense of the past. As Rüsen writes, “Historical learning entails far more than simply acquiring knowledge of the past and expanding the stock of that knowledge.” Nevertheless, there is a component of knowledge in historical consciousness, but this does not determine the level of historical consciousness. In other words, an extensive historical knowledge does not imply an advanced historical consciousness. The concept of historical consciousness indicates that actions take into account the historical dimension, and, hence, that history matters: regardless of whether we choose to forget or commemorate. Ursula van Beek states, “[a] mythologized knowledge might direct an individual to action just as well as might knowledge based on facts.” From this perspective, the curricular question of how to advance a historical consciousness becomes important, and at the same time, with Van Beek’s quote in mind, it raises questions regarding the distinction between history and collective memory. To Wertsch, the distinction between what he calls “formal history” and “collective memory” is both necessary and hard to maintain. Since it is not the aim of this study to explore how to

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33 Rüsen, 2004:133.
36 Rüsen, 2011:82.
38 Van Beek, 2000:344.
advance historical consciousness, we will settle with acknowledging the distinction that has been made. While collective memory is subjective and belongs to a particular group, formal history is objective and rather distanced from a particular perspective. Collective memory denies the past, whereas *historicity* is the very definition of formal history. This enables formal history to become critical and self-reflective, and thus also able to recognize ambiguity, which collective memory is not able to do.\(^{39}\) Historical consciousness, as a specific orientation mode, functions regardless of the distinction between formal history and collective memory. However, the distinction is important when it comes to questions regarding the advancement of historical consciousness. In addition, the distinction is important to the discussion of whether historical consciousness is solely a private matter – a question the concept of historical culture might shed some light upon.

### Historical culture

Historical consciousness is unique to the individual. This poses the question: To what degree does historical consciousness reflect group consciousness? In addition, it prompts questions as to whether the concept can really explain the role history plays within a society. In her study of youth in South Africa, Ursula van Beek states that the collective and the individual consciousness overlap, since members of the same group share ideas and opinions.\(^{40}\) Instead of talking about a collective consciousness, this could be understood as meaning that individuals communicate ideas and opinions, for example sharing the same historical culture. Historical culture is, in this way, to be understood as a category.\(^{41}\) The term “historical culture” refers both to different human-made artifacts, for example historical narratives or monuments, and the different ways these artifacts are communicated. Communication includes both its content, for example historical accounts, and where these are produced, consumed, and reproduced. For example, we can come across history at the dinner table, at museums, and in school education, but also at the movies, through the media (e.g., newspapers or radio), and so forth. Historical culture could therefore be described as the communicative context where we as humans encounter the past, and this will differ around the world. As a consequence, historical culture has

\(^{39}\) Wertsch, 2008:144-151.

\(^{40}\) Van Beek, 2000:343.

\(^{41}\) Rüsen, 2004:150.
different meanings for different people in different places of the world, but also locally.\textsuperscript{42} For instance, it is plausible that the stories we come across at the dinner table and through a documentary show on television are not the same. These are different channels with different receivers as well as senders. However, sharing historical culture does not mean that all individuals share the same historical consciousness.

The sociologists Margaret Somers have defined four dimensions of narratives, distinguishing between ontological, public, and conceptual narratives, and meta-narratives.\textsuperscript{43} The distinction between ontological and public narrativity is useful for the understanding of historical culture as well as historical learning. Narratives become ontological when agents use stories to make sense of their lives. In other words, they become ontological when history is being used. An ontological narrative defines who we are and preconditions our actions. However, where do these narratives come from? Somers argue that ontological narratives are interpersonal and social. Hence, they are derived from public narratives, adjusted and tailored to fit the agent. Public narratives, on the other hand, are stories attached to cultural and institutional establishments larger than the individual.\textsuperscript{44} In a way, all narratives larger than the individual can be perceived as public narratives, since, according to Somers, public narratives range from the narratives of the own family to those of the workplace, church, government, and “nation.”\textsuperscript{45} Furthermore, Catherine Kohler Riessman suggests that narratives serve a different purpose for groups than for individuals. Whereas group narratives are used to mobilize others and also to create a sense of belonging, individuals use the narrative to remember, argue, justify, persuade, engage, mislead, or entertain an audience.\textsuperscript{46} These two purposes could be seen in Somers’ distinction between ontological and public narratives. Public narratives are met in all aspects of historical culture. Public narratives are altered and tailored to suit the individual, which makes them ontological to the individual. This recognizes the relationship between historical consciousness and historical culture.

\textsuperscript{42} Nordgren, 2006:19.
\textsuperscript{43} Somers, 1994:617-622.
\textsuperscript{44} Somers, 1994:619.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46} Riessman, 2008:8.
To study historical consciousness

If a narrative can be understood as an artifact that satisfies someone’s needs, it becomes possible to assess the use of history or the historical orientation of the narrative. As Troulliot states, there is no space or situation where historiography is not driven by interest (need). The narrative could, in other words, be seen as a form of expression of historical orientation and could therefore be interpreted hermeneutically. Historical consciousness has a heuristic dimension where uses of history can explain the role history plays, either to the individual or within a society.

“Use of history” as a concept has been described in numerous ways. To present it as a typology is a common tradition that stems from Nietzsche who saw three different uses of history, namely, monumental, antiquarian, and critical uses. These uses of history corresponded with striving, preserving, and emancipative needs. This typology, together with the work on philosophy of history by Jörn Rüsen, inspired the historian Klas-Göran Karlsson to present an additional typology of the uses of history. In terms of his typology, all uses of history had different needs and, as such, the use had different functions for the user. The disciplinary or academic use of history had the need to discover and reconstruct, whereas the function of history became to verify, falsify, and interpret. This disciplinary use of history is most common among professional historians. The most common use, however, must be the existential use of history, a use that is common, not only among historians, but among all people. The need to remember is fulfilled and as such the function becomes to orientate and find roots. Karlsson also presented a moral and an ideological use, and even a non-use, of history. He emphasized that the didactics of history were about communication and that, like any communication, history always has a sender and a

47 Rüsen talks of historical orientation, while Lérouanneau uses the term “narrative orientation.” Since it is only the name of the concept that differs, this might suggest that Lérouanneau is a bit more careful about whether or not to include action. The present study uses the concept of “historical orientation” even though actions have not been studied. The relation between use of history and historical orientation has likewise not been fully explored, as discussed below.
48 Nordgren, 2006:19.
50 Nordgren, 2006:41.
52 Nietzsche, 1994:50. The typology of Nietzsche can, however, be seen as an argument for Memory History at its best and was an argument against the disciplinary history and Nietzsche’s contemporary counterpart Ranke (Nietzsche, 1994:6).
53 Karlsson, 2009:56-69
54 Karlsson, 2009:56-69
receiver,\textsuperscript{55} points which the historian Kenneth Nordgren made his focal point of interest.\textsuperscript{56} Nordgren saw the use of history as a chain of communication, rather than a typology. Whereas Karlsson’s typology worked as a set of labels, Nordgren’s model points to the real life context of history. The use of history was described as a dialogue and as such is dependent on the historical culture.

**Model 1: Use of history as dialogue**

The historical culture as context includes senders as well as receivers of narratives. Both the sender and the receiver have needs – needs that Nordgren describes as affirmation, regularity, negation, or transformation.\textsuperscript{57} With a focus on the sender, it would be the intentions behind the narrative that are investigated. If the needs of the sender are not fulfilled, the narrative becomes useless and dysfunctional.

A receiver-oriented approach, on the other hand, is interested in how the narrative is received by the receiver and, hence, how it is used, to understand a phenomenon. In other words, what sense or meaning does the receiver put to the narrative, no matter what the intentions were? Nordgren describes this approach as a kind of a reception study, where the receiver uses the narrative to satisfy his or her own needs. Both the sender and the receiver are therefore perceived as users of history.

\textsuperscript{55} Karlsson, 2009:37-38
\textsuperscript{56} Nordgren, 2006.
\textsuperscript{57} Nordgren, 2006:38-47. See also Rüsen, 2005:12, and the earlier discussion on meaning making in history, 2005:11.
But the narrative can also be understood as a distinct category, describing contemporary views and historical culture, and this point is crucial to the present study. So, how can a narrative be perceived and how is it connected to historical orientation?

**Narrativity and historical orientation**

Riessman suggests that the push towards narrativity comes from the preoccupation of contemporaries with identity. She concludes that the narrative has a “robust life beyond the individual.”58 One definition of narrative (storytelling),59 is, according to Riessman:

... [a] speaker connects events into a sequence that is consequential for later action and for the meanings that the speaker wants listeners to take away from the story. Events perceived by the speaker as important are selected, organized, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience.60

This definition has similarities to the sender approach in Nordgren’s model of uses of history: specifically, that uses of history might only be meaningful to a certain audience. However, Riessman continues that there exist many definitions of “narrative” and that these differ between disciplines. Quoting Phil Salmon, she argues, however, that all narratives work with contingent sequences:

A fundamental criterion of narrative is surely contingency. Whatever the content, stories demand the consequential linking of events or ideas. Narrative shaping entails imposing a meaningful pattern on what would otherwise be random and disconnected.61

The two definitions recognize the development in perception of narratives and narrativity, from the latter, where a consequential linking of events and ideas is focused on, to the former which emphasizes a sequence that is consequential for later action. The development explains the move from an epistemological towards an ontological understanding of narrativity. It is easy to see the connections between Riessman’s definition of storytelling and uses of history as discussed above. It is also tempting to connect the use of history to that of historical orientation. However, while the activity of using history is active, historical ori-

59 Riessman do not make any distinction between “narrative” and “story” (2008:7).
60 Riessman, 2008:3.
61 Riessman, 2008:5.
tation can best be described as passive, where historical culture constrains (or enables) the possibilities of future orientation.

Riessman suggests three different approaches to narrative analysis, which might also shed some light on the distinction between historical significance, historical orientation, and uses of history. She distinguishes between a thematic approach, a structural approach, and a dialogic/performative approach to narrative analysis. The first, thematic analysis, according to Riessman, is solely interested in what surfaces topically and thematically in the narratives. This stance could be connected to the concept of historical significance, which investigates what content is explicitly regarded as significant. Most often, this information is gained by asking what events, individuals, or historical processes are historically important and, hence, important to learn about. The second approach is focused on structure, where the interest lies in the overall sequential composition of the narrative. A structural approach could, hence, be connected to the concept of historical orientation. Lastly, Riessman suggests a stance towards dialogic/performative analysis. This approach combines the other two approaches, but is also interested in “‘who’ an utterance may be directed to, ‘when’ and ‘why,’ that is, for what purposes?” This third approach can, hence, be connected to the dialogic understanding of the uses of history.

To Rüsen, “historical consciousness functions as a specific orientational mode in actual situations of life in the present.” Rüsen accounts for four different orientation possibilities by means of history. These different types of narratives are: the traditional, the exemplary, the critical, and the genetic. The first, the traditional narrative, reminds us of origin, and how recall of the past is linked to the present, in short an affirmative act of given narrative. The exemplary narrative, on the other hand, utilizes rules, rather than tradition: Past events in this sense deliver a message or lesson to the present. Thirdly, the critical narrative can be described as a counter-narrative exchanging one pattern with another. However, the critical narrative foremost negates affirming narratives as well as narratives of regularity, such as traditional and exemplary narratives. As such, the critical narrative reminds us of deviations in both traditional and exemplary

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63 In a school context, the concept is elaborated by Peter Seixas. See Seixas et al., 2013:12-24, but also Lévesque, 2009:39-61.
64 Riessman, 2008:105.
66 Rüsen, 2011:72-73
narratives by deconstructing stories of continuity where time itself has been put before judgment.\textsuperscript{67} This is an argument that requires evidence or an ideological critique. Finally, the genetic narrative seeks to understand the concept that “times have changed,” embracing both difference and change. This is what ultimately gives history its meaning. Stories in this category give direction to temporal change. These different types of historical consciousness can, then, imply different historical orientations. Finding aspects that imply a traditional, exemplary, critic, or genetic narrative is possible; however, it is likely that these types describe a trajectory of historical arguments, focusing on content and how the argument is phrased. In order to look at the connection between past, present, and future, the structure of the narrative must therefore be focused.

Wertsch distinguishes between specific narrative and schematic narrative templates.\textsuperscript{68} A specific narrative consists of specific characters, settings, and events and could be described as content focused and, hence, including an epistemological category. By contrast, the schematic narrative template provides a stable and constant thematic base, where the basic plot remains the same, regardless of setting, events, and characters. As such, the schematic narrative template can be said to provide a narrative framework to specific narratives. Renditions of these schematic narrative templates are powerful, according to VanSledright, since they can be “compressed into succinct storylines.”\textsuperscript{69}

The concept of meta-narratives can also be understood in the light of schematic narrative templates. Meta-narratives give meaning to specific stories. The Renaissance, Enlightenment, and Industrial Revolution, not to forget Imperialism, are all meta-narratives. In addition, these distinct periods of history can also be understood in combination with other meta-narratives, such as progress, decline, and modernity.\textsuperscript{70} Wertsch’s specific narrative and schematic narrative templates could therefore be compared to Margaret Somers’ dimensions of narrativity or, more specifically, of public narrativity and meta-narrativity.\textsuperscript{71} To analyse the function of the narrative, Rüsen’s typology can be used.\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{67} Rüsen, 2005:14.
\textsuperscript{68} Wertsch, 2011:51.
\textsuperscript{69} VanSledright, 2011:23.
\textsuperscript{70} Nordgren, 2006:46.
\textsuperscript{71} Wertsch, 2011; Somers, 1994.
\textsuperscript{72} Rüsen, 2005:12.
Jocelyn Létourneau used narrative plot to analyze the structure of Canadian students’ narratives on the history of Canada. He discovered a similar narrative template, where the plot basically consisted of an initial situation, a time of crisis, an awakening, and a time of uncertainty. To the students, these four episodes worked as a schematic narrative template. Even though they shared a narrative template, their historical orientation regarding the future differed. The students saw four different stories: a descriptive story; and stories telling about: adversity; a just cause; and victimhood. These each demonstrated four different directions of historical orientation. The descriptive story consisted of narratives that did not provide any clear evidence of a distinctive orientation. Either they lacked personal connotations or the story was incomplete. The story of adversity referred to a permanent state of struggle. Thirdly, the narratives categorized as “just cause” stories were characterized by a positive view of the current situation and were confident about the future. Lastly, the stories of victimhood repeatedly stressed the danger of assimilation and emphasized the threat of cultural and linguistic identity. These findings have informed the present study.

The study is framed by Rüsen’s paradigm of narrativity, but, in engaging with analysis, uses the typology of Rüsen and the different narrative dimensions of Somers, as well as leaning on Létourneau’s concept of the narrative plot, together with the concept of historical significance. The following chapter will discuss the design of the study. Methodological considerations as well as the analysis of the empirical production will be presented.

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73 Létourneau and Moisan, 2011.
74 Lévesque, Létourneau, Gani, 2013 used the concept of “narrative orientation.” However, the definition is equal to Rüsen’s definition of historical orientation. See Rüsen 2005:11.
76 Rüsen 2004:88-95.
Chapter 3: Research Design

The aim of the present study is to explore patterns of historical orientation in Ugandan students’ narratives regarding their country’s history and their own past. Do these patterns say anything about how students use history to orientate themselves in their contemporary society and develop perspectives on the future? The study can be seen as an example of historical orientation in a postcolonial school context. The analytical units in this case are the students’ narratives. This chapter will elaborate on the design of the study and discuss how the empirical data was analyzed.

The case – historical orientation among Ugandan History students

It could be argued that the present study is a kind of reception study. Students studying their last year of History were asked to narrate their country’s history, as well as what they themselves found important from the past and what was worth retelling. School History should, however, not be seen as the only focus of the study. As discussed earlier, the History classroom is just one of the places the students came across history, albeit an important one. The classroom was where they made their narratives, but this does not mean that they would tell only what they been taught in school. The Ugandan school experience is one of the factors that may have affected the students’ narratives and, in addition, their historical orientation. But these factors cannot be the only ones and might not even be the most important ones. A classroom study is often restrained by many factors and one can only guess how many of these factors would be present in a study such as this.

The focus of this study is historical orientation among Ugandan youth who studied History at Advanced Level in upper secondary school. Two different regions of Uganda were included. Therefore, it should be noted that three groups of cases were looked at: The case study was focused on Ugandan History students in general and, specifically, on Central Ugandan and Northern Ugandan students.\textsuperscript{77} To choose two different regions was a way to handle ‘nation’ as a presupposed category, assuming differences between the two regions should derive from different historical cultures.

\textsuperscript{77} The sampling of two regions is also discussed in the chapter “Selection of regions, schools and students”, page 26, and in the chapter “The postcolonial experience”, page 39.
The object of study – narratives elicited through assignments

The data the study is based on consists of student narratives that were elicited through assignments. As previously mentioned, all assignments were conducted in the classrooms of the students participating.\(^{78}\) The assignments given to the students were the following:

1) What do you think about when you hear about history?
2) Narrate or present the history of Uganda since its beginnings, as you perceive it, remember it, or know about it.
3) Complete the sentence “The history of Uganda is all about ...” with a phrase or a word.\(^{79}\)
4) What from the past do you find important for you and your family, and worth retelling?
5) What from the history do you think affects contemporary life in Uganda? Motivate your answer.

Assignments 2, 4, and 5 were the objects of the study. However, all assignments have been presented to give a picture of what was expected of the students. Assignments 1 and 3 have been useful for the researcher to better get to know the students’ perceptions of history. For instance, the student’s quote in the Introduction (page 4) was an answer to assignment 1.

Assignments 2, 4, and 5 were designed to encourage the students to expand on their answers in writing. This was the study’s main interest and objective. All assignments were tested in November 2012 in a pilot study. The aim of the pilot study was to see how the students would respond to written assignments and how they would understand the assignments. The instructions given to the students in the pilot study related to the research project and the assignments that needed to be assessed. The assignments were given individually in writing and without any further instructions; all three assignments were tested simultaneously. This method also enabled a decision regarding the order in which the assignments should be handed out.

\(^{78}\) Once, an assignment was conducted outside the classroom under a big tree. Ordinary level exams were being held and hence there was a lack of classrooms.
\(^{79}\) Referred to as “the one-liner” in the study.
The pilot study demonstrated that the writing worked well, regarding both the students’ understanding of the written instructions and their ability to narrate in writing. Drawing from the pilot study, two lessons were learnt: Firstly, the forth assignment, which originally was phrased, *What from history do you find important for you and your family?*, provided instrumental answers as quite a few responses suggested that the study of History was important for getting an income or a grade. One interpretation of this was that this original version of the assignment asked about “history” rather than “the past.” The term “history” seem to allude to School History and in an attempt to get more personal connotations to history, the word “history” was replaced with “the past.” Rüsen’s paradigm of narrativity can shed some light upon the distinction between “the past” and “history.” The concept of “history” is to be understood as a narrative representation of our interpretation of the past. To exchange “history” with “the past” made the assignment become a historical account rather than a recount of a public narrative, using Somers’ distinction. Also, we added the phrasing “and worth retelling” to assignment 4 to draw out a narrative response instead of getting bullet-point, “fact-based” answers. More importantly, the wording “worth retelling” connected the past with both the present and the future by making the narrator the center of the narrative. The final version of the assignment was not trialled in a pilot study and was therefore more of a theoretical construct.

The second lesson learnt was that some narratives in response to the fifth assignment listed above, asking students to explain the contemporary situation in Uganda, resembled those for the second assignment (asking students to present the history of Uganda since its beginnings). To avoid repetition in the narratives, it was decided that the students should narrate *the history of Uganda since its beginnings* before they narrated *the contemporary situation in Uganda*. Thus the order of the assignments was decided. The second assignment seemed natural to the students and for this reason it was decided that it would be handed out first. In this way, overlap was avoided.

Other considerations regarding the wording and order of assignments include the following: The purpose of the first assignment was twofold. Firstly, the aim was to find out what the students’ definition of history was, which seemed reflexively important for the study. Secondly, it functioned as an icebreaker to facilitate writing, before the other, actual assignments were given. The second assignment, asking students to *narrate or present the history of Uganda since its begin-
nings, as you perceive it, remember it, or know about it, was inspired by Létourneau and Moisan’s study on Quebecois youth and history.\textsuperscript{80} The question was used since it was fairly open and also focused on the history of the Ugandan state. In addition, it took a genetic outlook on history. The starting point as well as the end point of the narrative was up to the narrator and, hence, the assignment did not exclude future perspectives. The third assignment was given on the same occasion, directly after the second assignment. This was to see how the students would describe the history of Uganda if they could only use a word or a sentence. The conjecture was that this would encourage reflection on their earlier narrative.\textsuperscript{81} Whether the students were evaluating School History or the history of Uganda, when answering, was, however, unclear. Because of this, the assignment has not been used in the final text. The fourth assignment, \textit{What from the past do you find important for you and your family, and worth retelling?}, was phrased in such a way as to allow the students to be unrestricted by a political outlook on history. This assignment was therefore a way to explore how the students perceived history, regardless of opinion and politics. The theoretical work of Rüsen also stated that the need for understanding the past always stems from life practice.\textsuperscript{82} Research in Europe has shown that students are more attracted to cultural and social history than to political history.\textsuperscript{83} The assignment aimed to open up other dimensions of history besides the political. The aim was to explore what references to the past the students would see as important to themselves and their family. The assignment therefore had a genealogical approach to the past. Putting the narrator in the center of the narrative recognized the personal connotations to the past. The phrase “and worth retelling” connected the past with the contemporary and possibly the future. One could argue that this assignment should have been handed out first. However, the pilot study had shown that political narratives were the students’ first choice, which contradicts the study of Grever, Haydn and Pelzer\textsuperscript{84}.

Finally, the fifth assignment was designed to see what answers would be given to a genealogical version of the second assignment. It was given the following design: \textit{What from the history do you think affects the contemporary life in Uganda? Moti-

\textsuperscript{80} Létourneau and Moisan, 2011.
\textsuperscript{81} It would have been interesting to see what the students would have written if the fifth assignment had been worded similarly: \textit{... from history has affected the contemporary life in Uganda.}
\textsuperscript{82} Rüsen, 2004:119-120.
\textsuperscript{83} Grever, Pelzer, Haydn, 2011.
\textsuperscript{84} Grever, Pelzer, Haydn, 2011.
value your answer. Just like the second assignment, it focused on Uganda. However, the point of departure here was the present situation rather than the country’s past. This was intended to encourage the students to explain and describe contemporary life in Uganda and explain what parts of history had affected development. The assignment consequently had more of a genealogical approach to history compared to the second assignment, which had a genetic approach. However, the future dimension was less focused here compared to assignments 2 and 4. Nevertheless, an explicit mention of the future dimension has been avoided in all three assignments. The future perspective was excluded simply to explore if a future dimension would be included in the narratives. The three assignments were designed to obtain a range of dimensions as well as perspectives (or narrative departure). The narratives explored had either a genetic or a genealogical perspective and were either public or personal (as can be seen in Table 1 below). However, all were still dependent on the students’ interpretation of both the assignment itself, and history. The given approach to history in an assignment, genetic or genealogical, did not mean that the answer would necessarily take the same approach.

**Table 1: Assignments and narratives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Narrative perspective</th>
<th>Narrative dimension</th>
<th>Narrative type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2: Uganda since its beginnings</td>
<td>Genetic</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Genetic public narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Important past for my family and me</td>
<td>Genealogical</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Genealogical personal narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Contemporary Uganda and how it has become that way</td>
<td>Genealogical</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Genealogical public narrative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignments 1–3 were given during the same occasion; assignments 4 and 5 were given on two other occasions. Whereas assignments 1 and 3 were completed within 5 minutes each (or less), 40 minutes were designated to conclude each of the assignments 2, 4, and 5. This amount of time was not, however, always used.
To elicit narrativity – the narrator behind the narrative

The study objects were the narratives of the Ugandan students – narratives elicited through assignments. The questions answered were therefore not to be understood as “historical,” as described by Rüsen, resulting from a need to explain a felt change or contemporary phenomena. The questions were put by the researcher, which hindered the possibility to look at the narratives as uses of history. The students might have felt the need to conclude the assignments. Nevertheless, they wrote coherent narratives with references to historical individuals, events, and developments in order to answer the assignments. Even though the study object was the actual narrative and not the recipient or even the sender, it was hard not to acknowledge that every narrative had a sender who in turn had an imagined recipient. Regardless, the narratives did say something about the historical culture(s) in Uganda.

Narrative, as previously stated, can be understood as a category of its own, besides the sender and the recipient. As a category, the narrative says something about the historical culture where the narrative was produced. The different references to the past or to history, by the students, were in this sense delineated from the perspective of historical cultures in Uganda. The references to individuals, events, and developments in the narratives were made for a reason. The assignments were interpreted by the student, which in turn triggered the narrativity by referring to the past. Possibly different historical references would have been given if a non-Ugandan had recounted the story of Uganda’s past and possibly the narrative would have had a different structure, due to a different historical culture and, therefore, different experiences of the past. However, the imagined recipient does have an effect on the narrative. For the sake of clarity, the researcher, being present, in some narratives explains certain explanations given of phenomena or concepts, or even by thanks given for an elicited memory. The role and impact a European researcher has on students in a Ugandan school, or, for that matter, an African classroom could also be discussed. Would a Ugandan researcher have elicited the same stories? The fact

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85 For a list of the assignments, see page 21.
86 Rüsen, 2004:120-122.
87 A plausible guess would be the researcher himself who handed out the assignments. The importance of a receiver becomes obvious in school contexts where the phenomenon of cue seekers, students who try to get the teacher to disclose what is going to be tested, is known. While handing out these assignments, however, not many questions were asked.
88 See endnote of 1FNU5, page 116.
that Uganda is a multi-ethnic state may, however, not make it easier for a Ugandan researcher. For instance, Levstik and Groth, in their study on Ghanaian youth, suggest that their initial use of a Ghanaian interviewer seemed to trigger a school response as answers were recited as if the students were standing in front of a class. Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that the imagined recipient of the narratives has informed the narratives.

**Selection of regions, schools, and students**

A prerequisite to conducting the study was the students who participated, and the possibility to observe classroom activity. The former criterion was important, students being the study object of the study, while the latter was important to the context of the study. The study criteria required contact to be made with Senior 6 History students in their final year of upper secondary school. The criteria also facilitated a study of History teaching in Uganda. In addition to this, a criterion to include students from governmental schools was also included. In Uganda, three different kinds of schools exist: governmental, government-aided, and private schools. The difference between government-aided schools and governmental schools is mainly the ownership of the schools. Missionary schools became government-aided schools after Independence. All schools have school fees; however, the governmental schools often have lower fees compared to private schools. This was the main reason for this criterion, which aimed to gain a sample of average students, regardless of economic status, receiving a standard education. The results of the final exams in December 2013 demonstrated that the schools participating in the study had an average 50% pass rate in the exams. It could therefore be assumed that on average, the students participating in the study were neither extremely poorly nor high-achieving students.

The last criterion was to enroll students from different parts of the country. Out of the four regions, Western, Eastern, Central, and Northern Uganda, the last two were chosen. The Central region was selected mainly out of conven-

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89 Levstik and Groth, 2005:573.
90 The classroom observations as well as teacher interviews have not influenced the results of the study. They have, however, been important to the researcher to understand History education in Uganda and, as such, have been influential in designing the study.
91 The principals at the government-aided schools understood their schools to be government schools. As proof of this status, they presented documentation on school buildings paid for by the government.
ience to the researcher, but also because the Baganda have been the dominant ethnic group for a long time in Uganda.

With its history of conflict, the Northern region was also of interest. It was postulated that the situation of a post-conflict era might elicit different views on the history of Uganda. The study was conducted 4–5 years after the one-sided peace treaty between Uganda and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) was signed – one-sided because the LRA had not signed the peace treaty. In addition, the choice of a remote area might show differences in narrativity when it came to periphery and centrality. Only two regions were chosen because of the time scale of the study.

The schools were chosen and contacted through a method of convenience sampling as well as some snowball sampling. The latter method was mainly used in Northern Uganda, where the History classes were small and where some districts lacked Senior 6 History students. Initially, governmental schools were chosen. However, there were only a few governmental schools in Northern Uganda and therefore the study also included government-aided schools. Small classes and a lack of governmental schools, few reported students, and a strike (2013) led to the decision not only to use governmental schools, but also to ask teachers and principals to get in touch with more schools.

Altogether, six schools from Northern Uganda and two schools from Central Uganda participated in the study. The existing imbalance between the numbers of schools in the two regions participating in the study may be considered problematic. However, it was not the schools or even the classroom activities that were the study object, but, rather, the students’ narratives. The many classrooms visited became an advantage in terms of the aim to understand the nature of History instruction in Uganda, which was of great importance to the researcher to instinctively engage with the empirical body.

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92 “Baganda” refers to the people of Buganda kingdom.
94 The researcher drove to all schools to personally introduce and collect the narratives from the students, a time-consuming method.
**Narrowing down the scope of the study**

In all, 346 narratives in response to assignments 2, 3, and 4 were collected from 158 students. Not all students completed all three assignments. It was therefore decided to only include the students who had the opportunity to complete all assignments. It could be argued that this sampling only included students with good attendance. However, on two occasions, setting the assignments was postponed due to a lack of students.96 Because of the nature of the sampling it would have been possible to conduct a cross-analysis of the narratives, since each student concluded all the assignments. This has, however, not been done in the present study.

**Table 2: Number of narratives in the study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment 2: Genetic public narratives</th>
<th>Central Uganda</th>
<th>Northern Uganda</th>
<th>Narratives in total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 4: Genealogical personal narratives</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 5: Genealogical public narratives</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of narratives</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>346*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating students</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who concluded all three narratives</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>219**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Since assignments 1 and 3 were given at the same time as assignment 2, the numbers of answers to each of these were the same as for assignment 2 (n=101). In total, therefore, there were 548 answers (assignments 1–5).

**This number, 219, indicates the total number of narratives elicited from the 73 students included in the study, in response to assignments 2, 4, and 5.

There were 36 students in Central Uganda and 37 students in Northern Uganda who were able to conclude all five assignments. This totalled 219 narratives from 73 students, whose narratives became the main study objects of the study.

96 Both of these occasions occurred in school number two in Central Uganda. Both times, heavy rain had delayed the students.
Table 3 below shows the age, sex, and affinity to ethnic group of the participants. The age span between the students was quite large, ranging from 17 years old (five participants) to 23 years old (one participant). Twenty of the students participating from Northern Uganda were female, and 17 were male. In Central Uganda, the number of male and female students was equal. In total, 38 female and 35 male students participated in the study. A gender analysis of the empirical body has not been undertaken, as both sexes were equally represented.

Table 3: Age, gender, and ethnic affinity among participants by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Central Uganda</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Northern Uganda</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Muganda</td>
<td>Acholi</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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As a result of the decision to sample from two different regions, it was mainly members of two different ethnic groups who participated in the study. As shown in Table 3, 59 students perceived themselves as either Muganda or Acholi. A total of 14 students belonged to other ethnic groups. Out of 36 participating from central Uganda, 26 considered themselves to be Mugandan. In Northern Uganda, by contrast, the majority considered themselves to be Acholi.

97 This might be a consequence of the selection of schools. However, it is probable that the composition of ethnic groups at different schools in the two regions from those included in the study would have been the same. Nevertheless, origin of students is only of interest as it is connected to a specific narrative. It is not the aim of this thesis to explore the historical culture of different ethnic groups.

98 Muganda is singular of buganda, the people of the buganda kingdom, and refers to an individual.

99 Ten students reported other tribal affinity, including one Acholi (28% considered themselves non-Mugandan).
In all, eleven different ethnic groups were represented, including two considering themselves of Rwandan origin. In the table, however, only Baganda and Acholi have been accounted for, as it became clear that Central Ugandan participants represented the Baganda people, while among Northern Ugandan students, Acholi people predominated.

Analysis of the data production

Using a narrative method does not only involve interpretation, but it is also an activity of reflexivity. To approach research reflexively means to systematically acknowledge the relation between the knowledge produced and the way this knowledge has been produced. In other words, it means to interpret the construction of knowledge and the interpretation made. In this chapter, the analysis of the data will be explained and commented upon.

What upper secondary students in Uganda found important in history and how they used the past to orientate themselves was explored through the investigation of historical references made by the students, as well as the structure of their narratives. Two research questions were posed: Firstly, *What references to the past do Ugandan students make in order to understand their contemporary society?* And secondly, *Which patterns, in terms of historical orientation, can be found in the students’ stories?* The empirical data obtained through the students’ written narratives, elicited through assignments, has been read through a number of times. In engaging with coding and transcribing the data, a number of factors have been taken into consideration.

**Coding and transcription**

Throughout the text, the narratives have been presented in their entirety, with few exceptions, in order that the reader may gain as full and transparent an interpretation as possible. Fragmentation has, hence, been avoided. Since the narratives were written by hand, they have been first transcribed onto computer by the researcher and thereafter allocated identity numbers to ensure that the

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100 In Northern Uganda, 16% reported tribal affinity other than Acholi, including one Muganda.
101 The students themselves wrote their tribal affinity on an open-ended question.
103 Riessman, 2008:12.
narrators remain anonymous throughout the study. The language has not been corrected in the transcriptions, in order to remain true to the narrator. Many of the students did not speak English as their first language, although English is the official language in Uganda and is used as teaching medium throughout the education system. It is important that the reader must be able to read the same text as the researcher did. Where corrections have been made or clarifications added, they have been put in square brackets. Unreadable words, to the researcher, have been marked with three en-dashes in square brackets: [–––]. The original narratives, together with the transcriptions, are archived at Karlstads University.

The identity numbers of each narrative also need to be commented on. These identity numbers have been used as source references. Each of these numbers is five to six characters in length. The first is the number of the school. The third and fourth character indicate the region a narrative comes from (the third character is either a “C” as in “Central” or an “N” as in “North” and the forth is always a “U” as in “Uganda”). The second character indicates the assignment. This character is the letter B, C, or F, indicating whether the assignment is on the history of Uganda since its beginning, on the contemporary situation in Uganda, or on that part of the past that is important to the narrator and his or her family. The two assignments involving a sentence completion exercise (assignment 3) and immediate thoughts on the word “history” (assignment 1), have also been used in the study, however not as systematically as the narratives. For these assignments, the letters A (about history) and O (one-liner) have been used. The last character indicate the student number used to identify a student in a regional school. On a few occasions, the full narrative has not been presented in the text, the characters after the colon then indicate the sentence or, rather, the line breaks originally made by the narrator; this made it easier to locate the quote in the transcribed narrative.104

**Narrative analysis**

Narrative analysis has been used to analyze the empirical data, consisting of thematic and structural analysis. Whereas thematic analysis focuses on the content or what is being said, structural analysis focuses on the structure of the nar-

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104 In the final text, the line breaks of the original narratives have been altered for reasons of space.
rative or *how* the story is being told. Due to the design of the assignments, the elicited narratives have been analyzed and categorized somewhat differently. This has affected the final text. The decision to account for methodological considerations in the presentation of the empirical chapters was also made. Nevertheless, the analytical categories presented in this chapter are based on the historical approach of the narrative and on whether the narratives were personal or belonged in the public domain.

The assignments focused on eliciting genealogical or genetic approaches to the past, through either public or personal narratives. The data production hence consisted of narratives elicited through three assignments as detailed above and on page 21. Assignments 2 and 5 were framed by Uganda as a state and as such focused on a political dimension as well as the public domain. These two assignments were based on public narratives, while assignment 4 was more open-ended with regard to its dimension of history and was more personal in nature.\(^{105}\) Besides being framed differently, the assignments also differed in terms of design, being either genetic or genealogical. Assignment 2 had a clear genetic outlook on history, where the narrator was asked to start from the beginning. Assignments 4 and 5 started from the present and referred to important events in the past that may have affected contemporary society. Through the concept of historical significance, both ontological and epistemological categories of the narratives were simultaneously explored. The epistemological category focused on *what* in the past the narrators referred to, whereas the ontological category focused on *how* the reference to the past was made. It was mainly *how* the reference was made that rendered a different analysis, depending on the design of the assignment.

Content analysis of the narratives elicited what was regarded as historically significant by the narrators. Common themes used by the narrators, and individuals and events frequently referred to, can be regarded as significant. The content analysis was grounded in empirical data.\(^{106}\) References made to the past, in

\(^{105}\) Using the typology of Somers on different dimensions of narratives, all three of these assignments would be classified as public narratives (1994:618-619). Putting Uganda and “family” into the assignments made these the focal point of the narratives, instead of the narrators.

\(^{106}\) In her research on South African youth and historical consciousness (2000:345), Ursula van Beek used six categories: spaces; dimensions; epochs; identification; operations; and topoi. Her study was quantitative, however, and the categories were not usable for data analysis in this present study.
the form of mention of individuals or events, were not chosen beforehand as points and keywords to look out for in the data. The data was, rather, read through sentence by sentence in search of references to the past, including individuals’ names, dates, events, and developments. Locations were also of great interest as an aspect of historical significance. As the significance of events changes over time and also between groups, it was assumed that the settings of the narrative would give more information regarding the identity of the narrators. Content analysis did not always reveal the places referred to, and, more importantly, the researcher was carrying out the research in a setting that was foreign to him. Therefore, a closer and more careful read through of the narratives was necessary. However, content analysis complemented the text analysis; mostly regarding the frequency of specific references. The content analysis was, however, always complemented by a text analysis since a more interpretative approach to the narratives was needed. For example, numerous references to king Mutesa I were made, but after further analysis of the context, such as him being mentioned together with Milton Obote or Independence, it was clear that the narrators on several occasions were thinking of Mutesa II and hence recalling another episode.

As the assignments through which the narratives were elicited differed in design (see above), the analysis also differed from the initial brief.

Analysis of the genetic public narratives

Recounting the history of Uganda since its beginnings placed a huge demand on the narrators. What would their narratives’ storylines be? What would be included and excluded in their narratives? As both of these questions suggest, it was both content and structure that were focused in the analysis. Structural analysis was used to determine which episodes of Ugandan history the narratives referred to. In the nominal analysis, events, personages, and developments were highlighted. The narratives were then read more closely a number of times to see what references were being made and what time or episode they referred to. All the references to the past were categorized into four different episodes of Ugandan history, depending on the context of the references. Episodes of Ugandan history were in a sense based upon the data production, for both the genealogical public narrative and the genetic public narrative. The four episodes, of precolonial, colonial, Independence, and postcolonial, clearly were not specific to Uganda; also, they cover different time spans, with Independence
being the shortest and precolonial the longest. The structure analysis was based on inclusion and exclusion of these episodes. Furthermore, within each episode, themes of reference were identified that represented each episode. But although the thematic analysis explained what the students narrated, it did not explain how. Therefore, the next step was finding a pattern in the narratives in the episodes referred to. Some narratives included all four episodes – others started later and ended earlier. It was of interest to explore whether these patterns corresponded with aspects of Jörn Rüsen’s typology of traditional, exemplary, critical, and genetic narratives (Page 17-18).107

**Analysis of the genealogical public narratives**

One of the assignments aimed to elicit narratives that had a genealogical approach, that is to say, narratives that took their departure from the present and searched for explanations for this situation in the past (a retrospective approach to history). The narratives described contemporary life in Uganda and what from history had affected it to become this way. Hence, the narratives explicitly spelt out current perceptions of contemporary Uganda. Being framed by contemporary life in Uganda, the assignments also contained aspects of a public narrative. A political outlook on contemporary life in Uganda was not presupposed, thus allowing the opportunity to present a personal outlook on contemporary life in Uganda. Nevertheless, the data demonstrated that a political outlook on history was most common. The fact that the narrative was an elicited explanation influenced the analysis. The analysis of these narratives was dependent on an interpretative approach.

The narratives generally contained two time references. The first was a reference that talked of the present day situation. The second was a reference to the past that had led to, and somehow explained, the contemporary situation. These references enabled the narratives to be seen as stories of change, progress or decline, depending on the narrator’s emphases; they were an evaluation of the contemporary situation in Uganda. It was also of interest to explore which episode was referred to in order to explain the contemporary situation: precolonial, colonial, or postcolonial.108

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107 Rüsen, 2005:12.
108 Independence was not included as an episode among the genealogical public narratives.
Analysis of the genealogical personal narratives

In the genealogical personal assignment, the students were asked to name what from the past was important to them. The assignment was not connected to a political dimension per se and also gave the students a chance to write about themes unconnected to School History. The only link to School History was the fact that they conducted the assignment in their History classroom. This made the assignment fairly open, inviting the participants to share what was important to them and their family, which was worth retelling. The method of analysis used can best be described as “abductive.” The first step in the analysis was to conduct a content analysis similar to the one used in the previous analysis on the genetic public narrative. Through this step, it became clear that the students spoke of different places, even though the content was sometimes similar. As an example, a student’s interpretation of the assignment regarding what is important for my family and me could be understood as: important to my family and me at a Ugandan or African.

Four different levels were defined. Firstly, there was a supra-national level, which was mainly represented by references made to Africa and Africans; secondly, a national level was represented by references made to Uganda or Ugandan. Both of these two levels were mainly concerned with a political dimension. Thirdly, a societal level was characterized by a scale that was larger than the individual and the immediate family, but at the same time not restricted by national boundaries. Finally, narratives unfolded on a family level, containing stories that were significant to the narrator and/or his or her immediate family. The genealogical personal narratives were, in this sense, mainly concerned with how historical significance changed from group to group (or individual to individual).

Analysis of the historical orientation of narratives

The first research question of the study, What stories about themselves and their nation are Ugandan students narrating?, was explored by analyzing the narratives using both content analysis and text analysis. Content analysis was used as a means of exploring the epistemological category of the narrative. All factual or content-oriented references to the past could be categorized into episodes, places, and

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109 Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2008:55.
dimensions. However, without an interpretative approach that was close to the text, the ontological category remained invisible to the reader.

The second research question of the study was: *Which patterns, in terms of historical orientation, can be found in the students’ stories?* This research question was connected to the ontological dimension of the narrative, which presupposes that all individuals have a historical consciousness, whereby they use the past to interpret their contemporary situation and set their expectations for their future. Patterns of historical orientation, where orientation can be understood as the symbiotic relation between past, present, and future, had to be found. Rüsen describes history as “the mirror of past actuality into which the present peers in order to learn something about its future”\(^{110}\) As such, historical orientation was connected to both an epistemological and an ontological category of the narrative. The epistemological orientation describes what past experiences are mobilized; the ontological orientation essentially establishes the identity of its narrator. Where the first research question is interested in the epistemological category of the Ugandan students’ narratives, the second is interested in the ontological orientation. To reach beyond the surface of the epistemological orientation of the narrative, in search for patterns of historical orientation, have historical significance as a concept been used, but also to interpret if the narrator evaluates historical developments as progress or decline.\(^{111}\)

References were made to individuals, events, and developments, encountered in a certain space and time. All individuals, events, and concepts could be interpreted as abbreviated narratives by just being mentioned.\(^{112}\) The allusions made to a person or a concept were individual and dependent on where and when the reference to the past was given. Idi Amin’s reign probably does not hold the same connotations today as it did in the past. Neither does every ethnic group make the same association with Independence or the Bush War; moreover, perspectives change with time. However, with an abbreviated narrative or a reference that is given without intentions told, it is hard if not impossible to determine if, or how, the narrative establishes identity and orientation. On the other hand, given all the determined spaces and dimensions, it is possible to interpret *for whom* the narrative becomes significant. Given several points in time, it also becomes possible to interpret how the narrator talks of development and

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\(^{110}\) Rüsen, 2005:24.

\(^{111}\) Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2008.

\(^{112}\) Rüsen, 2004:102. Abbreviated narratives are further discussed on page 65.
whether development is seen as progress or decline. These two aspects, significance and interpretation of development, have been important in interpreting the historical orientation of the narratives.

Last but not least, a comparative approach has been used in the study. Empirical data has been produced from two different regions in Uganda: the Central region and the Northern region. The latter was historically important during the colonization of Uganda, since the British came to ally themselves with the kingdom of Buganda; the former is a post-conflict area where the LRA was at war with the Ugandan government. A peace treaty was signed by one party as late as 2008. There are witnesses to the conflict, and the years of conflict have left many scars and traces. Choosing these two regions meant that the sample of students would consist of mainly two ethnic groups: Baganda and Acholi. This sampling, which enabled a comparative approach, was chosen in order to detect differences between the narratives. Nationality in Uganda, aside from Ugandan, can also be perceived as Baganda, Acholi, Banyankole, Bagisu, Batoro, etc. Therefore the question still presents itself: Do Ugandans identify with this multi-ethnic state or do they identify first and foremost with their ethnic group and/or region? This study does not aim to answer this question; nevertheless, differences between the regions could point towards regional imbalance and identification with certain ethnic groups, while similarities might point to a state identity. The comparison between the ethnic groups has mainly functioned to shed light on the spaces and dimensions included in the narrative, as well as the references that shed light on the narrators’ views on development.

In the following chapter, Uganda’s postcolonial state, the history of Uganda, and History education in Uganda, will be discussed before turning to the empirical chapters of the study.
Chapter 4: Contextual Background of the Study

This chapter will describe the postcolonial experience of Ugandans, and further give a brief account of Uganda’s history and of the History education given in Uganda, especially in upper secondary schools. All three of these areas have implications for the students and will have influenced their narratives. It was considered necessary to include this information, both to give a background to the design of the study, and to provide a context to the empirical findings.

The postcolonial experience

In 2012, Uganda celebrated 50 years of Independence from the British Empire. The Independence gained in 1962 meant that the country could, for the first time, define itself as a sovereign and independent nation or state. Being colonized for half a century affects the historiography and narrative of a nation. Therefore, it is assumed, in this study, that being a postcolonial state likewise affects the narrative of the nation, while accepting, however, that it is not known how it affects individual narratives. In this chapter, the connection between state, nation, and history will be discussed, as well as how postcoloniality affects these concepts. Ultimately, this is important because it affects the aims of History teaching in schools. According to Duara, nation-centered narratives became the basis for national history in the European colonies during the 20th century. Researchers in the Western world agree that the nation state has remained the organizing axis of school narratives all over the world and that very little has changed in textbooks since 1989. According to Duara, the modern state and history have become inseparable. The nation attains its sovereignty through the very subject of History, where the nation becomes the “silent frame of reference” in history. The main object of knowledge we get through history is an understanding of the concept of change (not to forget continuity), according to historians. Nevertheless, the nation remains as the “silent space of reference” — a frame of reference that remains, regardless of whether the subjects of history change, such as for instance the state, class, gender, individuals, or identity groups. Possibly this also applies to ethnic groups. On the

114 Carretero et al., 2012:153.
115 The silent space of reference might best be illustrated through the example of the default map of many classrooms of the world, which commonly is a political map.
other hand, professional historians have moved towards a more comparative and transnational stance towards history, a stance filled with tension between the need for the national and an endeavor to transcend the same.\textsuperscript{117} However, very few postcolonial theorists on or outside the African continent would use the term “nation” to describe the new states of Africa, according to Grovogui, who argues that the postcolonial states in Africa today cannot be described as either ethnically or culturally homogenous entities.\textsuperscript{118} The reader is reminded of Mamdani’s reference to “multicultural and multi-ethnic” Africa states.\textsuperscript{119} Grovogui elaborates, “The state provides a container for separate groups engaged in exercises of self-invention and self-determination.”\textsuperscript{120} To the nations born in the 1960s on the African continent, there was a fundamental paradox, according to Richard Reid. While History on a national level could serve the purposes of consolidating power in the newly independent states, History on the subnational level could, on the contrary, be harmful. In Uganda, history in this sense has been used both by the ruling elites, and by others seeking to redistribute power.\textsuperscript{121}

The focus of the present study is Ugandan History students and their narratives on the history of Uganda. However, Uganda cannot be seen as a homogenous state, as Mamdani and Reid have rightfully stated.\textsuperscript{122} This follows the findings of Jocelyn Létourneau that Anglophonics and Francophonics in Canada do not share the same national narrative. For this reason, two different regions in Uganda have been chosen for sampling, Central Uganda and Northern Uganda, and mainly two different ethnic groups appear in the study, the Baganda and Acholi. In other words, the cases of the study, besides being Ugandan History students, can also be described as Central Ugandan History students and Northern Ugandan History students.\textsuperscript{123}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Berger, 2012:34.
\item Grovogui, 2010:236.
\item Mamdani, 1996:287.
\item Grovogui, 2010:236.
\item Reid, 2014:351. This statement is by no means only true in an African context as John Tosh has argued, when stating that History is a political battleground, with both upholders of authority and subverters of the same seeking sanction of the past, and “finding plenty of ammunition” (Tosh, 1993:9). Regarding contested power between groups and tribes in Uganda, see Mamdani, 2002:496-498; Branch, 2010:25-36; Rolandsen and Andersen, 2015:8-9; and, further, regarding the civilian coups and successions after the war in Uganda, see Mazrui, 1999:6.
\item Mamdani, 1996 and Reid, 2014. See also footnote above.
\item Both Central Uganda and Northern Uganda are home to many more ethnic groups. One could therefore debate whether Buganda and Acholi students should be the cases of
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\end{footnotesize}
Richard Reid has described the discipline of History in Africa as follows:

History as a discipline has been in retreat across much of Africa for the better part of the last forty years, as political instability and economic decline have rendered Historical debate and meditation either irrelevant or downright dangerous, and ever more precarious as a profession.\textsuperscript{124}

Use of history on a national scale seems self-evident: that history might serve certain purposes can hardly be denied by anyone. Historiography in Africa has, however, been problematic. To colonial historians, the African past was nothing but darkness and, using written sources as a yardstick for historical knowledge, this was an understandable conclusion. Written sources are not available precolonization, which means that there is a bias in favor of colonialism in the documented history of Africa. However, it is not only sources of history, but the interpretation of these sources, which have had an impact on African historiography. For instance, Elíso Macamo discusses the impact on African historiography when history started adopting theories of social science. To him, the absence of African sociology constrained the possibility to reflexively engage with the experience of social reality. Among other things, Macamo states that sociology was a European invention, as the discipline saw its birth at a time when Europe was experiencing rapid social change. To describe social change in Africa with the conceptual distinction between “traditional society” and “modern, industrial society” neglects the fact that Africa itself is a modern construct.\textsuperscript{125} The European concept of modernity thus ignored the very understanding of continuity and change with regard to Africa. These concepts, traditional versus modern, are presuppositional categories carrying within them “frozen” historical arguments.\textsuperscript{126} History must try to undo or “unfreeze” these arguments, according to Somers and Gibson.\textsuperscript{127} Reid has a similar line of argument regarding colonialism in his article titled, “Past and Presentism: The ‘Pre-colonial’ and the Foreshortening of African History,” where the use of the concept “precolonial” contains a bias towards the episode of colonialism in African

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{124} Reid, 2014:351.
\textsuperscript{125} Macamo, 2010.
\textsuperscript{126} Somers and Gibson, 1993:9.
\textsuperscript{127} To Somers and Gibson, using concepts of social science is, however, just as big a problem in the Western world. Conceptual misunderstanding may cast a shadow over the historical context and historical misunderstanding is avoided (1993:11).
\end{flushleft}
history. The same could be said about the use of the concept “postcolonialism,” where African history consists of three episodes: precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial. Nevertheless, we now know that there would be no Kenyan, Tanzanian, or Ugandan identity if it had not been for European colonialism. But at the same time there would be no African identity. As Appiah puts it, “a specifically African identity began as the product of a (male) European gaze.” The statement emphasizes Africa as a modern construct. This is an important point in relation to this study, since the students lack historical knowledge, for example in the form of written sources, outside of colonialization; a historical continuity is, hence, not present. This may have implications to what the students might be able to tell.

The very concept of a state endorses the control of land and legal recognition, as defining features. Historical narratives that are national in character can be interpreted as defending boundaries. All the borders of young African states were drawn by foreigners and the newly independent states’ sovereignty was inherited from their colonial masters. The legitimacy of governments did not come from the people of the countries concerned, but from abroad. In this study, the concept of “postcoloniality” is used to refer to the time after the demise of European colonial empires. According to Eriksson Baaz, it should not be referred to as an achieved state beyond colonialism, however. The concept of “postcoloniality” recognizes that old colonial relations still exist and that they did not disappear due to the fact that Independence was gained. The fact that colonial history shapes identity is undeniable, because of the mere existence of past ideas and imagery, and also because colonial discourse is one of the histories to which people are both being positioned and positioning themselves. Postcoloniality is recognized in the study in the sense that the new states of Africa emerged from a colonial experience. The terms “state” and “nation” have, in this sense, been used simultaneously and interchangeably as an accepted historical experience that has shaped identities. How people and different groups position themselves according to this colonial discourse is, however, an open-ended question.

128 Reid, 2011.
130 Appiah, 1992:114.
A history of Uganda

In outlining this chapter, the students’ references to Uganda’s past have informed the researcher’s selection. It is important to place the empirical text in some sort of context for the reader.

The empirical material was produced during the year of 2013. The narratives of the empirical body were, hence, mainly written during the year Uganda celebrated its 50th anniversary as an independent country. In July 2012, an edition of the magazine named Understand Uganda discussed the topic of the history of Uganda. It was published by the newspaper Daily Monitor, in partnership with the Uganda Society and the Institute for National Transformation, to mark the anniversary of Independence. The magazine contained four sections: “In the beginning: The roots of the nation,” “Incubating Uganda: The colonial period,” “Fifty years of Independence,” and, lastly, “Creating tomorrow: The Uganda we want.” Except for the last section, about the future, the different sections resembled the three episodes commonly used to periodize Ugandan history (and the history of other African countries), namely, a precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial episode. The foreword to the volume had a non-deterministic approach to how history may influence the future, in raising questions about the past:

How did Uganda get to where it is today? Where has it come from? Where is Uganda going? Appreciating that a country exists in a continuum, in which the past impacts the present that, in turn, influences the future is a common failure in many societies, most especially our country.132

The executive editor David Sseppuuya expressed the intention of the magazine’s Independence edition to trace origins and investigate the influences that had got the Ugandan people where they were today. On the other hand, the future was handled in a more political way in the phrasing “where we should go.” Though Uganda as a nation was a colonial construct, the concept of Uganda was present in all the headings as the precolonial section spoke of “roots of the nation” and the colonial section of “Incubating Uganda.” These first three episodes will provide the structure for this chapter on the history of Uganda.

Precolonial Uganda

As has been previously noted, there is a lack of written sources regarding the precolonial episode in Uganda, or, more correctly, regarding the land that came to be known as Uganda. This is, however, not entirely true: One ethnic group stands out, with regard to both power and records (one often leads to the other). They were the Buganda kingdom, one of many ethnic groups that were settled within the later borders of Uganda. In the Daily Monitor’s account of “the roots of the nation,” people and culture defined the precolonial episode that also had subheadings as “The age of explorers” and “Bonds of a nation.”

It was probably by the end of ad 1000 that Bantu peoples entered the southern parts of Uganda and by the 15th or 16th century they had developed centralized kingdoms. Bantu peoples included the Baganda, Basoga, Batoro, Banyoro, Banyankole, among other ethnic groups. During the same time, Nilotic language speakers entered from the north. They were the first cattle-herding people in the region, but also relied on crop cultivation for subsistence. Among ethnic groups that speak Eastern Nilotic languages are the Iteso and Karamojong. The Acholi, Langi, and Alur speak Western Nilotic languages. The Lugbara, Madi, and other, smaller ethnic groups in the northwestern corner of the country, who also migrated into Uganda from the north, speak central Sudanic languages. What was coming to be known as Uganda was therefore populated from mainly two directions: the south and the north. According to the Understand Uganda articles, it was migration, and especially the Luo migration, that challenged the different kingdoms. Further, the articles argue, migration accounts for the formation of different kingdoms before the arrival of the Europeans and their impact on political organization: “It is the coming of the Europeans which would finally sort out the positions.”

Colonial Uganda

During the 19th century, linkages beyond the immediate neighboring kingdoms and ethnical groups increased. Firstly, there were Arab merchants who established trade with the Buganda kingdom. Not long after came European explor-

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133 Reid, 2014:352.
134 Byrnes, 1992:49.
ers, missionaries, and, with them, trade companies. During the “scramble for Africa” following the Berlin conference of 1884–1885, Uganda became a British sphere of influence and by 1894 Uganda had become a British protectorate. In colonial times, boundaries were mainly defined by diplomatic negotiations and there was little concern for the consequences they could have on ethnic groups or in what way they would undermine social, religious, or political order. Knowledge of populations and traditions of mobility were of marginal consideration.\textsuperscript{137} This was the case not only on an international level, but also within the colony when collaborators to the British were rewarded land for their services. The boundaries of Uganda evolved during the 1890s and were constituted in 1902. The land that was to be known as Uganda included many ethnic groups with different languages and cultures, all placed under the British sphere of influence. Boundaries in the south were within the German sphere of influence, and in the west, they were marked by the Belgian-controlled Congo Free State.\textsuperscript{138} But most of all, Uganda connoted to Buganda, the territory ruled by the Kabaka, the Buganda king.

In precolonial times, the Kabaka was the giver of land. Chiefs held land at the pleasure of the king and if they were dismissed or retired, the land was returned to the king. The prestige of a chief was solely dependent on the number of farmers he could attract to his land and, by extension, mobilize for war if the king commanded it. Since land tenure was not granted permanently to the chiefs, the farmers could easily shift allegiance. Serfdom was, hence, a poor description of the precolonial farmers in Buganda. Following the Buganda Agreement of 1900 and the subsequent Buganda Land Law of 1908, both signed between a representative of the Kabaka and the British colonial government, land could be bought and sold. Consequently, the colonial system divorced the ownership of land from political responsibilities. But the Buganda Agreement did not affect only Buganda and its people, since Uganda also consisted of land outside of the Buganda kingdom, to which the Kabaka was also assigned to be the king, in terms of the agreement. Peterson states that the British colonial administration was “deliberately ignorant of the multi-linguistic diversity of Uganda’s people.”\textsuperscript{139} Hence, the protectorate administration created the division of the territory between the Bantu-speaking kingdoms of the south.

\textsuperscript{137} Adefuye, 1985:55.
\textsuperscript{138} Kibuuka, 2012:60-62.
\textsuperscript{139} Peterson, 2015:51.
and the Nilotic- and Sudanic-speaking peoples of the north. To Allen and Vlassenroot, it is this legacy that restricted the development of Uganda into an integrated nation.

**Postcolonial Uganda**

The magazine *Understand Uganda* named the chapter on the postcolonial era “Fifty years of Independence.” The attainment of Independence in Uganda was not violent. Granting Uganda Independence was in line with British policy throughout the empire – a policy that was externally caused by World War II, but also a new world order where both the Soviet Union and the United States of America accelerated the decolonizing processes around the world. During the 1940s and 1950s, parties begun to be formed in Uganda. Mainly three parties fought for power in the first elections: Kabaka Yekka, the party of the Bugandan king, which had separatist goals. The Democratic Party of the Bugandan elite who wanted a united Uganda was supported mainly in the south. And, lastly, there was the Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC) led by Milton Obote, with support of the north. In 1962, general elections were held and an alliance between the UPC and Kabaka Yekka provided the opportunity to form a coalition government, with Milton Obote as the Prime Minister. This was the government when Uganda gained Independence on October 9th, 1962, with Edward Mutesa II as Uganda’s first president. The partnership between the UPC and Kabaka Yekka was a fragile alliance of two fairly weak parties where each party functionary represented a local constituency, in a country where most constituencies were ethnically distinct. In short, this was a system that resembled a client–patronage system.

In 1966, Idi Amin, on Obote’s order, attacked the palace of Kabaka Edward Mutesa and ended the kingdom that had thrived for 500 years on the shores of Lake Victoria. Obote now became president and kingdoms were banned in Uganda. In 1971, Obote’s military commander, Idi Amin, staged a coup and overthrew Obote. One of Idi Amin’s first acts was to murder Langi and Acholi soldiers in the army in order to control the army. Idi Amin’s reign has been the subject of many books and films, a regime of a dictator characterized by deport-

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142 Parliament of Uganda, 20160925.
tation of Asians and war on Tanzania, but also by many cruel acts against his own people.

After the removal of Idi Amin in 1979, supported by Tanzania, the next few years saw the reign of a succession of different presidents in Uganda. The first was Yusuf Kironde Lule (April 13th, 1979, to June 20th, 1979), followed by Godfrey Lukungwa Binaisa (June 20th, 1979, to May 12th, 1980). Binaisa was deposed and a military commission ruled the country. In December 1980, Milton Obote was reelected – before he was ousted by General Tito Okello Lutwa, who assumed office on July 29th, 1985. When Okello with his largely Acholi army, the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA), ousted Obote and became president he immediately started peace negotiations with Museveni, who was waging a guerrilla war in the bush, first against Obote and later against Okello.144 Museveni disregarded Okello’s peace negotiations and soon after marched into Kampala to oust Okello, on January 26th, 1986. This was, according to Allen and Vlassenroot,145 the reason for many subsequent claims that Museveni could not be trusted and did not really want reconciliation. Museveni had waged the 5-year bush war with the support of the National Resistance Army (NRA), largely consisting of soldiers from his own region, the southwest and central–south of the country. This was an area that had strong antipathy towards the government, which it perceived to be dominated by the north.146

Thirty years later, in February 2016, Museveni was elected for yet another term of office. This was the third presidential election he has won since the multiparty system was reintroduced in Uganda in 2005 (elections were held in 2006, 2011, and 2016). In fact, however, Museveni has been president of Uganda since January 1986, when the National Resistance Movement (NRM) came to power following the capture of Kampala by the NRA. Consequently, Museveni has been the president of Uganda for 30 years, the lion’s share of the country’s postcolonial history. This period has seen both positive and negative developments. The regime of Museveni has been praised for managing the HIV/AIDS epidemic and Uganda was among the first countries in Africa to significantly increase the number of women in both its legislature and government. In Uganda, Museveni has also been praised for his restoration of the kingdoms which had been banned by Obote in 1966. Economically, Museveni returned

144 Byrnes, 1992:33-34.
146 Ibid.
confiscated properties to Asians, who had been ousted by Idi Amin in 1972, and Uganda’s gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate has had a positive development. On the other hand, the regime has been accused of violating human rights, especially freedom of speech and assembly, besides being corrupt. Also, the period under Museveni’s leadership has been characterized by conflicts. The most notable of these has been the 20-year-long civil war in Northern Uganda, often referred to as the “UPDF–LRA war,” alluding to the conflict between the Uganda People’s Defence Force (UPDF) and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), with its notorious commander Joseph Kony. According to Adam Branch, each rebel movement in Acholiland (a Northern region of Uganda) after 1986 was an attempt to impose internal order on the Acholi people – an attempt to “create internal order through military struggle against a common enemy, all cast in ethnic terms.”

Today, there is no unified view that peace and reconciliation has been achieved. The LRA never signed the peace agreement in 2008. Also, there is widespread displacement of people as a result of the UPDF policy to remove people from rural areas where they are a risk in terms of assisting the rebels. The number of people who have been forced into internal displacement (IDP) camps has been extraordinary – more than one and a half million people. The government has not been held accountable for many of the human rights violations conducted during the conflict.

The Ugandan school

The Ugandan formal educational system, which is the contextual background of this study, was founded during the colonial era, as is the case in many African countries. This was strongly criticized by representatives of the newly independent states of Africa in the 1960s. For instance, Julius Nyerere, the late president of Tanzania, criticized the Tanzanian school system, which, he stated, embodied the worst of two systems. It was the missionaries who founded formal education in many countries in Africa during the inchoate emergence of the colonial era. Uganda was no exception in this case. Formal education became a colonial inheritance of the newly independent states. Ssekamwa’s

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147 Branch, 2010:25.
149 Nyerere, 1968.
150 Odaet, 1990:11.
book *History and Development of Education in Uganda* deals with this issue.\textsuperscript{151} Ssekamwa describes a struggle between indigenous (precolonial) education and the formal education built on Western guidelines and introduced by the missionaries in 1877, regarding what knowledge was; a struggle that continues to date. This tug of war has, according to Ssekamwa, resulted in an education system that has been neither truly African nor European.\textsuperscript{152}

The Ugandan school system has similarities with the British school system. Primary school lasts 7 years, followed by secondary school, Ordinary level, for 4 years and, finally, upper secondary school, Advanced level, which lasts 2 years. The Ugandan National Examination Board (UNEB) is an authority whose main function is to conduct national examinations on various levels and award certificates, for instance the Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) at Ordinary level and the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) at Advanced level. This order was inherited from the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES).\textsuperscript{153}

An observer of a history lesson for upper secondary students in a classroom in Uganda is first impressed by the transparency of the objectives of instruction. After reviewing last lesson, the teacher gives an introduction of today’s topic and carefully outlines the lesson on the blackboard. The questions posed usually deal with issues like causality and consequence, or assessment of historical events and their impact on development. At the end of the lesson, the students review the lesson, which means in practice repeating the answers given to them. In fact, the majority of the lesson is dedicated to the activity of giving and taking notes. Generally speaking, teaching in Uganda is centered on a question–answer approach, a transmission-oriented instruction focused on memorization and factual information – memorization of content determined by the UNEB syllabi.\textsuperscript{154}

The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) in Uganda, an institution under the Ministry of Education and Sports, with the mission to initiate, develop, and evaluate existing and new curricula on various levels, recognized

\textsuperscript{151} Ssekamwa, 1997.
\textsuperscript{152} Semali, 1999: 512-513. Semali’s review of Ssekamwa’s book is up to the point when it concludes that the backdrop of the book is both the lack of critical analysis, references and bibliography.
\textsuperscript{154} UNEB, 2008.
the transmission-oriented approach when they published complementary syllabi in the spring of 2013\textsuperscript{155}, stating in their preamble that “For a long time teachers have been using UNEB syllabi to plan their teaching schemes. This approach has rendered the curriculum to be largely driven by examination.”\textsuperscript{156} A teacher interlocutor commented on the frequent use of note taking: “It is the teacher who gets the blame. If the students do not do well on exams, it is not the student who did not study. Everybody blames the teacher – the Head, the parents, the students.”\textsuperscript{157} The picture drawn by the NCDC, of an examination-driven school, and the mentioned quote give an indication of the expectations put on teachers to help the students pass their examinations. The method of teaching outlined above and the fact that the curriculum in Uganda is largely driven by examinations, is well in line with findings from research conducted on History education, and policy debates all over the world.\textsuperscript{158} This situation also makes it relevant to examine the syllabus to gain a picture of History education in Uganda.

The objectives of upper secondary History education are important as a contextual background to the students’ narratives. Though the objectives cannot demonstrate what really occurred or what was learnt in the classrooms, they do show what the government of Uganda perceives as the aim of History education. The objectives of History education in Uganda will be outlined in the following chapter. The intention here is not to investigate whether the students know what is expected of them, as in a reception study, but, rather, to describe what History education in Uganda is aiming for, in order to contextualize the student narratives.

\textit{General objectives of Advanced History education}

The syllabus of the UNEB outlines six general aims for the study of History, or, more precisely, the History course for upper secondary school, at Advanced level. These are to: provide the students with a sound knowledge and under-

\textsuperscript{155} A syllabus that was meant to be implemented in 2017, according to teacher interlocutors.
\textsuperscript{156} NCDC 2013:iii Notetaking as instruction is a time-consuming practice. The advice, from the NCDC, was that one double lesson (80 min) should be allocated to complete the syllabi within the two year course (NCDC, 2013:341) Note: The schools visited during the present study all used at least three times that amount, often more.
\textsuperscript{157} Field notes, 20131002.
\textsuperscript{158} Von Borries, 2011:281.
standing of history; encourage historical research and use of a wide variety of source materials; help students develop the ability to relate historical events to the present; encourage students to develop systematic appreciation of the major economic and social issues being tackled by the present day governments; stimulate thought and discussion by use of historical case studies; and further the development of the students’ skills in expressing historical ideas in a more coherent and logical manner. 159

The first two aims of the syllabus are probably standard and need no further discussion here. The third and the fourth aim, however, suggest that history be used to understand the present. The third aim suggests this in more general terms, as it states that the student should develop the ability to relate historical events to the present. The fourth aim, however, is more normatively formulated as it states that students should develop appreciation for issues being tackled by present day governments.

In Advanced level History in Uganda, six different papers are offered. 160 These papers can be viewed as different History courses. The student chooses two out of the six papers during the 2-year course of Advanced level History. The various papers to choose from say something about UNEB’s outlook on history. While Ordinary level History deals with African history from ad 1000 to Independence, the papers of Advanced level history cover the modern history of Africa, Europe, and the rest of the world. All students participating in this study had selected European History, 1789–1970 (Paper 3). This paper was mandatory, according to students, teachers, and head teachers. 162 Besides this paper, 160 Whereas the UNEB referred to them as “papers” the NCDC spoke of “units.” The concept of a paper is largely associated with examinations, but since it has already been concluded that the Ugandan system is largely driven by examinations, the word “papers” will be used here instead of “units.”


162 The papers form three different groups; group A includes Paper 1 and 2, group B Paper 3 and 4 and group C Paper 5 and 6. The student had to choose two different papers from different groups. According to teachers and students we spoke to, Paper 3 was mandatory and one additional paper was selected by the student. The most common choice in the study population was Paper 1 and, in some cases, Paper 6. According to the UNEB and NCDC, Paper 3 was not mandatory, but a choice as described above. This is confirmed by the examination timetable for U.A.C.E. for 2013, where Papers 1 and 2 are examined sim-
the participating students had either chosen *Africa: National Movements and New States* or *History of Africa, 1855–1914*. These three papers will therefore be the focus of the discussion on history objectives in this chapter. In the spring of 2013, during the data production for this study, the NCDC published a new teaching syllabus on their website with the aim of suggesting teaching and learning strategies that recognize the effects of the examination-driven system. According to the NCDC, the new teaching syllabi largely cover the same content as before. Teacher interlocutors claimed they were aware of the NCDC syllabus and said that they had discussed it to see whether they could “marry” the two syllabi. The new syllabus will not be implemented until 2017, but the two syllabi were discussed among the staff at Ugandan schools during the data production of the study. In examining objectives of History education in Uganda, we have studied both the UNEB syllabus and the NCDC syllabus. The fact that, at the time of data collection, the teachers discussed both syllabi makes it relevant to look at both. However, the UNEB is the assessment body and, hence, in charge of examinations. Their syllabus was therefore regarded as the important syllabus.

*Africa and Europe – topics and objectives of the papers*

What were the specific objectives and content of the papers studied by the participating students? In this chapter, the objectives of the different papers chosen by the students will be outlined. The papers examined convey the history encountered by the students in the classroom. A focus has been on the objectives; hence the content has been looked at from the perspective of the papers’ objectives. However, it should be noted that the review only focuses on School History at a policy level. In addition, as research has shown, there is not always a strong correlation between the objectives of national curricula and what really takes place in the classroom. Nevertheless, the syllabus at policy level can be

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ultaneously, as are Papers 3 and 4, and Papers 5 and 6. As a consequence, it would be impossible to be examined on Paper 4 if Paper 3 was mandatory.

163 The paper on National movements was selected more often than Paper 6. According to teacher interlocutors, this was because *History of Africa, 1855-1914* was considered harder than *Africa: National Movements and New States*. The researcher tried to get hold of statistics from the UNEB in June 2014; however, without receiving a response. How many students chose which papers can therefore not be answered at this point. In the study, all students took Paper 3, *European History*, and as second paper 18 took Paper 6 (*History of Africa, 1855-1914*) whereas 55 took Paper 1 (*Africa: National Movements and New States*).
viewed as an expression of the government’s views on School History and, as such, as a public narrative and part of the historical culture. The three different papers will be discussed chronologically and according to geographic region (Africa and Europe). Paper 6, History of Africa, 1855–1914, will therefore be discussed first. Secondly, Paper 1, Africa: National movements and new states and lastly, Paper 3 on European History, 1789–1970.

The paper on History of Africa between 1855 and 1914 had a focus on Africa being colonized and in terms of colonization was not limited to the demarcation years 1855–1914. Objectives of paper 6 are presented in Table 4 below.

| Table 4: Objectives of Paper 6: History of Africa, 1855–1914\(^{164}\) |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| ‘Aims’ of the UNEB | ‘Objectives’ of the NCDC |
| To enable students to obtain an understanding of the process by which African societies lost their independence in the period 1855–1914. | To understand the organization of African societies before colonialism and the process by which African societies lost their independence in the period 1855–1914. |
| To enable students to understand the impact of European colonial rule on Africa. | To appreciate the impact of European colonial rule on African societies. |
| To enable students to obtain an understanding of the African initiative in response to the new situation. | To analyze the African initiative in response to the new situation. |
| | To analyze situations in their communities as future community leaders. |

The objectives suggest a focus on causes and consequences of colonialism and also an emphasis on resistance. The objectives can be interpreted as content-focused and, hence, provided a framework for the content of the paper.\(^{165}\)

Paper 6, focused on African societies in 1855 during the scramble for, and partitioning of, Africa, as well as the colonial administration, colonial economic exploitation and development, and finally, the missionary factor in Africa. All

\(^{164}\) UNEB, 2008:38, and NCDC, 2013:517.

\(^{165}\) The NCDC presented one additional objective. Students were to analyze the situation in their communities as future leaders. While it is hard to interpret the implications of the objective on History education, it is clear that this objective focuses on History as a political subject and aims to connect the past to the present and the future.
of these themes were encountered through different “national” experiences. It was not the history of Uganda or other national narratives that was addressed, but, rather the history of Africa through different experiences of individual countries. Ugandan ethnic groups as examples of African societies, for instance, appeared in the NCDC syllabus,166 as did the Buganda agreement and the Mutesa I collaboration. Kabarega’s resistance appeared as an example of a response to the colonial encounter.167 Uganda was presented as an example of British indirect rule policy.168 However, the syllabus objectives strengthened the sentiment that the course objectives provided a framework for the content, which told the story of Africa simplistically, where the actual history of Africa is complex and diverse. The focus of the African paper was on content rather than historical reasoning. These objectives were specific to the paper, however, and not general aims of History education. The roots to Africa’s history are, hence, to be found in the shared experience of colonialism and the paper is intended to focus on a traditional narrative and the origin of modern Africa.

In Paper 1, on Africa’s National Movements and New States, African societies that have become African states are discussed. The paper focused on historical experiences of individual countries. Aims are to develop knowledge of the national movements and the birth of the new states of Africa, as well as to develop an understanding of the historical roots of contemporary Africa.169 To focus entirely on the rise of new states would negate understanding of change and aspects of a genetic narrative. The historical experiences of the individual countries often tend to be used as an argument for exemplary narrative – in this case, an African experience.

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166 Thirteen African tribes were mentioned as examples of African societies. Among these were the Buganda and Bunyoro from Uganda, mentioned together with the Iteso. NCDC, 2013:518.
167 Again were the Buganda and the Bunyoro represented, with mention of Mutesa of the Buganda and Kabarega of the Bunyoro. NCDC, 2013:533.
168 The NCDC provided one additional objective regarding content. This was to also acknowledge external factors affecting the rise of national movements in Africa.
The general aim of History education from the UNEB’s syllabus, namely, to develop a systematic appreciation of the major economic and social issues being tackled by the present day governments, reappeared in Paper 1. The equivalent formulation in the paper was “to develop an understanding of the historical roots of the problems of modern Africa and sympathy for the various efforts being made to overcome them.” The NCDC had nearly the same formulation and additionally gave the objective to: “develop a sense of patriotism among students using historical data.”

In the UNEB syllabus, the paper on *Africa: National movements and New States* was organized around four main topics: “The Development of African Nationalism;” “The New States: Modernization and Internal Problems;” “External

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Problems of the New States;” and, finally, “The Military in Africa.” Only the African nationalism topic had a subttopic explicitly dealing with Ugandan history: The subttopic on the struggle for self-government had a heading on politics and nationalism in Uganda.\textsuperscript{171} The NCDC syllabus provided five main topics, but not much was different otherwise. However, most notable was the mention of Uganda among the headings. The NCDC syllabus contained subttopics on: “Nationalism in Uganda 1945–1961;” “The military coup in Uganda (1971);” and, finally, “The civil war in Uganda, 1980–1986.” The last mentioned was a NCDC subttopic that did not feature in the UNEB syllabus.\textsuperscript{172} The specific objectives on the topic were to: examine the causes of the civil war, account for its success, examine its outcome, and assess the achievements of the NRM since 1986.\textsuperscript{173}

The NCDC syllabus gives some direction with regard to interpreting the relation between the objectives of the paper and the five different topics of the syllabus (instead of UNEBs four topics). “The emergence of African Nationalism”\textsuperscript{174} is described as: African nationalists’ dedication to regaining Independence. The attainment of Independence was possible through both internal and external factors. The objective of the topic is appreciation of events that have led to development of African nationalism. The objective of the subttopic “The struggle for self-government” is to give an understanding of the challenges faced. Regarding the topic of “The New States: Modernization and Internal Problems,” it was concluded by the NCDC that national unity could be achieved by observing the ideology, political parties, religion, and language. The general objective of the topic was that the students should “appreciate the challenges faced by the new states in the process of modernization.”\textsuperscript{175} The objective of the topic “Regional economic groupings and international relations”\textsuperscript{176} was to enable the students to discuss Pan-Africanism and regional economic cooperation. Finally, the fifth topic, “The Military Africa,” concerned the many military takeovers in post-Independence Africa, “caused by the civilians who

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{171} UNEB, 2008:24-28.
\item \textsuperscript{172} The UNEB syllabi have been abridged more compared to the NCDC syllabi.
\item \textsuperscript{173} NCDC, 2013:365.
\item \textsuperscript{174} “The Development of African Nationalism” in the UNEB syllabi.
\item \textsuperscript{175} An interesting subttopic on modernization and internal problems was Nationalizing Education, the specific objective of which was to examine the value of syllabus review and the pronounced methodology to use discussions to teach the students about the weaknesses of colonial education.
\item \textsuperscript{176} “External Problems of the New States” in the UNEB syllabi.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
could not meet the expectations of the people [sic]. The objective of this topic was to assess the impact of military rule in Africa. Generally, the objective of the different topics was focused on Africa, and not historical inquiry.

The paper that covered the largest time span was the paper on European history. The paper begins with the French Revolution and ends during the Cold War. The objectives are focused on the causes and consequences of historical events in Europe. However, the UNEB syllabus also focuses on the consequences of these events and their effect on the world community and a discussion of how the new states of Africa could handle similar problems as faced by Europe in the past.

The European history paper had 15 topics with subtopics (versus eleven topics in the NCDC syllabus), ranging from the French Revolution to the Cold War in 1945–1970. The history of Europe was given an “end date.” The demise of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Empire, the Balkan War, or the revolutions of Eastern Europe had no place in this history. As one teacher remarked, “African history is so interesting. Look at Tunisia and Libya – the revolutions. African

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177 NCDC, 2013:376.
180 The correct number would be twelve as the tenth topic was counted twice. Nevertheless, examining and comparing both the topics and sub-topics of the two syllabuses the conclusion was clear. The content was intact and not changed in the revised syllabus.
history is continuous; Europe’s [history] ends in 1970.” An understandable comment, given that in the reference literature on the topic, proposed by the NCDC, ten books out of eleven were published between 1955 and 1988. The political outlook on European history might seem obvious: Starting with the French Revolution and Napoleon Bonaparte, the history then turns to a discussion of the Vienna settlement and the congress system, and on, via European revolutions and the unification of Italy and Germany, to the Eastern Question and the two World Wars, and finally ends with the Cold War. Comparing the NCDC and the UNEB syllabi, the main difference is that the NCDC gives general objectives for each topic, as well as listing specific objectives and content for each of the subtopics. For instance, studying the Eastern Question, the student should be able to understand the challenges faced by the European powers and, in addition, comprehend how African powers can learn from this. The Eastern Question was a topic which African countries could use to learn how to solve similar events. The European Unification struggles of the 19th century demonstrated how important unity is in nation building. Through studying the revolutions of 1815–1830, the students could understand the causes of revolutions in Europe and “how such situations could be avoided in Africa.” The general objectives of topics detailed in the NCDC syllabus mirror the general aims of the paper, although possibly only on a policy level and not in practice. The objective “how these problems can be handled in the new states of African” (see Table 6), however, clearly demanded an exemplary approach, since it focused on lessons learnt.

**Conclusive discussion on Advanced level History**

This chapter has outlined a brief description of History instruction in Ugandan upper secondary schools. This has been done partly through observations made by the researcher and mainly on a policy level, by examining the objectives of the three different papers studied by the students participating in the study. All studied *European History, 1789–1970*, and in addition they took either: *History of Africa, 1855–1914*, or *Africa: National Movements and New States.*

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181 Field notes, Teacher interlocutor, 20121123.
182 Comparing the reference literature given by the NCDC on European history to the one on history of Africa it was noticeable that the books of European history far outnumbered those on African history. However, only three were written in the 21st century, while the other 24 references were published between 1908 and 1988.
183 NCDC, 2013:424.
184 NCDC, 2013:419.
The two African papers covered the immediate precolonial history, colonialism, Independence, and present day struggles of the governments of the new African states. The paper on Europe was linked to Africa through its objectives to understand causes and consequences of European events and compare these to African history. The objectives were not to present historical causes as complex, or to demonstrate that change is driven by multiple causes, and results in multiple consequences. The objectives were phrased in a manner that suggests that history demonstrates the inevitable.

The titles of the papers suggest a supranational History content, and in reality, the papers related to different African states or African societies. Given the objectives, it could be argued that the syllabus imposed an African framework, whose content was examples from different African states/societies. Focusing Africa in the objectives resulted in national narratives that could be both traditional and exemplary, using Rüsen’s typology. One could therefore surmise that the syllabi aimed at an African identity rather than a national Ugandan identity. The general aims of History education in Uganda might counteract this, but the description of an examination-driven school above makes this improbable.

The general aims of the UNEB syllabus included one rather broad, overall objective, which was to: “encourage students to develop systematic appreciation of the major economic and social issues being tackled by the present day governments.” This objective was reflected in one of the papers, namely, *Africa: National Movements and New States*. The general objective of this paper aims at developing an understanding of the historical roots of the problems of modern Africa and sympathy for the various efforts being made to overcome them. On both a general level and at the level of the paper, the objectives emphasize African states and governments and, hence, an African experience that is to be focused, rather than a national, Ugandan experience. It could be argued that different examples of national history of the rise of national movements and the causes behind the formation of new states in Africa enhanced an African framework, especially since the objectives did not emphasize variation or historical inquiry. Africa and the experience of being colonized could therefore be understood as a schematic narrative template under which the examples of individual states worked as specific narrative templates, to use the concept of cul-

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185 Seixas et al., 2013:104-115.
tural tools as presented by Wertsch.\textsuperscript{186} Africa, first under colonization, then independent and struggling in a postcolonial era, could hence be understood as a meta-narrative, a storyline that applied to all countries on the African continent.

History instruction in Uganda is characterized by note-taking, suggesting that memorization of content is encouraged. Students of such approaches to history may recount the general contours of a nation building narrative, according to VanSledright.\textsuperscript{187} However, research also shows that students of multiethnic states do not often relate to such narratives. To James Wertsch, the narrative as a cultural tool is important to the process of remembering, which in turn requires an agent.\textsuperscript{188} At the same time, research shows that different schematic narrative templates (meta-narratives) may imbue and distort historical accounts.

\textsuperscript{186} Wertsch, 2011.
\textsuperscript{188} Wertsch, 2007:11-12.
Chapter 5: The History of Uganda since its Beginnings

The subject of History is associated with a national narrative. Uganda has been an independent state for little more than 50 years and its boundaries during this time have remained intact. Within its boundaries, however, ethnic groups have lived together for a long time and the country is better described as a multi-ethnic state than a nation state. Internationally, the reign of Idi Amin in the 1970s is one of the better known stories of Uganda, and, more recently, so is the conflict between the Ugandan state and the LRA. But what do Ugandan students include when narrating the history of Uganda?

Four episodes in Ugandan history

The very first narrative the students produced was a genetic narrative on the history of Uganda since its beginnings, although some students took their point of departure from their current situation or structured their narrative around a person. It is possible, or even likely, that a genetic assignment such as this can never be extracted without any genealogical considerations. Decisions have to be made regarding what to include and what to exclude, in a story as comprehensive as that of a nation; a beginning has to be chosen. The main bulk of narratives began with what the narrator perceived as the beginning of Uganda, and then continued with the nation’s historical development – a development that was mainly political in character, although this was not surprising, since the assignment presupposed a conceptualization of the Ugandan nation. The following example has been chosen from the empirical body of student narratives to exemplify some common references to the past among the genetic narratives that signified Ugandan history, according to the student narrators:

The history of Uganda is not all that very clear. But as I know different tribes migrated into Uganda in the early centuries for example the Bugandas, Luo, Nilotics Nilohamites and many other tribes. After reach Uganda they settled in different places. Later different Europeans came to Uganda for different purposes, for example some came to spread Christianity, others came as colonialists. The country, which colonised Uganda, was British where by they declared Uganda a British protectorate in 1894. They rule Uganda until 1962 that is when they granted independent for Uganda. From 1962 dif-

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189 Examples that departed from the present were 1BCU19 and 4BNU1, which were structured around Idi Amin as a personage.
Four different episodes emerged through the above narrative. The precolonial episode “in the early centuries” is characterized by migration and the populating of the area that was to become Uganda.\textsuperscript{190} This was followed by the colonial episode, with references to the coming of Europeans, both as missionaries and as colonists. The third episode, Independence which was achieved in 1962, was referred to as a benchmark that signified both the rupture of the colonial bond and the start of the fourth episode, the postcolonial era. The postcolonial episode was largely characterized by references to leaders and presidents.

The example narrative above demonstrates a clear line of succession, with no explicit judgment on the history of Uganda, except for the initial statement that “the history of Uganda is not all that very clear.” Despite this lack of assessment, the four episodes clearly emerge from the narrative. The four episodes of Ugandan history were emphasized differently, as can be seen in the table above.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{Episodes of the genetic narratives}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Narratives & Precolonial & Colonial & Independence & Postcolonial & Number of narratives \\
\hline
A & & & & & 21 \\
B & & & & & 30 \\
C & & & & & 1 \\
D & & & & & 3 \\
E & & & & & 3 \\
F & & & & & 8 \\
G & & & & & 3 \\
H & & & & & 4 \\
Total & 35 & 66 & 63 & 62 & 73 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{190} 6BNU3.
\textsuperscript{191} The term “precolonial” only occurs once among the genetic public narratives (see 4BNU13).
\textsuperscript{192} “Post-Independence” was also used to refer to the period from Independence up to the present day (see 1CCU31 and 4CNU3).
Through narrative analysis, references to the past have been classified into the four episodes, often based on content, for instance when historical concepts, figures, or events were referred to. However, statements about the situation before, for instance colonialism or Independence, have been more closely classified.\(^{193}\) A mere content analysis was therefore not enough. The episodes were not always referred to in chronological order.\(^{194}\) All four episodes were included in 21 of the narratives (shown in row, or category, A of Table 10). To 30 of the narrators, Ugandan history began with colonialism and hence lacked a precolonial episode (category B), which was also the case for eight additional narratives (categories C, D, and H). A reference to the precolonial episode was hence the least common among the narratives. Eleven of the narratives lacked references to a postcolonial and contemporary era (categories E and F). The content of the different episodes will be discussed in the following.

**The precolonial episode**

The episode referred to least was the precolonial episode. Thirty-eight of the 73 narratives did not mention any events or personages from the precolonial\(^ {195}\) era in Uganda. However, 35 narratives did and, among these narratives, two different themes\(^ {196}\) were discernible: The narrators either referred to migration, and hence the populating of the area that was to become Uganda; or discussed the rule of kings, which preceded the coming of colonialists. Often the reference to precolonialism was made in relation to the subsequent episode, colonialism.\(^ {197}\) For instance, the following narrative refers to the colonial episode in the very first line:

> Before the British draw the international (national) boundary (boarder line) to establish Uganda, people lived in this area. The Luo people who migrated from Barhel Gazel in Sudan. The Bantu Luo Amids, Luo Nilotics among others. In 1900 through the signing of Buganda agreement the British imperialist took control of Uganda and rose their flag

\(^{193}\) As statement such as that the development has continued up to date has hence not be seen as a reference to the postcolonial episode (see 1BCU35 or 4BNU13, for instance, which have both been classified into the broader category F).

\(^{194}\) Narratives were sometimes structured around events such as independence (2BCU17) or a personage (2BCU7).

\(^{195}\) The concept of "precolonial" has been discussed in the introductory chapter. It is clear that the concept, as well as the one of "postcolonial," biases in favor of the colonial episode. Nevertheless it has been used in the study as an easy to understand temporal reference.

\(^{196}\) “Themes” are to be understood as themes of content, as has been discussed in the chapter “Analysis of the Data Production.”

\(^{197}\) See 1BNU3, 1BNU6.
(Union Jack). In 1962 9th Oct Uganda attained her independence under the first Prime Minister Dr Apollo Milton Obote a man from Northern Uganda, Lango sub region. The Union Jack was lowered as the Uganda National flag rose up high with the national Anthem being sung. In 1971, there was a coup in Uganda against Iddi Amin Dada regime. There after the coup Amin was overthrown and Obote II took control (rose to power Again). In 1981 there was a civil war led by Yoweri Kaguta Museveni (NRA) The war took place for five years. There after in 1986 the NRA won and came into power under the leadership of H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and overthrow the government of Obote II leading to exile were he died in 2006 10th of Oct. The government of NRA still leads up to date but with different name of NRM government (National Resistant Mov’t) with the army name UPDF (Uganda People Defense force).

Here, the colonial era was used as the point of departure in the narrative’s reference to the precolonial episode as the narrator began the story: “Before the British draw the international boundary […], people lived in this area.” As migration was the only reference to the precolonial episode, it could be interpreted as answering the question of what existed before colonialism. The narratives that had migration as a theme to signify the precolonial episode stated that people already populated the area that was to become Uganda, before the coming of missionaries, explorers, and colonialists. In short, because there were people already inhabiting the land, the episode was significant. However, another interpretation is to look at the theme as a reference among others: The theme could be stating that Uganda is a multiethnic state. The narratives that discussed the theme of the rule of kings could also be interpreted as being dependent on the colonial episode. In the following narrative, it is argued that Uganda used to be self-reliant before the foreigners (Arabs and Europeans) entered the scene:

With the history of Uganda, Uganda used to be a self reliant country centralised and running on the basis of kingdoms. They Include Buganda, Ankole, Bunyoro among others. Each Kingdom had its own king and was supposed to take care of his own subjects. Later on foreigners started entering Uganda due to the their own interests. The first group was of the Arabs who were traders and in the same way spread out Islam. Christians also entered Uganda with time, they spread out Christianity and abolished slave trade. They were followed by the explorers, who led to the scramble and partition of Africa.

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198 4BNU4.
199 See 1BNU5, 6BNU3, 1BCU13, and 1BCU34.
200 2BCU4.
Before foreigners entered the stage, the local peoples used to be independent and ruled by kingdoms. Several references to the rule of kings were made to illustrate that the area was organized socially, politically, and economically before colonialization.\textsuperscript{201} One narrator pointed out that the only setback was after independence:

Politically, Ugandans lived under kingdoms and chiefdoms. These kingdoms comprised specific tribes and had rulers known as kings. For instance Buganda had a "Kabaka", Acholi had "Rwot", Banyoro had "Omukama", the Basoga "Kyabazinga" and many others. These kingdoms existed even when the British colonialists administrered Uganda. Even after the departure of these colonialists, the kingdoms were carried on until Milton Obote (who liberated Uganda from the colonialists) dissolved them. However Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni revived them and are still operational up to now.\textsuperscript{202}

Most common, however, among the narratives that included the theme of the rule of kings was to acknowledge the presence of kingdoms together with references to the colonization of Uganda.

The history of Uganda started as with the name Ganda and when the colonial power came it was added as Uganda because it was difficult for the colonial power (Britain) to pronounce that word Ganda. Uganda was ruled by kings on top "kabaka" and later assisted by chiefs in the palace of the kabaka and then small chief doms. The system was organised socially, politically and economically. The presidents of Uganda that time were known as Dr Milliton Obote, Admin Dada and finally the present is Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. Uganda got her independence on 9th October 1962 after the British colonial rule and its located in the east of Africa bordered by Kenya in the east, Tanzania in the south, DRCongo in west and in north its Sudan and finally south west is Rwanda. Uganda is associated with many ethnic groups namely Bantu speaking which includes Baganda, Banyakole, Bakiga, Bagisu, Basogo etc. and the Nilotes, Hamites etc.\textsuperscript{203}

References to both migration and the rule of kings can, consequently, be interpreted as significant. Migration also had significance, however, because it explained where different ethnic groups originated from before they settled in Uganda and because it confirmed that Uganda is a multiethnic country.\textsuperscript{204} To summarize, the references to migration and kingdoms demonstrate that something existed before the colonialists came, namely that people populated the

\textsuperscript{201} See 4BNU13, 1BCU5, 2BCU20
\textsuperscript{202} 2BNU1:67-76
\textsuperscript{203} 1BCU26. See also 1BCU35, 2BCU10, 2BCU20, 1BNU3, 1BNU6, 4BNU12.
\textsuperscript{204} Which in turn presupposed the colonial boundaries.
area and were organized.\textsuperscript{205} The precolonial episode in the student narratives could therefore be described as an initial state of being – as something that preceded the subsequent situation of either colonialization or Independence. Hence, the initial analysis of the narrative plot could be said to be characterized by migration and the rule of kings, although fewer than half of the narrators referred to this initial state. Also, only 14 out of the 35 narratives covering this episode originated from the north of Uganda. Hence, only 28\% of narrators in Northern Uganda included the precolonial episode, compared to 58\% in Central Uganda.

**The colonial episode**

If the precolonial episode was characterized as an initial state, the colonial episode was presented as a state of change that challenged the initial situation, according to the narrators. No less than 66 narratives included the colonial episode in their narratives,\textsuperscript{206} almost twice the number that mentioned the precolonial episode, making it the episode most written about.\textsuperscript{207} However, the colonial era was not explicitly assessed, or not to a great extent. The bulk of narratives did not describe this episode, but just mentioned the fact or a short episode in the form of an abbreviated narrative.\textsuperscript{208} References were made to catchphrases and terms associated with the colonial episode, such as “the scramble for Africa” and “the partitioning of Africa,” and the concepts of “protectorate” and “indirect rule” (as well as “direct rule”) were included; however, these were rare and sparsely described.\textsuperscript{209} That colonialism was regarded as significant cannot, however, be neglected. Out of 73 narratives, 30 referred to colonialization in the opening sentence. Colonialism and the colonial episode were described as either a state of change or a state of crisis.

\textsuperscript{205} Many narratives used \textit{location} as their point of departure, for example stating that Uganda is one of the East African countries (see 1BCU19, 1BNU1, 4BNU5).
\textsuperscript{206} The difference in percentage between the two regions was small. Altogether 92\% in Northern Uganda included the colonial episode, compared to 89\% in Central Uganda.
\textsuperscript{207} Among the seven narratives that did not include a colonial episode three were entirely occupied with the postcolonial episode and contemporary developments. The remaining four narratives mainly focused on either contemporary developments or a personage and excluded the colonial episode. As an example of category G (a narrative that excluded the colonial episode), see 4BNU7; for a narrative focused on the postcolonial episode (category D), see 1BCU7.
\textsuperscript{208} Rüsen, 2004:102.
\textsuperscript{209} Six, seven, and seven narratives, respectively.
According to the following narrative, Uganda’s history started with Independence; however, the narrative did not lack references to the colonial episode:

To me Uganda had its begin from the time of Independence in the early 1960’s. Basically before the 1960’s Uganda as a country did not exists but only different tribes for example Baganda when were being colonised by the British. Through many different factors for example rise of able leaders, the desire for people to get Independence from the whites, political parties etc. Uganda got its Independence in the early 1960’s. The first president of Uganda was called Milton Obote. He and his party fought for Uganda’s Independence raising the Uganda flag consisting colours of black, yellow and red. From his time many presidents came to power up to our present day president Yoweri Kaguta Museveni who came in power through a military coup, made against Idi Amin who was a dictator. The political, economic and social events have changed greatly.  

This was a fairly common way to refer to the colonial episode: being “colonized by the British,” which, by extension, meant subsequently gaining Independence from them. The narrators tended to use the words “colonized,” “colonization,” “colonialists,” “colonial,” as well as “foreigners,” “whites,” and “Europeans,” to refer to the colonial past, although there were also a remarkable number of references to “the British” and “Britain.” In all, 117 references were made to either “the British” or “Britain” in no fewer than 56 narratives, both as synonym for, and a description of, colonization. In fact, the mention of Britain and “the British” was as common as the mention of “colonialism” (or “colonialization,” “colonialists,” “colonial,” etc.): 49 of the narratives included the word “British” while describing a colonial episode. This is in comparison to the references made to “Ugandan(s),” of which there were 28. Even though references to colonialism were not evaluations, in many cases it was clear that colonialization was seen as a rupture of development. 

The history of Uganda has not been good at all since the British came and colonised it and began using oppressive policies such as forced labour. And the civil wars that took place during the time Museveni took over power, which led to displacement of people and Idi Amini dada who chased the Asians out of Uganda. Although later on the Brit-

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1BCU12.

211 The term “foreigners” as a reference to colonialism is not without problems. I would hesitate to use the term in a content analysis since the term was used in several situations. See 3BNU1 as an example of “foreigners” being used instead of “colonialists,” but also 1BCU23, which refers to Arabs and Europeans.

212 The word “British” can both refer to a British citizen as to a phenomenon characterized as British. “Ugandan” appeared in 28 narratives, which included the plural, “Ugandans,” used in 22 narratives.
ish granted Uganda Independence where by the union jack was lowered down and there was rising of the Uganda National flag.\textsuperscript{213}

The decline described in the narrative above was started by British colonization and continued with the displacement of people during Museveni’s struggle for power and Idi Amin’s policy to force the Indian population out of Uganda. The narrative could even be interpreted as arguing that both Museveni’s and Idi Amin’ reigns could be placed within the colonial era. However, it is likely that the narrative was not intended to be understood chronologically.\textsuperscript{214} Colonialization was referred to as a change in Ugandan history, which was not good for the Ugandan people, and even though Uganda has been granted Independence, signs of present suffering among Ugandans can be seen in the postcolonial era, with the examples of Amin and Museveni.\textsuperscript{215}

However, colonialization was not always referred to as causing rupture to development; some narrators held a positive view of colonialization, characterizing it as an episode of great change. To these narrators, the colonial era was an era of development into a modern society, where the precolonial era was an example of a “traditional” society,\textsuperscript{216} as in the following narrative:

Uganda part of Africa, which was regarded as a dark continent was not wellknown to the outside world. It was inhabited by early man who had no clothes and lived on wild fruits and hunting of animals. The Uganda of the time had a number of cultural groups such as Baganda, Basoga, Banyankole among others and these have a similar word in their language “ntu” [human]. In Uganda, the different cultural groups lived on farming and pastoralism. There were also conflicts amongst them for example the Baganda were not in good terms with the Banyankole. Later on the European powers such as Britain, Germany, France came in to get colonies in Uganda/Africa. Uganda was colonised by Britain and they applied indirect rule in their colonisation of Uganda. Uganda of the time had cultural leaders and when the British took over, they allowed them to continue ruling but under their supervision. In Uganda, the most cultural group that welcomed most europeans was Baganda, they welcomed explorers, missionaries and these people helped in the development of Uganda of the time in such a way that they set up Euro-

\textsuperscript{213} 1BCU30.
\textsuperscript{214} See Page 70, narrative 4BNU12, on a discussion of Wills and his concept of misremembering and schematic narrative templates.
\textsuperscript{215} For other examples of narratives that holds a negative view of colonialization, see 1BCU3, 2BCU22, 1BNU1, 3BNU2, 4BNU13, 5BNU3.
\textsuperscript{216} The conceptual distinction between traditional and modern has been discussed in the chapter “The Postcolonial Experience,” page 40.
pean schools, social, economic infrastructure hospitals among others and civilised Uganda as seen to date.\textsuperscript{217}

Under the “supervision” of the British, Uganda became “civilised” through the development of European schools, infrastructure, and hospitals, a development that this narrator viewed as modernizing.\textsuperscript{218} The references made to tribal conflicts in the precolonial era are juxtaposed alongside references to the development seen during the colonial era, which puts the colonial episode in a positive light.

References to historical events and personages during the colonial era were few, no matter whether the narratives held positive or negative views of colonialization, or were indifferent.\textsuperscript{219} Therefore, colonialization was more often referred to as an oppressive era; a rupture in Uganda’s development; but to some, it also brought the end of the traditional society and marked the start of Uganda’s development into a modern society.

\textit{The episode of Independence}

References to the Independence of Uganda were almost as common as references to the colonial era. In total, Independence was included in 63 of the narratives, thus being the single most referred-to event, despite covering the shortest time span out of the four episodes.\textsuperscript{220} The episode was placed at the beginning,\textsuperscript{221} middle, or end\textsuperscript{222} of the narratives. For example, the following narrator chose to structure the narrative around Independence, which was the point of departure for the narrative:

Uganda to became Uganda was after the independence in 1962. But below these year uganda was divided along traditions such as the Buganda, Tesu Anchole, Busoga etc. These were some of division in Uganda. Further still all these were united in terms of political parts such as Democratic Party led by Benuhito Kiwanaku, The Uganda Peo-

\textsuperscript{217} 2BCU11.
\textsuperscript{218} The narrative was categorized as including two episodes, precolonial and colonial, despite the wording “up to date.”
\textsuperscript{219} A few narratives mentioned personages “belonging” to a colonized past, such as Kabaka Mwanga, James Hannington, and Sir Henry Morton Stanley (1BCU24), or Kabaka Mwanga and Frederick Lugard (2BCU20).
\textsuperscript{220} The independence was referred to in 86% of the narratives, irrespective of the origin of the narrator.
\textsuperscript{221} Seven of the narratives mentioned Independence in the very first sentence, see, e.g., 1BCU12, 2BCU3, and 4BNU3.
\textsuperscript{222} See 1BCU2.
ple congress led by Apollo Milton Obote. These were the political parties that led Uganda to the independence. Leading to the lowering of the union Jack. The union Jack was lowered in 1962 during independence and the Uganda flag was rise saying goodbye to colonialism in Uganda. Dr. Obote became the first prime minister and the first president was Mutesa Edward I. Dr. Obote put a constitution in 1972 that eliminated kingdoms in Uganda and they were revived by Present Museveni Kagutat in the 1995 constitution.223

By beginning with Independence, the narrator leads the reader through the episodes of both precolonialization and colonialization to the postcolonial episode, including two historical processes: the tribal division that existed in Uganda before Independence and the emergence of parties, and colonialism. One way to read the narrative is that divisions among ethnic groups were there before colonialism; however, the tribes united in order to gain Independence, which, in turn, brought an end to colonialization. In the words of the narrator, “The Union Jack was lowered in 1962 during independence and the Uganda[nt] flag was rise [raised] saying goodbye to colonialism in Uganda.” However, the theme of division was continued into the postcolonial era, as seen in the expulsion and revival of kingdoms during Obote and Museveni, respectively. Other narrators referred to Independence as if it was the end of history:

Ugandan elites later challenged the colonial masters and the country attained the independence in 1962 09 October and till now the country is under democratic rule.

And,

However, after a long struggle in 1962, on Oct 9th Uganda became an independent state up to date.224

The two last episodes of Ugandan history, Independence and the postcolonial episode, were summarized in both of these narratives in a concluding single sentence. According to these narratives, no trace of division remained after Independence. Uganda was now under democratic rule and an independent state. In all, there were four narratives that ended with Independence as if the goal, historically speaking, had been achieved. To become independent and free from colonial rule was so important; post-Independence history seemed unimportant

223 2BCU17. 224 1BCU35:26-27.
to the narrators and the only thing that mattered was being Ugandan and independent.225

The Independence episode was also characterized, in relation to the precolonial and colonial episodes, by the emergence of important historical characters. The references to certain people became much more common in the last two episodes of Ugandan history, compared to the precolonial and colonial episodes.

Uganda in the past was a country which was under the rule of the kingdom and Chiefdoms then later the colonialists came to explore Uganda since it was a land locked country and nothing was known about of where the explorers got inspired and called more of their fellows and later on the missionaries also came in and blinded the Ugandans where they had to extend their rule which led to the disrespect of Ugandan leaders. Then Ugandans began to be under Colonialists till when they proved things were not well because even their land were occupied, they were suffering harsch conditions where they had to adopt the policy freedom fighting because of the colonial rule by Amin Dada 1870’s which was unbearable therefore Uganda had to call for their full independence from the British colonialists which granted Uganda’s Independence declaration with uganda’s president Apollo Milton Obote in 1962 which created Unity and freedom in Ugandaupto today hence the history of Uganda.226

The example narrative ended with Independence, but it also emphasized that it was Obote who brought unity and freedom to Uganda and hence the narrative works as a tribute story to Obote. The narrative also mentions Idi Amin; however, he was placed in the 19th century.227 Idi Amin was often described as a dictator, which appeared to place him in colonial times.228 The researcher Wills argues that a person’s mistaken narrative is informed by a schematic narrative template. Hence, misremembering represents the use of a schematic narrative template rather than a simple mistake in the retelling of specific narratives.229 Both the colonialists’ and Idi Amin’s abuse of Ugandans caused the narrator to place Amin during colonial times instead of after Independence.

When writing about Independence, the narrators referred to personages to a greater extent compared to when they wrote about pre-Independence times. Of

225 The narratives in category F (1BCU24, 1BCU26, 1BCU35, 2BCU2, 2BCU3, 2BCU10, 4BNU12, and 4BNU13) all excluded the postcolonial episode and the attainment of Independence could be interpreted as the final goal.
226 4BNU12.
227 See also 2BCU5.
228 See 1BCU6, 2BCU6, 3BNU2, 5BNU3, 5BNU10.
229 Wills, 2012:122.
course, some characters had been referred to previously, but almost exclusively in narratives that focused on the Baganda kingdom, where references to Baganda kings were found, or a few narratives that recognized Kabarega’s resistance against the colonialists. In general, Ugandan history before Independence lacked historical agents. This all changed in the era of Independence, and narratives of this era often include Milton Obote and Sir Edward Mutesa II. Obote was mentioned many more times and in many more narratives compared to Mutesa: in 41 versus 15 narratives, of which Obote was referred to in 27 of the Northern Ugandan narratives and Mutesa in eleven narratives from Central Uganda. Obote being of Northern (Lango) descent and Mutesa II being a king of the Buganda could be a plausible explanation for this regional imbalance. Both of them were mentioned as the first president, or in the case of Obote interchangeably as the Prime Minister, who brought Independence to Uganda. The inclusion of agents in the narrative was to be continued in the writing about the postcolonial episode.

**The postcolonial episode**

The postcolonial episode spanned from Independence to the contemporary era of the narrators. However, postcoloniality should not be referred to as an achieved state that came after colonialism. Hence, the episode should be regarded as inclusive of future perspectives. An evaluation of past and present events sometimes emerged in the postcolonial narratives, unlike the narratives about the first three episodes of Ugandan history. The postcolonial episode was, in this sense, very different from the other episodes. The postcolonial era could be described as invoking stories of progress or decline, as well as descriptive narratives about the postcolonial episode itself. The precolonial episode was characterized by migration and the rule of kingdoms, an episode that was interrupted by the emergence of missionaries, explorers, and colonizers, a development that could be described as a crisis. This episode was, however, interrupted by Independence, when Uganda was liberated and born as a nation.

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230 See page 53.
231 Ben Kiwanuka was also mentioned. See 2BCU17 and 5BNU8.
232 For examples where Obote and Mutesa II were mentioned, see the chapter on the postcolonial episode.
233 Narratives that did not include the postcolonial era could also be interpreted as stories of progress or decline. For example, all the stories that ended with Independence could be interpreted as stories of progress where the final goal, of Independence, had been achieved. Others that ended with colonialism could likewise be interpreted as stories of decline (2BCU4) or progress (2BCU11).
Postcoloniality should not be seen as an achieved state, according to Eriksson Baaz. Though the postcolonial episode can be described as taking care of the heritage of Independence, it is also a time of uncertainty about the future. Progress narratives were most often stories of tribute, where the progress was ascribed to a person or the continuous progress since Independence. Decline narratives, on the other hand, judged the postcolonial era either by describing Ugandan history as a story of continuous decline since the era of colonialism or by judging the achievements of historic figures, such as presidents. Lastly, narratives that were categorized as descriptive mainly listed the presidents in order of succession, that is: who succeeded who. Table 8 shows the presidents who were named and gives both the number of narratives in which they occur, and the number of times they are mentioned altogether.

Table 8: Mention of presidents in the genetic public narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presidents</th>
<th>Central Uganda</th>
<th>Northern Uganda</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of narratives</td>
<td>Times mentioned</td>
<td>No. of narratives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Mutesa II*</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton Obote (I &amp; II**)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idi Amin</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yusuf Lule</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godfrey Binaisa</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tito Okello Lutwa</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoweri Kaguta Museveni</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some confusion existed among the narrators between Mutesa I and II. In the analysis, the context where the reference was made was taken into consideration.
**I & II refers to Obote’s two regimes, one in the 1960s to early 1970s, and the other in the 1980s.

235 These episodes can be compared to the ones used by Létourneau and Moisan 2011 and Lévesque, Létourneau, Gani, 2013: the initial situation, the time of crisis, the awakening, and time of uncertainty.
References to individual persons were common from the episode of Independence onwards, as mentioned above. However, it was not any individuals, but presidents and leaders: terms that were used interchangeably: There were 201 references to “president(s)” or “leader(s)/leadership” in the postcolonial era, occurring in 62 of the 73 narratives.\footnote{Referring to the postcolonial episode was somewhat more common in Northern Ugandan compared to Central Ugandan narratives, 92\% and 78\%, respectively.} This specific naming of historical personages, and, hence, historical agents, was a remarkable contrast to the earlier episodes. To refer to presidents was such a common feature that the postcolonial era in Uganda could not be accounted for without reference to a president.\footnote{One narrative that did not mention any presidents, but still emphasized that Uganda had had eight presidents since Independence (2BCU21).} Most often, narrators gave the presidential line of succession. This was always the context in which the three least referred-to presidents were mentioned: Yusuf Kironde Lule (April 13th, 1979, to June 20th, 1979), Godfrey Lukungwa Binaisa (June 20th, 1979, to May 12th, 1980), and General Tito Okello Lutwa (July 29th, 1985, to January 26th, 1986). A plausible explanation for this could of course be that all three of them left office within a year. The presidential line of succession was often not commented upon, even if comments were made, as in the following example:

I then recall Tito Okell Lutwa, Godfrey Binaisa who also had the chance to rule Uganda but these took a small time in power due to their unpopularity ie they did not show any ability to improve Uganda[...]\footnote{1BCU23:10-12. See below for the full narrative (at footnote 227).}

According to the narrator, the presidents left office due to their inability to affect change in Uganda. Narratives that discussed the postcolonial episode by listing the postcolonial leaders in order of succession were common, as in the following:

Uganda is a name adopted from Buganda a strong kingdom centered in central Uganda that existed since 1500 AD. Uganda became a British Protectorate in 1880’s when Britain colonised it. It achieved its Independence in 1962. Before the formation of the republic of Uganda there existed many kingdoms that were headed by their kings/queens but never had a joint government as it is today. The kingdoms were joined together by the British especially around 1900 during the Buganda agreement where all the kings of the kingdoms that used to make up Uganda were made to be royal answerable to the British governor in Uganda. Buganda Kingdom as a strong and permanent kingdom by then wanted own independence, ie never wanted to be joined to other kingdoms of Busoga, Bunyoro, Ankole etc but due to the influence of the British it was forced hence the formation of Uganda What I know about Uganda is a heterogenous nation with
various tribes with an official language English and a common language Luganda, I remember it has been governed/ruled by 9 presidents since it's independence in 1962 like Idi Amin, Obote, Muteesa, Museveni and others.\footnote{1BCU5. See also 1BCU13, 1BCU16, 2BCU16.}

This specific narrative mainly focused on colonialism and the fact that different kingdoms joined together to create the nation of Uganda. However, by naming the presidents without commenting, the narrator seems to show indifference to the postcolonial era. In this sense, these narratives show similarities to narratives that ended with the episode of Independence.\footnote{See footnote 171. The narratives in category F (1BCU24, 1BCU26, 1BCU35, 2BCU2, 2BCU3, 2BCU10, 4BNU12, 4BNU13) all excluded the postcolonial episode and the attainment of independence could be interpreted as the ultimate goal.} Mentioned together with Independence was Sir Edward Luwungula Walugembe Muteesa II, who ruled the newly independent Uganda as the country’s first President from October 9th, 1962, to March 2nd, 1966. He was either referred to as the first president in a line of presidents, or as one of the Buganda kings. However, most frequently he was mentioned in relation to Independence, in 15 of the 28 narratives that referred to him.

The leaders and presidents that narrators referred to the most were, however: Milton Obote, Idi Amin, and Yoweri Museveni. Apollo Milton Obote (who held office twice: from April 15th, 1966, to January 15th, 1971, and again from December 17th, 1980, to July 27th, 1985), Field Marshall Idi Amin Dada (January 25th, 1971, to April 11th, 1979), and Yoweri Kaguta Museveni\footnote{The name Museveni was spelt variously: Musevni, Museveno, Meseveni.} (January 29th, 1986, to date) were referred to in more than half of the narratives, 56, 47, and 49, respectively, and were often mentioned more than once. It can be assumed that Obote was named due to his connection to Independence, Amin for being infamous, and Museveni as he is the current president. However, of the 129 instances of referring to Obote, only 48 referred to Obote and Independence together.\footnote{Forty-one narratives mention Obote in connection with Independence. Noticeable was that 27 from the Northern region did so, compared to only 14 from the Central region.} As Amin ousted Obote from office, Obote was named in this context as well as in connection with his second reign during the 1980s.

Among these references to leaders, several narratives could be described as tribute stories, mainly regarding Museveni, but also regarding Obote. The following narrative structured around Milton Obote:
Uganda was colonised by the British and British took over social economic political sphere of Uganda, but later when Milton Obote reasoned with other people they came with the conclusion that it is important for a country like Uganda to get self ruled other than foreign ruled of which Obote Milton struggle for independence of Uganda and was got in 1962 with Obote as a president of Uganda but when Obote went out to the foreign land Idi Amin dad intermediated him not to come back to Uganda He had taken over the thrown but remember Obote took the leadership from the British. British who were leading Uganda and that was Sir Edward muteda so Idi Amin dad was the third president followed by others like Okello Titus and later His Excellency Yoweri Museveni Kaguta who is the current president of Uganda.243

The above narrative was structured around Obote and Independence, where Obote was presented as a peaceful liberator who brought Independence through reasoning. Idi Amin’s wrongdoing in overthrowing Obote was also emphasized, when the narrator reminded us: “… but remember Obote took the leadership from the British.” The postcolonial episode was in this sense a way to bring the reader up to date with contemporary society, and could be interpreted as a tribute story to Obote who brought about Independence. These tribute stories to Obote were only found in narratives from the Northern region. Also, these stories had similarities with narratives that ended with Independence, although those were not structured around individuals. Tribute stories to Museveni were the most common: Museveni was seen as the cause of the relative peace that Uganda has recently experienced.

Uganda is a land locked country found in the region of east Africa. It is surrounded by Kenya in the East, Tanzania in the South. Uganda was colonised by Britain after the signing of Buganda agreement in 1900 and this demarcated land in the Buganda region. Uganda got her independence in 1962 under Sir Edward Mutesa II of Buganda as a president and Dr Apollo Milton Obote the prime minister. Milton Obote later turned against the Kabaka of Buganda Mutesa, and became president. He was overthrown by Idi Amin after a coup ‘de tat. Idi Amin was among the worst presidents of Uganda as he disorganised its economy most by when he ordered indians to leave Uganda. Later Obote came back and took over power with the help of Tanzania and Kenya. Other presidents came in but didn’t stay for long. Currently Uganda is ruled by President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni who came to power in 1984 after a guerilla war. Ever since Uganda is stable - politically.244

The statement that Uganda has been politically stable since Museveni came into power does implicitly reach into the future. Mentioning the economic turmoil

243 5BNU7. See also 4BNU12.
244 2BCU9.
during the reign of Idi Amin and the political struggles after Independence indicated that gaining Independence was not enough to secure positive development.\textsuperscript{245} The agency of Museveni was hence emphasized as positive: If political stability is desirable, it argued, then Museveni should be supported. This argument can also be seen in the following narrative. Uganda had experienced wars and conflicts continuously ever since the arrival of the missionaries, but there had also been development, such as the bringing of electricity and education.\textsuperscript{246}

According to me, the history of Uganda has for a long been developed largely on the political side in a way that right from the start missionaries came in the time of Mutesa I\textsuperscript{st} reign who gratefully upheld their stay in Uganda but by their wars of expansion of the Buganda kingdom started after the acquisition of guns from the missionaries thus causing tribal tensions in Uganda and also bringing ethnic racialism in Uganda which counts for the present tribalism today. More so, some other rulers like Idi Amin dad, Milton Obote I and II came to power and it should be recalled that these two were diplomatic leaders who were mostly driven by the character of dictatorship and despotism due to their backgrounds and social way of life. I then recall Tito Okell Lutwa, Godfrey Binaisa who also had the chance to rule Uganda but these took a small time in power due to their unpopularity ie they did not show any ability to improve Uganda with all this I can say that the history of Uganda has been running on the line of politics but also their has also been some other things that Uganda has gone through for example the people of Uganda had grass-hatched houses (manyattas/huts) they had no electricity but with time their has been economic development and also their has been mostly a great improvement in the education system because people of long ago had education from their grand parents and they did not get a chance of going to school which is the greatest improvement in the history of Uganda. With all this analysis, I can say that Uganda has gone to some bit of degree of development since it’s early years. I was born in the reign of President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni who has developed it from a war filled country to a sustainably peaceful country.\textsuperscript{247}

The narrator’s conclusion “I was born in the reign of President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni who has developed it from a war filled country to a sustainably peaceful country” truly acknowledges historical agency through the achievements of Museveni in restoring peace. Others did not share this view of Uganda being peaceful and the colonial heritage being broken.

The history of Uganda is trying to reveal the future in accordance to the past. For example in politics, the issue of Buganda struggles and the central gov’t have been re-

\textsuperscript{245} For other narratives that were tribute stories to Museveni or recognized his achievements, see 1BCU6, 1BCU34, 2BNU2, and 4BNU9.

\textsuperscript{246} Hardly any narrative contested that the postcolonial episode has been marred by political struggles.

\textsuperscript{247} 1BCU23.
vived as a means of history. The history of Uganda has criticised the colonial gov’ts for their mistake they did of separating Ugandas ethnic groupings which has caused misunderstandings. Answer. Mutesa I invited the missionaries to come and teach his subjects how to read and write. With that, missionaries arrived in Uganda with chartered Companies for example IBECO who played a significant role in the colonisation of Uganda by the British. The British tried their best to develop and exploit Uganda. They as well created disorganisation between central Gov’t and the Buganda Gov’t. Then came strong leaders like Obote, Amini, Mutesa II and so many others who created instability in Uganda through coups, wars, Rebellions. In 1971 there came a man know as Musevini who staged his base Tanzania. He fought strongly and indeed he won the battle by overthrowing Obote II in 1986. After that time, a new Constitution was amended. In 1996, Uganda Conducted Her 1st General Presidential Elections. From that time, Uganda has been experiencing Elections who I don’t know whether their Free and fair or their are b’se [because] a not yet of voting age. Uganda is trying wake up from the colonial framework structure.248

The narrative has been categorized as spanning two episodes, the colonial and the postcolonial.249 Independence was excluded in the narrative, if the sentence “Then came strong leaders like Obote, Amin, Mutesa II and so many others who created instability in Uganda through coups, wars, rebellions.” is not interpreted as describing Independence. To clarify, Uganda experienced coups and wars from colonial times until 1996 when the country gained its new constitution. However, even though the narrator stated that Uganda had begun to experience elections, she or he questioned whether they were free and fair. A statement carefully put since, as the narrator said, she or he was too young to vote and therefore could not tell for sure. Nevertheless, making the statement illustrates some hesitation on this matter. The final sentence of the narrative, “Uganda is trying wake up from the colonial framework structure.” could be interpreted as meaning that Uganda, during the postcolonial era, has struggled with its colonial past, the effects of which are still present. The absence of a reference to Independence would support such an interpretation.

Hence, the constraints of social structures were emphasized at the expense of agency and autonomy. With regard to the future, the postcolonial episode was described as an episode of uncertainty. It was, however, not only narratives focusing on the constraints of social structures that regarded Ugandan postcolonial history as conflict-ridden. In the following, the narrator only included a

248 2BCM22.
249 This was the only narrative in category C.
postcolonial episode and was quite pessimistic. He or she acknowledged developments in the areas of education and transport; however, he or she also gave the leaders the epithet “warmongers.”

The history of Uganda since it’s beginnings mostly showed that the people of Uganda that is the leaders lyk His excellence Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the late Idi Amin Dada, Obote milton and many others must have all been so ambitious war mongers to the extent that some because of those charachters they had they ended up being our leaders irrespective of their level of education for example Idi Amin Dada. More so the history of Uganda since it’s beginnings showed that by then Uganda was so backward that is lagging behind in terms of Education, transport and communication. I say all these because today with the little I have learnt about history of Uganda at least the sectors around Education transport have improved Eg. today many women have been able to also be among the leaders in Uganda compared to the past where they were few and of which the majority were illiterate. Nevertheless around the area of transport and communication it has efficiently worked upon. Further still the history of Uganda since it’s beginnings at least it really showed that Decency was prevailing among the Ugandans. I say so because from what I know During Idi Amins regime no one most especially the girls and women were allowed to put on short skirts and trousers as it is today.250

A debate about mini skirts was ongoing at the time of writing; a bill on the issue was also passed in parliament, the “mini-skirts bill.” Amin’s concern with women’s fashion and the banning of mini skirts has been interpreted to signify Amin’s breaking with the Western World. According to Alicia Decker, not only did the mini skirt signify immorality, but the banning of it was also a struggle to maintain African authenticity at a time of rapid social change.251 Decker argues that women in her study remembered Amin’s restoration of morality, including the banning of mini skirts, as a memory that “undoubtedly stemmed from their frustration over the ‘loose values’ of today’s youth.”252 In this study, however, the ongoing debate may explain the conclusion of this narrative.

Here follows another example narrative that told about more than the postcolonial episode and passed judgment on developments. As can be seen, after a short résumé of Ugandan history, the narrator went on to discuss the postcolonial episode from an economic, political, and social perspective:

Uganda was a country that arose after the partitioning of Africa by the white (British) and then made a protectorate. From 1900-1962 9th October before midnight. After

250 1BCU7. See also 4BNU8 and 4BNU11.
Uganda got its independence it had a number of presidents ever since then first was the late Kabaka of Buganda Sir Edward Mutesa II, Dr. Apollo Milton Obote, Gen. Idi Amin dad, the late professor Yusuf Lule; Dr. Binaisa, the late Tito Okello Lutwa and current President HE: Gen Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. Economically Uganda had a good start just intil when the late Gen Idi Amin Dada took power and chased the indians out of Uganda these were the people who had been business owners by the time and made Uganda economy to boom but their chasing caused a lot of misery in our country until the coming of HE Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. Politically we haven’t been very stable since the coming of each new president was characterised by extreme fighting between governments forces then and rebels, coups etc. all these caused misery to our forefathers. Socially Uganda has been very stable people being brought up in God fearing family that thus been the beginning of harmony and good social behaviour amongst people in our country. Until the coming of President Museveni who has allowed these white people to bring their foreign stupid behaviour amongst our Ugandan eg gayism and now the new coming bill of marriage and divorce. 253

After only two sentences, the narrator acquaints us with both the colonial episode and the episode of Independence, and brings us into the postcolonial era of Uganda. The postcolonial episode started off with a list of the presidents from Mutesa II, the country’s first president, to Museveni, the current President of Uganda. The narrator then turned to political, economic, and social issues. Socially, Ugandans were described as a god-fearing people who lived in harmony. However, this was challenged by “foreign stupid behaviour” such as “gayism” and “the new coming bill of marriage and divorce.” Both the Anti-Homosexuality Act, which was passed by the Ugandan parliament in the spring of 2014, and the Marriage and Divorce Bill were heavily debated in Ugandan parliament and by the press in Uganda as well as internationally at the time of the study. The narrative was hence clearly informed by ongoing debates.

The narratives on the postcolonial episode frequently included agency and evaluation of the same issues. The political turmoil described, which manifested as coups d’état, takeovers, and civil war, was mainly mentioned by Northern Ugandan students, who also used the example of the conflict between the LRA and the UPDF.

Uganda got her independence in 1962. The history of Uganda was not clear, however some of the [- - -] suggested that, Uganda was once having few districts. Not only that but only Ugandan the president was Toto Okell Nuta and later follows by Apollo Opote and letter Museveni the current president. In the past clans were very important

253 1BCU15.
system in the Uganda they used to impede the government in maintaining peace in the country of Uganda. Not only that, but Uganda was also colonised by British before she got her independence. There was some punishment, Rampand slave trade, selling of people. and also high taxes being impose on Ugandan people. After the independence brought by Milton Obote Uganda became a independent country. In northern Uganda there was rampand war caused by LRA in the northern part of Uganda and also one of the part of northern eastern part. War took twenty years in this region. There were serious suffering of northern and north eastern part of Uganda. People loss there lifes and people were also displaced from their original place. later the current president force people in camp where they [- – –] from America and USA could help in feeding ie they could bring food for the people but not to the expectation of the people because northern people are farmers they used to cultivate enough crops for their sustainance. Later they organised peace talk in Karamba in Sudan where they negotiated for peace (between the government of Uganda and LRA) then later there was some stable and small peace in Northern Uganda. These war that took place in Northern Uganda therefore remains in the history of Uganda like the history of Napoleon in Europe.254

Whereas some narratives were pessimistic towards change, others were hopeful. The following narrator concluded that Uganda was still lagging behind in comparison to other countries despite economic stability and freedom of speech and worship. However, he or she expressed hope that this would change within the next 20 years.

Uganda comes from a collection of different enthenic [ethnic] states for example Buganda, Bunyoro, Acholi and many others. It so happened that these different groups came up to form Uganda on 9th Oct 1962 when Britain handed independence to Ugandas. Sir Edward Mutesa I was the first president and Milton Obote was the prime minister by then. Before independence Britain had colonised it and used a policy of indirect rule to administer it. Britain would choose different local chiefs to administer their local people for example the kabaka of Buganda. I think it has changed in various aspects like political stability, economic stability, freedom of press, freedom of worship and so on. But to my view we are still lagging behind because of the present corrupt officials that occupy the highest posts in the government. I think with time to come like 20 years Uganda will have changed to get a better position compares to the one we are currently in.255

It has been shown that the content of narratives about the postcolonial episode mainly consisted of references to presidents and their achievements. Nevertheless, some patterns were discernible. The presidents were listed from Independence up to the modern day, often in combination with mention of the many

254 6BNU5. For comparison, see also 3BNU1, 3BNU3, 4BNU10, and 2BCU6.
255 2BCU18.
coupes and civil wars that Uganda has experienced. To some, this political turmoil had come to an end with the Museveni presidency; to others, the postcolonial episode seemed to be a continuous political struggle, causing suffering among the Ugandan people.

**Historical orientation in the genetic public narratives**

The narratives that constitute the empirical body have been categorized according to four different episodes. The presentation has mainly focused on the epistemological dimension of the narratives, i.e., *what* they told, and less on the structure, which relates to *how* they were told. We found a narrative on the precolonial episode that was characterized by migration and/or the rule of kings. This episode can be said to have had a role as an initial state in the narratives. But the precolonial episode was the least referred-to episode, which was included in only 35 out of 73 narratives. Also, it was less common to find the episode included among the Northern compared to Central narratives. The themes were that Uganda was populated before the coming of foreigners and the society was organized socially, politically, and economically.

This era in Uganda came to a close with the coming of missionaries, explorers, and, finally, colonizers. The point at which these outsiders appeared marks the beginning of the colonial episode. To many of the narrators, the episode could be described, if not as a time of crisis, at least as a break with Uganda’s own development. To the narrators, the colonial episode was crucial. The historical significance of colonialism to Uganda and its people is unquestioned. It was the episode most referred to and the one used as the point of departure in Uganda’s history in many narratives. Only four narratives included neither a precolonial nor a colonial episode. Whereas the descriptions of the precolonial episode were characterized by references to what Uganda was before the coming of colonialists, the colonial episode was characterized as a time of crisis where the Ugandans’ and Uganda’s own development was interrupted.

Hope of restoration came with the next episode of Ugandan history: Independence. This episode was the second most referred-to episode in the narratives.

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256 See 2BCU22.
257 Thirty narratives mentioned colonialism in the very first sentence of the narrative.
258 Three of these narratives were about the postcolonial episode (1BCU7, 4BNU8, and 4BNU11) and the fourth referred to Independence and the postcolonial episode (2BCU7).
and as an event it had the shortest time span of the four episodes. Some narratives stopped at this event, by stating that the fate of history and development was now in the hands of the Ugandans themselves, almost as if the ultimate goal of history had been achieved, which could implicitly be understood as a future perspective. In relation to the colonial experience, the episode of Independence brought about liberation. However, 62 out of 73 narratives continued and also included a postcolonial episode. This episode was where the current status and developments could be best evaluated; however, the postcolonial episode was mainly written about in descriptive narratives. These narratives, often listing the presidents, seemed to suggest that Independence could be evaluated by referring to the leaders since 1962. One way to understand this is that the postcolonial episode was all about politics and leadership, suggesting continuity. Hence, the narratives pointed towards the continuity of Independence. However, the postcolonial episode has also been described as a progressive age or as a time of continuous decline since colonialism. Hence, it was the episode where interpretations of the past differed most. This has made it possible to identify different historical orientations.

The political outlook in the genetic public narratives is unquestioned. The motto of Uganda is: “For God and my Country.” However, this motto has often been paraphrased and changed to: “For God and my Stomach,” alluding to the current corruption. Yet another paraphrase of the national motto is referred to by Sverker Finnström in his book Living with Bad Surroundings on the Conflict in Northern Uganda, who gives the motto as “For God and my Life,” in reference to the lethal situation, for many people, during the conflict. The stories told in the students’ narratives could be categorized under three headings: “For God and my Country,” “For God and my Stomach,” and, thirdly, “For God and my Life.” Both narratives that ended with Independence, stating that democracy or freedom had finally been achieved, and narratives that supported the achievements of the current president, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, could be said to fall under the motto “For God and my country.” The goal of the stories’ plot was either the attainment of Independence after colonialism or Museveni’s rise to power after three decades of political turmoil. Hence, these narratives were categorized as stories of progress, expected to continue into the future.

259 See, for instance, a New Vision article published November 26th, 2013, Who is Uganda’s problem?
Among the 73 narratives, 16 were interpreted as stories of progress. Stories of progress were in fact more or less tribute stories. They frequently gave thanks to Museveni and/or his reforms for the relative peace the country and its citizens have experienced during his time, and/or the economic development achieved.261 But this view was not always unquestioned. The following narrator concluded:

Yoweri Museveni who is now achieving in many field and to me his reign should be called the ”years of joyful”. Though his cabinet and ministers are corrupt but he himself achieved a lot. This account for his stay in power for almost 30 yrs and many years is expected. The history of Uganda is about women emancipation, equality, fair treatment and others though corruption is the order of the day.262

Although the reign of Museveni was described as “joyful,” the narrator concluded that the order of the day was corruption, something that was blamed on Museveni’s ministers, and not on Museveni himself. It is important to bear in mind that Museveni has been in power for nearly half of the era that represents the postcolonial episode. The importance of Museveni can therefore not be neglected. To others, however, Museveni’s reign was nothing but dictatorship:

It still important to note that up to date Museveni is still the president of Uganda. And his government has been characterised with dictatorship, tribalism, despotism.263

In this way, the narrators commented on different Ugandan leaders and it was through comments like these that it was possible to decide if the narrator perceived developments during the postcolonial episode as progress or decline. The inheritance of Independence and whether the different leaders in power had used the opportunity to develop the country was judged by students as “successful,” or as “maintaining or declining development.” Thus, the different leaders were discussed in exemplary narratives, to use Jörn Rüsen’s terminology.264 By contrast, the progress stories that ended with Independence had aspects of traditional narratives, where the origin of a sovereign independent state was invoked. The importance of defending the nation’s sovereignty was hence emphasized by evaluating development in the postcolonial era.

261 Two of the narratives in this category were tribute stories to President Obote. Both of these narratives came from Northern Uganda.
262 5BNU8:26-33.
263 3BNU2:37-41.
264 Rüsen, 2005:12.
The 73 narratives also included stories of decline. These stories most often evaluated the postcolonial episode as having brought decline, often a continuous decline. References were made to either conflict or corruption and, as a consequence, to regional imbalances. These narratives, hence, were examples of stories to which the motto “For God and my Stomach” or “For God and my Life” applied. Worth noticing is that the regional differences among the narratives was eminent. Nearly half, 17, of the Northern Ugandan students told a story of decline, which was the vast majority of the students narrating a story about decline (see Table 9 below). Also, students not referring to the episode only three, out of a total of eleven, originated from Northern Uganda. One Northern Ugandan story about decline was as follows:

Uganda which is a landlocked country got its independence in 1962 under the leadership of the late president Sir Apollo Milton Obote. It wasn’t very much developed until now its still a developing country. But, its was able to celebrate its 50th year of independence last year on 9/Oct/2012 under the current president his excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. Uganda since its inception by the British has not been politically, socially and economically stable. Why? Because of the majority of the ethnic groups called Bantu who are mostly based on Western, central and southern part of the country. Because of this, Uganda had 20 yrs of war especially in Northern part of the country where the least groups of Nilotics and Nilo-hamites live. The war was led by the lord’s Resistance Army Joseph Kony who is nowadays in Central African Republic. The war greatly destabilised the economy and development of the region of North, East and West Nile. Poverty highly affected these states, low level of education, poor health, poor social service and poor means of communication especially roads. This has generally led to imbalance of growth in the country. Today, Uganda tries as much as she can to rebuild, restore and develop there states but fails simply because of high level of corruption in the country. Recently 50 billion shillings was swindled from the prime ministers office and nothing was done about it. Lastly, the weaknesses of National Resistance Movement is that they have totally failed to restore Uganda to the glory of being a free and moral upright country the way the citizens need. Theres high level of unemployment, corruption, mismanagement of public funds and low level of economy.265

The text makes several references to corruption, unemployment, war, and ethnic conflict. The narrator also emphasized the imbalance between regions in the country, which was a consequence of this. This narrative is an important counter-narrative to the narratives of the nation being progressive and narratives that suggest that the historical goal has been achieved through sovereignty and Independence. This view of history was much more common among North-

265 3BNU3.
The decline story of Central Uganda most often referred to is the story about the political coups, which can hardly be seen as a counter-narrative to the official story of the nation, or said to be critical of certain problems such as poor economic development or of “foreign influences” such as gayism. However, to narrators telling a story of decline when reviewing the postcolonial episode, the origin of these problems seems to be important. Out of 24 postcolonial decline stories, 17 originated from the Northern region. Table 9 presents the different views the students held regarding the postcolonial episode.

Table 9: Postcolonial stories of progress and decline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story of Progress and Decline</th>
<th>Central Uganda</th>
<th>Northern Uganda</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tribal affinity or regional origin was, however, not only noticeable through the views on the postcolonial episode. Among the Northern narrators, Buganda was mentioned in twelve narratives, whereas in Central Uganda, the number of narratives that mentioned Buganda was 21. Looking at narratives that mentioned the Acholi, the corresponding numbers were five and one, respectively.

Taking a genetic point of departure, that is, starting from the perceived beginning, and having a forward-looking approach to history, rendered both stories of progress and stories of decline, as well as descriptive stories. Mostly the narratives ended in the contemporary situation and the future perspectives of the narrator could only be implicitly sensed, through concluding comments such as about the current party still leading “up to date” and “Ever since Uganda is stable – politically.” The future was also explicitly expressed, for instance in the following examples: “I think with time to come like 20 years Uganda will have changed to get a better position compares to the one we are currently in” and “Uganda is trying wake up from the colonial framework structure.”

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266 See 2BCU20, 1BCU31.
267 2BCU18.
less, developments could be understood as continuous and, as such, as reaching into the future.

Though the story of decline was the most common, the outcomes of the three stories were almost equally common. However, at a regional level, half of the narratives from the North were stories of decline, whereas half of the stories from Central Uganda were descriptive stories. The next chapter will examine the students’ narratives about Uganda from a genealogical perspective.
Chapter 6: Contemporary Life in Uganda and Its Historical Roots

To use the past to understand the contemporary situation is a common view of what history can teach us to do. However, that everyone has the same view of the contemporary situation would be a more contested statement. History is used in different ways and certain episodes of history are naturally more significant to certain individuals or groups of individuals. The final narrative that the Ugandan students wrote described contemporary life in Uganda and told what from history had affected it to become that way. The assignment aimed to explore how the students related their contemporary situation to the past. Since the point of departure was the present, the narratives are to be understood genealogically. A genealogical approach to history is explanatory, as references to the past are made in order to make sense of the contemporary situation. Narratively, the goal of the plot can be said to be the contemporary situation, while the rest of the narrative explains how this came into being. Most often, a development or a state of being was used to describe the narrator’s contemporary life. Historical events or developments were mentioned in order to explain the current situation. The students thus assigned historical significance by referring to historical events and developments. The contemporary situation became the criterion for assigning significance. Once the students understood contemporary life as meaning present life, they began to write. A narrative about Uganda seemed easy to conceptualize and produce. The question of interest in the context of this study was whether a genealogical approach to history would further reveal the students’ historical orientations.

Progress and decline

In the following chapter, the narratives have been categorized into stories of progress and stories of decline. A third category, of descriptive stories, has also been included. The categorization was dependent on the narrator’s description of the contemporary situation, as well as whether this was seen as a continuous development caused by a historical event or phenomenon.

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268 Explanations were given by the researcher.
Table 10: Number of stories of progress or decline among the genealogical public narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story of</th>
<th>Central Uganda</th>
<th>Northern Uganda</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since it was the same students who wrote this assignment we obtained 73 narratives through which we gained knowledge about contemporary Uganda. Two of the narratives that are descriptive have been categorized as incomplete. The reason for this is that they do not refer to past events as an explanation. In the first subchapter, the content of the stories of progress will be outlined; the second subchapter will discuss the stories of decline. The empirical data also shows that the students made references to either the situation before, or after, Independence and consequently referred to either the colonial or the postcolonial episode of Ugandan history. The different stories of progress and decline have therefore been presented either as stories of progress or as stories of decline, with references to either the colonial or the postcolonial episode. Lastly, the historical orientation of the contemporary narratives will be discussed at the end of the chapter.

Contemporary Uganda – a story of progress

Out of the 73 narratives, which talked about contemporary Uganda and what from history had affected it to become that way, 23 narratives were stories of progress. Half of them, eleven narratives, had a predominantly colonial content, and the other half, twelve narratives, mainly referred to the postcolonial era. Two-thirds of these narratives, referring to a postcolonial era, were from Central Ugandan students.

269 6CNU1 and 6CNU3.
270 Only one narrative referring to the colonial episode that was categorized as a story of progress came from Northern Uganda.
A narrative that has been categorized as referring to a colonial past is not to be understood as a story all about the past. All 73 narratives describe the contemporary situation in Uganda, and the explanations as to why the situation has become that way refer to the colonial episode. So, what did the students narrate about the colonial era that showed progress?

The references to the colonial episode were mainly about new developments during the colonial era. New developments included new projects and practices introduced into Uganda by the colonialists, which were important for the development of Uganda, according to the narrators.

The introduction of Western education in Uganda had a positive impact in that many Ugandans today can read write and speak foreign languages like English, Belgian or French. Capital technique of production which was introduced by the Europeans have made Ugandans nowadays to produce mass output for domestic market and for exporting outside. Further still, the introduction of Western religion (that is to say, the belief in supreme God) has made life today in Uganda good. This is because some Ugandans in the past were irreligious and could kill but this was rendered useless. European ways of life has brought unity in Uganda. Before the coming of the Europeans in Uganda, Ugandans were divided along tribal lines but this was reformed. Western people had introduced better methods of farming like crop rotation, agricultural modernisation which has produced self sufficiency in Uganda today. Ugandans today have access to medical services and this was because the Western European introduced hospitals in Uganda like Mengo hospitals in Buganda.\(^{271}\)

The colonialists introduced the education system and “Western religion.” In addition, they modernized agriculture in Uganda. All of these developments brought unity to Uganda and are still important for Uganda, according to the narrator, as is evident in the phrasing, for instance: “positive impact,” “good (life)” and “self-sufficiency.”\(^{272}\) Another narrative that referred to the colonial episode and can be categorized as a story of progress began with the statement that contemporary Uganda has mainly been influenced by the coming of the missionaries, which led to the colonization of Uganda. However, it is not clear

\(^{271}\) 6CNU6.

\(^{272}\) Genealogical public narrative as a category is based on the design of the assignment. This does not mean the student necessarily had a genealogical approach to history. Using 6CNU6 as an example, it is possible that the student chose a historical episode whose consequences were known to her or him. The described contemporary situation had been due to this episode. Yet another, more plausible, interpretation is that education was important and meant something to the student and because of this was the chosen point of departure, and was elaborated on.
from the narrative whether this was a good or a bad thing, until the narrator talked about the positive changes brought by the missionaries and colonialists.

Firstly, the contemporary life in Uganda, I think it was effected by the coming of missionaries. This is because the coming of the early missionaries in Uganda accelerated the colonisation of Uganda which one can take as the major factor that effect the contemporary life in Uganda. But I think, if it was not the coming of the missionaries that gave maps that the colonialists used to colonise Uganda, even colonisation wouldn’t have been successful to a lesser extent. On the other hand colonisation is another factor that effect the contemporary life in Uganda. This is because, the coming of colonialists brought about positive effects like the construction of the Uganda railway that at least improved on transport and communication in Uganda. Further still, the presence of the Uganda railway led to development of urban centres and one of them is Kampala, which is now the capital city of Uganda. The colonialists also built schools, hospitals and roads to facilitate their projects in Uganda thus modernising the country. The colonisation of Uganda back in time, also effect the contemporary life in the country in that, the colonialists had to reform the education, from informal to formal education, for the easy administrative process. The education that was introduced then it is still the same up to date. This gives a reason that colonisation brings effect to the contemporary life in Uganda.273

The references made in this narrative also focused on changes introduced by the colonizers as signifying development. These developments occurred during the colonial era. Infrastructure, like roads, hospitals, and schools, introduced by missionaries and colonialists, was still important. Historical significance seemed to be based on the impact of each of these events on the people, and on how long the impact lasted. It was rather striking, however, that hardly anything was mentioned about Uganda’s Independence era. Even if education was mentioned in both the example stories of progress, nothing appears to have happened in education in Uganda since Independence, according to the narratives. The postcolonial era was totally excluded from the students’ explanations of the contemporary situation; however, the introduction of colonialism and the impact of this, as still evident in contemporary Uganda, were included. So what stories of progress did the narratives include about the postcolonial episode?

The postcolonial episode was referred to in twelve out of the 23 narratives that were categorized as stories of progress. The narratives that included the postcolonial episode referred to the era as having had an effect on the contemporary situation, as in the following narrative:

273 2CCU2
The situation in Uganda today is generally peaceful and developing day by day. The political sector is in its transition stage, the economic sector is accelerating every now and then and socially, people are socialising with each other, different tribes are at peace with each other and to round it all up, the situation is organised, calm and growing. However all the above has come to a reality because of the one important, fundamental decision that was made over 45 year ago on 9th October 1962 right there at the Kololo airstrip, Uganda got its independence and finally it had the chance to develop itself, transform itself into a fast developing country and then the Ugandans were free to work with each other, unite under a President hence the improvement that is now seen.274

In other words, the significance of Independence that was gained in 1962 cannot be overemphasized. All the improvements that could be seen today were thanks to Independence, which had enabled the Ugandans to develop and unite. To other narrators, the postcolonial period was not easy. However, even if they recognized the hardships that Uganda has been through, the narratives categorized as stories of progress described an end to these hardships. The narrator below can be said to have described two situations, a past, bad situation symbolized by coups d’états and harsh regimes, and the present situation that is somewhat “better both economically, politically and socially,” as proven by birth and death statistics. This change, from worse to better, has occurred because of the fall of the Obote regime and the coming into power of Museveni.

Since 1962 when Uganda achieved its independence Uganda started to experience political, social and economic changes. On a political seen Uganda experienced challenges because of coup-de tatts in 1966, 1971, 1979 and 1986 which affected it socially and economically and the regimes at that time were harsh there4 the situation was not bearable. The leaders were harsh and history has it that in 1970’s the Indians who were leading financial sectors were expelled which directly or indirectly affected the whole nation currently the situations are somehow better both economically, politically and socially. This is seen according to the statistics, which shows that the birth rates are higher than the death rates because of the stability prevailing in the society today. Although Uganda is still economically backward but there has been a [---] change from the past because of one remarkable political change that happened in 1986 when the current president overthrew the harsh regime of Milton Obote.275

Museveni’s rise to power, in other words, had put an end to the endless coups in Uganda. The narrative was a tribute to President Museveni and the NRM, a

274.1CCU6.
275.1CCU5.
theme also discussed in other narratives categorized as stories of progress, for instance the following:

The Uganda I live in today is peaceful and has gone through great political, economic and social changes under the rule of a democratic government under the leadership of the National Resistance movement and all these changes have affected contemporary life in this country. As known in history, Uganda has had a past full of dictators and undemocratic leaders who oppressed the peoples wills such as Idi Amin Dada, Milton Obote etc. but all this, to me that is changed after the 1980-1986 Bush war carried out by the then National Resistance Army under Museveni Kaguta (Now it is the NRM but still under his leadership) successfully carried out a Guerrilla war against the Government leadership of Dr. Milton Obote II reign and his Uganda Peoples Congress Party and hence put an end to the dictatorial and oppressive rule ushering into a new era of peace, democracy and freedom of expression in my country after the rise and current rule of President Museveni to power.276

Once again Museveni and the NRM were being thanked for the fall of Milton Obote’s second reign as president. The stories of progress that included the postcolonial episode were often tribute stories like this, which explicitly expressed gratitude to the current regime for achievements and developments, and which described contemporary Uganda as generally peaceful, where life was good. Whereas stories of progress referring to the colonial episode were largely occupied with social and economic dimensions, stories of progress with reference to the postcolonial episode had a political dimension where freedom was important, irrespective of whether this freedom had been achieved by past Ugandan dictators or brought about by the colonial masters. These were stories of progress, not of decline, mainly because the sentiment of a brighter future was already being felt in contemporary society.

The themes of foreign influences, both during colonial times and during postcolonial times, and Ugandan leadership were the main themes among the stories of decline, which will be the topic of next subchapter.

**Contemporary Uganda – a story of decline**

Stories of decline were more common than stories of progress. Of the 73 narratives on contemporary Uganda, 48 were categorized as stories of decline. The explanations for the contemporary situation described were to be found in ei-

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276 1CCU34.
ther the colonial era or the postcolonial era. Out of the 48 narratives, eleven were set in colonial times, whereas 37 mainly referred to events and developments during Uganda’s postcolonial era.

The contemporary situation, according to the narratives of decline, was characterized by corruption, bad leadership, and poor economic development causing high unemployment rates and inflation. This was a common theme among these narratives. However, the emphasis was most often on leadership, corruption, and poor development.

Narratives that were categorized as stories of decline and that used mainly references to the colonial episode, were all about blaming the colonial era for the hardships faced at present. Descriptions of the contemporary situation as one filled with hardship, in terms of low living standards and corruption, were common. The following narrative, for instance, traces the start of corruption back to colonial times.

Contemporary life in Uganda is hard in terms of standard of living (economically). There exists unemployment, low pay, corruption and gross abuse of human rights. Though people may blame this on the current government, we have to look at the major cause from which it stems. In so doing we cannot avoid criticising certain happenings in history. According to historians, Uganda was colonised by the British, and this event is the major cause of all this untold suffering. Many Ugandans lost their land to the British colonialists and this made them squatters on other peoples land. The creation of a central governing body by the British meant that the local leaders (kings or chiefs) lost their powers and therefore Kingdoms fell apart, people became divided. These divisions led to individualistic tendencies whereby people only looked at themselves and not the communities as opposed to the African teaching of togetherness. Those who rose to political positions started stealing whatever passed through their hands thereby increasing corruption, which still exists up to now. Personally, I feel if Uganda had not been colonised, by the British, corruption would be a tale or hearsay from our neighbours.277

The narrator recognized that people might blame the current regime for corruption and unemployment, but that the “major cause from which it stems” was colonialism. The narrator concluded that if Uganda hadn’t been colonized corruption would have been “a tale or hearsay from our neighbours.” If it was not for the reference to precolonial “togetherness,” the narrative would not be

277 2CNU1.
a story of declining development but, rather, one of continuous decline. Colonialism as a cause of division and corruption is hence enhanced.

It was common to describe contemporary life in Uganda as being full of hardships. Hardships were mainly described in terms of unemployment, low pay, and low standards of living or, in political terms, corruption. The following narrative blames the school system introduced by colonialists as the cause of high unemployment rates.

I think the system of education that was started by the colonialists in effect to educate Ugandans in 1940. This system of education is still the same, however it has been polished a bit to suit the modern world, but it still emphasize "white collar jobs" office jobs but not technical skills. This is effecting many Ugandans since the world today need more technical people that it was at the time of colonialists. The system was set on theoretic basis than practical skills and up today there is still a big gap in between theory and practical education. This is affecting Uganda due to the lack of technical skills and many are not employed though - some hold degrees in various courses but lack technical skills.  

Even though school systems around the world often face exactly the same accusations, specifically the accusation that the education system is not relevant, it is interesting that colonialism was blamed for having introduced the very same system. These narratives are deterministic. Once an introduction was being made or an event had happened, there was no turning back and there was no way to change things. The narratives lacked thoughts on why certain things change while others remain the same. However, this is perhaps a harsh interpretation of the narrative. If emphasis is placed on the phrase "still the same," the narrative could be understood as critical towards contemporary regimes and their incapacity to reform the education system. Reading between the lines, the narrative emphasizes a changed world, but an unchanged education system. The following narrative is clearer. Corruption began during the colonial era and has continued since. The conclusion, that there is no turning back, gives a fairly pessimistic view of change.

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278 2CCU9.
279 2CCU9 has been categorized as a story of decline. Whether the criticism put forward in the narrative was towards the colonial regime or the postcolonial regime could, however, be debated. In this case, the narrative has been classified as colonial, partly because there were fewer colonial stories of decline, compared to postcolonial stories of decline, among the students in Central Uganda. But, mainly because of the explicit mentioning of colonialism.
With the coming of the whites into Uganda during the time of colonialism a lot of things have changed in Uganda. With them came Christianity, the western culture for example their dressing, their language which is English. All these were slowly being adopted by Ugandans. When we look at Uganda today, one can actually tell how colonialism has affected it. If one acts the way Ugandan culture prescribes one is referred to be backward and uncivilised. The whites and Ugandans believe that for one to be civilised he/she has to treat himself like a white. The official language of Uganda today is English and it was brought by the colonial masters who were British. Even if Uganda is referred to be independent, it is independent in theories but not practically. When we see Uganda, we are still being supported by our colonial masters through funds. These funds are yet still controlled by these donors. And the way of Uganda’s administrative government is like that of the British. During colonialism, the white officials were corrupt and embezzled peoples (here the people are Ugandans) funds and this has continued to affect Uganda up to today. Uganda is known to be one of the most corrupt countries in the world and there is no hope of it ending. The big posts in the government who would end it are the very ones who embezzle the poor people’s money. It was recent when he heard of the office of the Prime minister scandal. But do you know where it ended, before everyone could know the scandal was closed and no one was actually punished and you say that corruption will end. I as a person, I have already lost hope that corruption will ever end in Uganda and it is thanks to colonialism.

The narrator referred to the corruption scandal that unfolded during the autumn of 2012 in the Prime Minister’s office. As such, the narrative is a textbook example of how history can be used to understand the present. The continued corruption among colonialists left the narrator with the feeling that nothing can change. Mahmood Mamdani has described the postcolonial regimes as ruling in the footsteps of the colonial masters. The stories of decline from the colonial episode fit well into this description of postcolonial politics in Africa. This is also reflected in the following postcolonial decline story:

The education sector introduced by the colonialists in the early 19th century has influenced the education sector today. The education that time was more of oral and writing, this system of education has been carried on even on the present day for example we have little practical studies in school. The health sector of Uganda is still the same at that of the colonialists. Hospitals that were built by the colonialists are still the leading health centres. This has not motivated govt to build more hospitals in the country. Politically, the strategy laid by the British in politics is still the same put now. The president is the head of every department in Uganda for example the army is under/owned by the President. The religion bit of it has slightly changed in that in the past, only 3 foreign religions of Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam were in existence but today the other religions like Born Again are in existence. Thanks to the colonialists who

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280 1CCU17.
brought about farming. This has help Uganda up to today. Agriculture is the backbone of Uganda and it fetches the highest percentage of Uganda’s revenue of 60%. The transport development especially with roads has a little bit developed, however the railway that was built by Imperialists in East Africa has been destroyed and as I write, only a few parts of the railway are being used.282

As seen in the narrative above, colonialism was often discussed in the narratives categorized as stories of decline, when referring to the postcolonial episode. However, this narratives recognize the contribution of regimes during the post-colonial era to the situation. The postcolonial and current regimes are described as unmotivated, carrying out policies laid down by the British, leaving the reader with a sentiment of the governments’ inability to improve the situation. This is a continuing colonial legacy: continuing through modern regimes that do not develop or take care of past legacies. Apart from the colonizers, postcolonial leaders in Uganda also inspired each other. For instance, Idi Amin has been referred to as a leader who influenced succeeding regimes.283 In the main, however, postcolonial leaders have been accused of corruption and poor development.

Political instability in the past twenty years that led to displacement of people and devastated the agricultural productivity have led to poverty in Uganda. Neo-colonialism that have made Ugandan to adopt life pattern of former colonial master like western music. High level of corruption and embezzlement of public fund by government official, that have led to poor development of roads, substandard of goods and generally low standard of living. High level of unemployment in Uganda and the desire to get rich have led the need to consult witch doctor or go for witchcraft. The theoretical education system that produces job seekers and job creators have led to high level of unemployment and inability to get enough basic need. Unbalanced development where government tend to concentrate major developmental projects in areas of his associate have led to unemployment, income inequality. Ethnicity differences due to many tribes in Uganda like Acholi, langi, Bagandan hence led to tribal tension, suspicion, mistrust and generally disunity.284

There are a lot of hardships in the contemporary situation described above and there is a need to look for explanations as to how this situation has come about. One thing the above narrator has recognized is the existing imbalance between regions and their development, an imbalance often discussed in the narratives from Northern Uganda. This is evident in the statement referring to the gov-

282 2CCU22
283 2CCU7 and 1CCU24.
284 6CNU6.
ernment giving development projects to political associates, creating inequality and causing the unstable situation between regions. Besides the regional instability, civil war (e.g., the LRA conflict) was mentioned mainly among narrators from Northern Uganda. The contemporary situation was clearly seen as having been affected by war and corruption.

Wars and corruption in Uganda effect the contemporary life in Uganda. The war that affected the country was started in 1986 and it lasted up to 20 years or more. The effects such as the following are still felt. Mostly in the northern part and at least in other parts of Uganda the increased number of orphans, people lost various parts of their bodies ie ears, lips, breasts, arms, legs and so on. These body parts were either cut by the rebels or lost as a result of landmines. They have made victims unable to support the lives and families for the case of survivors and live under very poor condition (total poverty). They are not able to access education, medical facilities, clean water supply and many other in mostly affected places in the Northern region. People lost their lives, livestock, wealth and above all lost of the traditional African cultural value which were completely eroded during the course of the war. The war caused mental problems ie trauma to those who lost all their relatives, wives, children and parents. Not only the abducted ones and returnee (those who returned alive) can not live normally as the memories of all that were happening during the war like killing people using aces, pangas [bushknife] cutting body parts, using logs for beating peoples head, guns and many other forms of killing are still fresh in the minds. The war also ruined the future for many young girls who became mother at early age and [— — —] could cater for their children, boys were taken to hold guns forcefully which made them to lost hope in their lives. Corruption has denied many of the war victims and entire people of the Uganda the services they were supposed to get. The money meant to improve on the livelihood of the people through projects which would make them to be self reliant are swindled making it difficult for the poor people to get rich hence the poor people remain poor and rich people richer.285

The narrative also gives an example of regional differences as the war mainly affected everyday life in the North. To the narrator, the situation is not improving, and this is due to corruption.

The above examples illustrate that the students’ narratives on Ugandan history could be described either as stories of progress or as stories of decline. In the following discussion, regional differences between the narrators will be addressed.

285 1CNU3.
Historical orientation in the genealogical public narratives

The genealogical public narratives firstly describe the contemporary situation in Uganda and secondly explain how this has come about, by referring to past events. Departing from the contemporary and searching the past for an explanation has made the students tell stories either about progress or about decline.

Table 11 details the findings regarding categorization of narratives into stories of progress and decline, by the episode referred to, and also by region. Narratives categorized as stories of decline were more common than stories of progress, 48 versus 23 narratives. The postcolonial era was referred to most often (46 narratives). The Table further shows regional disparity in reporting progress or decline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Central Uganda</th>
<th>Northern Uganda</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colonial</td>
<td>Post-colonial</td>
<td>Colonial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The past referred to is either the colonial or the postcolonial era. Eleven of the narratives whose explanation for the contemporary situation is found in the colonial episode can be categorized as stories of decline. Six of these came from Northern Uganda; five came from Central Uganda. Out of the narratives categorized as stories of progress that refer to the colonial episode, only one was written in Northern Uganda while ten came from Central Uganda. References to the colonial episode were not common in narratives from Northern Uganda. Those that were made in Northern Ugandan narratives appeared in stories of decline.

Turning to the narratives that involved the postcolonial episode, the tendency became clearer and, with the two different regions in mind, some conclusions could be drawn. Out of 49 narratives that referred to the postcolonial era, 37 were stories of decline. Of these, 24 came from Northern Uganda. Of the 37
narratives from Northern Uganda, only five were categorized as stories of progress. In Central Uganda, half of the narratives, 18, were stories about progress and as such mostly referred to the colonial episode.

It could be said that the narratives focused change, since not one explicitly looked at the precolonial episode to explain the contemporary situation. The genealogical public narratives can, hence, not be described as traditional narratives invoking origin to explain the contemporary situation. The students, rather, looked at the colonial or postcolonial episodes for changes and developments that had affected the contemporary situation.

The fact that Central Ugandans most often invoked a story of progress with a colonial episode in mind, rather than a story of decline, may be due to the fact that the region is largely populated by the Baganda and, to them, the colonial era was a time of prosperity. The stories of progress from Central Uganda that involve the colonial episode could be seen as part of a meta-narrative of development. However, in terms of historical orientation, these stories have aspects of the “traditional narrative.” All the signs of development we can see in Uganda today were introduced during a period of prosperity for the Baganda people. In this sense, the meta-narrative of development contains “traditional” aspects. The differences between the regions bear witness to the importance of the context and the historical culture.

In Northern Uganda, stories of progress referring to the colonial era are nearly absent. Instead, it is striking that students from Northern Uganda seemed more inclined to invoke a story of decline. The most obvious reason for this is the region’s experience of 20 years of civil war that ended only recently. But according to the students’ references, it was not only the war that caused the decline. The narratives also bear witness to disparate development between the regions – an imbalance that started during colonial times and continued into the postcolonial era. The narratives seem framed by a criticism of contemporary governments. There are no signs of progressive development in the narratives and in order to explain the poor development of Uganda the students blamed everything on: the colonial school system, corruption, and bad leadership, as well as the multiparty system.

It is important to bear in mind that the assignment was to describe the contemporary situation and explain how this had come about, not to suggest solutions
to contemporary problems. However, the narratives are not only accounts of the past and contemporary time, but also of the future, such as the following concluding notes in stories about decline: “I as a person, I have already lost hope that corruption will ever end in Uganda and it is thanks to colonialism,” and “Personally, I feel if Uganda had not been colonised, by the British, corruption would be a tale or hearsay from our neighbours.” Both narratives blame colonialism for corruption and express doubts that corruption will ever end. Also, progress stories implicitly speak of the future, as in the following example: “... a new era of peace, democracy and freedom of expression in my country after the rise and current rule of President Museveni to power.” “A new era” can be understood as signifying continuity.

Stories about development in Uganda can roughly be divided between stories of progress with reference to the colonial episode, and stories of decline with reference to the postcolonial episode. Among the progress stories, developments introduced by the colonizers were crucial as continuing contemporary sources of development. By contrast, the stories about decline focused on poor development, mainly with a political, social, and economic dimension in mind. The few stories of progress with reference to the postcolonial era were written as tribute stories to Museveni and the NRM; but other narrators spoke of decline, stating that development had come to an end when Museveni entered the stage. Change was, hence, ascribed to strong leaders and could account for the numerous references made to presidents and leaders in both the genetic and the genealogical public narratives. Tribute stories had aspects of exemplary narratives as they provided lessons for the future. Reference to leaders was not, however, so common in the genealogical personal narratives.

286 1CCU17.
287 2CNU1.
288 1CCU34
Chapter 7: Important to Me and My Family

History, to most people, is not all about politics and about telling the story of a nation. To most of us, history allows us to feel rooted as individuals, and therefore, depending on which group we identify with, our interpretation of the past will differ. This study aims to explore what spaces, dimensions, and episodes of history Ugandan students refer to when thinking of their history and the past. To illicit narratives that would give the students an opportunity to freely choose what to write, they were given this assignment to recount what from the past was important, to them and their family, and worth retelling. This assignment elicited a wide range of answers, in terms of both point of departure and content. The question we wanted to address was twofold: What past is important to Ugandan students? And do they connect to their national history?

Important on different levels

The references to the past in the narratives were categorized around four different spaces. Depending on the spaces of the references, the narratives could be grouped into four different levels that the narrators deemed important or historically significant: a supranational level, a national level, a societal level, and, finally, a family level. Narratives on the societal and family levels were far more common than narratives on a supranational or national level.

Table 12: Levels among genealogical narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
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<th>Northern Uganda</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>73</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both the content of the narratives and the spaces referred to by the narrators were important for categorization. Content and spaces point towards certain political and social dimensions, but also, they suggest for whom the narrative was important, for instance a Ugandan or a family member. The supranational level was characterized by references the narrators made to Africa and Africans. In addition, these references were defined by a political component. This was
also the case for national-level narratives, the difference being that these narratives focused on the space of Uganda rather than Africa. They referred to events that were mainly of historical significance to Ugandans.

The societal level was the most common level. This level was characterized by narratives that in some sense referred to the narrator’s relations within society. Most often, the societal level was connected to a social dimension, which distinguished it from the national and supranational levels. The societal level was naturally larger than the family level; however, it was portrayed in some cases as borderless, extending beyond the national. The narrator made references to factors that he or she felt were significant to being part of the society. Lastly, references to events of importance to the narrator and his or her immediate family were categorized as a family-related references, and they could also be extended to other relatives. Narrators spoke both of their nuclear family and about their extended family or “traditional African family.” As a category, the references to the past on a family level were historically significant to the narrator and his or her family. Also, these narratives included a social dimension.

A key issue, regarding historical significance and the categorization of narratives into different levels, is for whom the narratives were important. In this chapter, the four levels will be the starting point for exploring both what the students wrote in their narratives (the content), and in what way the narratives were significant to the narrators.

**Supranational-level narratives**

Narratives categorized as narratives on a supranational level (five out of 73 narratives) were characterized both by being placed in an African context and by having a political dimension. However, one of the five supranational-level narratives referred to European history. The narratives on a supranational level were closely related to History taught in Ugandan schools, which may explain the two different spaces referred to. As mentioned in the chapter on School History in Uganda, the Advanced Level History papers were framed by either Africa or Europe and the outlook on history was political. The following narrative about what from the past was important to the narrator and his or her family evaluates Ugandan history, or rather African history, in a bullet list and has been named School History:
How civilisation started.
How colonialism started and ended.
How different leaders assumed powers and their respective consequences.
The impacts of colonialism on African culture.289

The narrative was closely connected to the History learnt in Ugandan schools. Except for the first sentence on how civilization started, the themes of how colonialism started and ended, how leaders assumed power, and the impact of colonialism are all main themes found in the A-Level History papers on the History of Africa, 1855–1914 and Africa: National Movements and New States. Following narrative focused the political dimension of the latter paper:

The past event important for me and my family and worth retelling is the roles of the prominent pan Africanist such as Dr Apollo Milton Obote of Uganda, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania who played a prominent roles in the revival of African culture and elimination of western influences from Africa. thereby bringing self rules and African independence. Up to now and due to their role non of the African state has undergone colonial influences though a new form of colonialism still persistently exist in African state. This is worth retelling because it has enhanced liberty and freedom of Africans.290

Leaders of the struggle for Independence in African states were important to the narrator, as was the notion of being African. Besides the mention of “Dr Apollo Milton Obote of Uganda,” the other references to political leaders were made to leaders from other African countries. The historical significance of past events was based on the effects they had on Africans. The emphasis on the broader African perspective, rather than a specifically Ugandan perspective, is what distinguishes these supranational-level narratives from national-level narratives.

Independence and the liberation struggle were the background to the following narrative headed “Slave trade story”:

This is the selling and buying of human beings. Slave trade was carried out in African countries by the Europeans mainly. The African slaves were taken to America and Europe to work mainly on plantations of sugar. The Europeans made deals with African chiefs who raided other societies to get slaves and sell them to the whites in exchange of items like clothes, mirrors, shoes etc. The slaves were chained and could move in

289 4FNU14. See also 4FNU11.
290 4FNU3.
straight lines carrying goods of the Europeans and Americans. They were escorted by the able bodied men provided by the local chiefs who traded with whites. The trade was stopped by the coming of missionaries who preached the word of God. This was not very successful, so it was finalised by the colonisation of Africa.291

The narrative ended with Africa’s colonisation. While the former narrative on Pan-Africanism gives examples of different African nationalist leaders, this narrative on the slave trade does not mention personalities and therefore is more general. However, both narratives speak of an African rather than a national experience. The fact that these are not the memories of the narrators themselves and, further, the fact that the references given are textbook examples, describing the slave trade, colonialism, and the struggle for Independence, give the narratives the characteristics of being public narratives rather than personal. The subjects of the narratives were not personally significant to the narrator and his or her family, though having significance to the narrator in a broader sense, as an African.

Framed by an African context, both narratives are focused on colonialism and liberation from it. Looking at the first example, described as School History, it is not until the final reference that it becomes clear that the narrative is framed by an African context. At the same time, the narrator focuses on the impacts of colonialism on African culture. The narrative could be interpreted as referring to, and evaluating, three different episodes in history: the precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial episodes. It is not quite clear from the narrative whether the impact of colonialism on African culture was a good or a bad thing. This becomes clearer in the second example of supranational-level narratives. Here, the narrators speak of the “elimination of Western influence” and slave trade as being carried out “by the Europeans mainly.” He or she argues, further, that though the missionaries tried to abolish the slave trade, their failure to do so led to Africa’s colonisation. While the “slave trade story” is an unforgettable part of the colonial past, the narrative on Pan-Africanists also warns of “a new form of colonialism.” A lot was left out, content wise, from the concepts of slave trade, colonialism and Independence, especially regarding a national experience. However, these concepts can also work as abbreviated narratives.292 Nevertheless, the narratives bear witness to an African experience rather than a Ugandan experience. The narratives were framed by a meta-narrative in the form of a post-

291 2FCU15.
292 See page 36 and 65 on abbreviated narratives, as well as Rüsen, 2004:102.
colonial critique. As a contrast to these, the narrative below on European history is a meta-narrative on democracy.

The history of Europe in particularity help me to actually acquire a peaceful mean of achieving democracy. Not only that, it also importance for me because it gives me a procedure and confident to stage a revolution against a dictatorial government as in 1789 revolution in France was a success against the bourbon monarchy headed by king Louis XVI who was a very dictatorial king. I also learned and realised that it is very important to have a peace keeping bodies to suppress and prevent any uprising for the world to be stable this was for the case of Congress of Vienna who ended the uprising during Napoleonic era, Versille and League of Nation who ended world war I and also United Nation Organisation who play major role in ending world war II as well as postponing the occurrence of the 3rd world war. During the 1789 revolution in France the major causes was the extravagancy, lack of constitutionalism among others these shows that me and my family should not practise such an evil act that may at any times leads to a revolution. The unfair treatment during the Vienna, Versille peace treaty and the League of Nation account for the cause root of the second world catastrophes known as the second world war therefore it is very importance for me to consider that to prevent a war, one need to avoid unfairness in settling peace. In conclusion, history is very importance for me and my family as it made me aware of what may bring in conflict, what should be done in order to avoid problems among others. All these experience I learned it from the history of the past as I used to compare the situation in Europe.  

To the narrator, European history was “exemplary” in achieving both peace and democracy. Even though it is not clear from the narrative which situations in the Ugandan or African experience the narrator compared to European history, the narrative held a rather political outlook on history. Even “extravagance” should be avoided, he or she argued, since it might lead to a revolution. In this sense, European history to the narrator was framed by a meta-narrative of democracy and progress. European history is not significant only to Europe, but also to Africa, hence the “exemplary narrative” in an African context. As such, European history may have historical significance also to Africans by shedding light on how to handle political situations in Africa.

National-level narratives

Concepts and phenomena such as the slave trade, Pan-Africanism, and colonialism represented an African experience, discussed in narratives on a suprana-

293 FNU8.
294 Compare this to the objective of paper 3: European history 1789-1970, page 56.
tional level. By contrast, references to specific events were more common in the narratives categorized as national-level. Ten narratives out of 73 involved a national space. As opposed to narratives on a supranational level, the references to the past of the national-level narratives were significant to Ugandans and not Africans. All narratives in this category were set in an Independent Uganda, with leadership as a common reference. They included stories about Independence, the NRM, and Idi Amin. Hence, there were two main themes that were identified in these narratives: Independence and leadership, both with a political dimension, as seen in the following example:

The incident of granting independence to Uganda is important to me and my family. This incident shows that Uganda, which is my country, was once under the dominancy of the British. So what made me and my family to feel at home is that my country (Uganda) got her independence on the 9th-October-1962, which is still being celebrated up to now. I celebrate this with my family annually. My country Uganda obtained independence with the help of the elites, international body like UNO, OAU and the ideas of Pan Africanism. These facilitated the independence of Uganda. Doctor Apollo Milton Obote became the first prime minister of independent Uganda. with Kabaka Muteesa II as the first president. The granting of independence to Uganda by the British marked the end of colonialism in Uganda.295

The narrative resembles the previous one about Pan-Africanism that was a supranational-level narrative, but the present narrative is explicitly about Uganda. The Independence of Uganda was historically significant to the narrator and his or her family as Ugandans, an event (“incident”) that made the narrator and his or her family feel at home. The recognition of outside influence in gaining Independence, as in the present narrative through its references to Pan-Africanism and the UN, is, however, not common among these narratives. Another narrator mentioned two events he or she deemed as important: firstly, Independence, which was important as “we [as Ugandans] started managing our country by ourselves,” and, secondly, the civil war (i.e., the UPDF-LRA war).297 This specific Ugandan event was in fact perceived as a regional matter as the narrator suggested that the civil war only affected the Northern region.298

The events on a national level could therefore not be said to be exclusively sig-

295 6FNU6.
296 6FNU3:10.
297 The term “civil war” was used in this text to refer to the UPDF-LRA war. Wars explicitly mentioned in the narratives were either this war or the Bush War, when Museveni fought for power and attained it in 1986. Besides these domestic wars, the Kagera war was mentioned, i.e., the war between Uganda and Tanzania during the reign of Idi Amin.
298 6FNU3:11.20.
nificant to all Ugandans. The LRA war has often been the subject of a Northern narrative, far more often than of a Central narrative, as it took place in the Northern region, and consequently mainly affected Northerners.299

A second theme among national-level narratives was leadership, hence making it historically significant, although the leadership referred to was usually criticized. One narrative, about Idi Amin and his reign during the 1970s, ended with the remark “In conclusion, he was too brutal, ruthless and once a president of Uganda who will never be forgiven.”300 Another said, “[in the past, there was] good leadership because in the past there is no any dictatorship leader like now which is very important.”301 “The past,” as mentioned here, seems to refer to a deep past, often the precolonial past. There were no specific references to specific leaders or a specific time, but rather, to a “golden past” with just leaders. But even if criticism of leadership was common, there were some examples of descriptions of “good” leadership – among the narratives on the theme of leadership, such as:

Breaking free the chains of freedom is the way I would term this particular event that took place in my country some years back and which I openly find important 4 me and my family. It is exactly 27 years ago when my country happened to have an end to the civil war that had taken place for 5 years. During this time many lives were lost people witnessed the collapse of a great nation that had just been reborn from the hands of the whites on 9th October 1962 when it all started. When my country was getting its independence the white had [- – –] some conflicting situations to handle n’ difficult questions to solve. Eg who would be the president of Uganda, how will they manage the black people and keep them in their group etc. So with all the many brains they have they put an incompetent person to be the prime minister with very many powers. And this person was called Dr. Apollo. M.O [Obote] who was the beginning of the doom We as a nation were going to face in the future coz he had hardly been to school. With his rise again he had conflicting interests with the true president of Uganda the late Kabaka of Uganda Sir Edward Mutesa II. Whom he tried to kill and killed later like was also overthrown by the late Idi Amin Dada and then when all hell broke loose in our country. Things became tough socially n’ economically after where there over countless coup’s before the National Resistance Army’s liberation war started and within a time period of 5 years war were delivered from the powers of evil until today.302

299 One Central Ugandan narrative mentions the war (1FCU13).
300 2FCU6:17-19.
301 5FN09:28-31. What was meant by the past was not entirely clear, but the narrator referred to “good government during the time of our father that was to say about independence in 1962” (8-10).
302 1FCU15.
The bad leadership had come to an end, according to the narrator, who described this event as “breaking free the chains of freedom” when, thanks to the NRA, Uganda and the Ugandans were “delivered from the powers of evil,” i.e., from a postcolonial leadership of the past, and, more specifically, the leadership of Obote.

Several of the narrators criticized past as well as the current leadership, even when they viewed the present leadership as good. The narratives were not focused on the narrator or the narrator’s family, but, rather, described a Ugandan experience with events and developments that were significant to Ugandan nationals. Narratives framed by the nation became political, either because they evaluated leadership or because they embraced the Independence of Uganda. The former had much in common with narratives on a supranational level; however, being national-level made them more patriotic than Africanist. The following narrative is a good example of a narrative that does not fit into the themes of Independence or leadership, but is still patriotic:

To me it is hardships my country (Uganda) has passed through [that is important to my family and me] like the civil war that took place in Northern Uganda, natural disasters, etc. that behind all our hardships and our problems there is still hope for a bright future at home. Its also men and women in Uganda who had dreams, ambitions and dedicated their lives 2 create a better Uganda for the generations to come after them. To add to that, it’s the struggles I have had in my education, but despite that I was able to reach where I am. More so, it’s the background of my family and the love for my country, tribe and fellow people.305

The narrator associated her own everyday struggles with those of Uganda in an almost “exemplary” way, where ambition could take him/her anywhere.

It has to be noted that several narratives on leadership were also critical. Even the example that embraces the current regime is critical of past leadership. But not all narrators have criticized dictatorship.

The past leaders who were dictators. In the past, Uganda had leaders such as Idi Amin, Milton Obote and Kabaka’s such as Kabaka Mwenga of Buganda kingdom. They were the high ranked leaders of that time. They ruled their people with harshness which involved; killing of their people, exiling of their people. Such aggressions affected the local people to a lesser extent though to a greater extent they promoted development of the country for example Idi Amin was the first president to make Uganda carry out ex-

305 1FNU2.
ports of coffee. Such aggression turned to local people’s activities towards their country ie. they became strong patriots which led to the development of Uganda. Such leaders are so patriotic though they use harsh methods to bring about development. It’s most times required among Africans since they do not learn without practical experience.304

It is not until the very end of the narrative that it becomes clear that, in the narrator’s opinion, a harsh government was preferable. Dictatorship was a measure against unpatriotic actions. The narrative hence works as a reminder to the reader that concepts are often abbreviated narratives.305 By contrast, the following excerpt is critical of history itself or, more precisely, of history conceived as an exemplary narrative:

… The past retelling lead to bad leadership skills which passes from past leader to current leader or power, which actually lead to instability in politic example in (1962-1970) by Obote and Ada Amin who was a [– – –] as presidents. as lastly from 1986 - present day, there is instabilities in the power.306

According to the narrative, it was the very telling of the past that may have influenced and inspired contemporary leaders to govern in the same, bad way. This narrator focused more on how political leaders in the postcolonial era have been influenced by the past, than on himself and his own family.

**Societal-level narratives**

Narratives on a societal level were the most common in response to this assignment. Thirty-one out of 73 narratives have been categorized as societal-level narratives. The category was characterized by references to a social dimension. Referred-to events and developments were significant to the narrator because of their impacts on society and hence a social dimension was eminent. Among the societal-level narratives, three themes of content could be discerned. Two of the narratives had a tribal theme, where origin was of great importance, 14 narratives had a colonial or missionary theme, and, lastly, 15 narratives dealt with the theme of African tradition and culture.

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304 2FCU18.  
305 Rüsen 2004:102.  
306 6FNU1:28-34.
Both of the narratives that had a tribal theme were about origin. One of them was a story of Kintu, the first Baganda. The other narrative was about the Madi people.

My traditions and family background is really very important because I get to understand our history and how we came to exist. We were the first indigenous people to settle in West Nile that is the Madi tribe. Lived there before the Luo migration. They intermarried with the natives giving birth to tribes like the Alur, Lugbara among others. Sometimes we are categorised as the river Nilotics because we settled around the river Nile. Our traditional god is called "Opii" meaning the mighty one and the word "madi" means "people" in our language. Our traditional enemies were the Acholis because they occupied our land and killed our people during their settlement. The traditional wears were hides and skins, and we are farmers in particular. Our traditional foods include millet, cassava, simsim to mention but a few. Names were given according to your time of birth, for example the name "Koriyo" reflects back to the time we lost our land to the Luo settlers.\(^{307}\)

This is a story about origin and about how the Madi tribe came to populate the West Nile area and gave birth to other tribes through intermarriage. As a story of origin, it has aspects of a “traditional narrative,” using Rüsen’s terminology.\(^{308}\) The story provides answers to questions such as: Who was the first settler in the area? Who was the traditional enemy of the Madi tribe?\(^{309}\) The story as such constitutes origin and leaves the reader with a feeling of timeless continuity. Both of the narratives that contain a tribal theme refer to the precolonial episode, in fact, the deep past of Ugandan history.

The second theme in the narratives on a societal level was colonialism and the time of mission. The coming of colonialists as well as that of the missionaries could be viewed as political events, events (colonialism) that we have already encountered on both a supranational and a national level. But the two colonialist narratives and the nine missionary narratives on a societal level have an important social dimension. The focus of the narratives was not to remember the colonial era or the brutal rule, in one case. The narratives’ focus was, rather, on the changes introduced by the missionaries and colonialists. These had a social impact, according to the narrators. Here follows a typical narrative on this theme:

\(^{307}\) 4FN9U.
\(^{308}\) Rüsen, 2005:12.
\(^{309}\) While writing the narrative, the narrator was surrounded by 13 Acholi and one Munyankole in the classroom.
From the past through history subject I learnt a lot of things that are still important and ever worth retelling and these include the following: During the 19th century there was coming of missionaries in East Africa. These coming missionaries came with the policy of practising the gospel or the word of God. East African chief by the time was so oppressive, exploitative and culturally by religion under their tradition customs. Before the coming of missionaries Africans were carrying out human sacrifices, killing of twins and their economic status of carrying out slave trade, but when the missionaries came to Africa slowly by slowly soften the heart of African and they started believe in God. There was also stopping of slave trade which was a source of income to African chiefs. They built schools which helped African to become educated and many hospitals were built for better treatment and many others. African also adopted to copy western culture like dressing style. English became a commercial language.  

Different changes introduced by the colonialists and the missionaries were the reasons given for the significance of these events – changes and projects like the building of schools and hospitals and development of infrastructure. Often the criterion for historical significance was based on continuity, as in the following excerpt: “Hospitals like Mulago in Kampala were built during their era, which up to now is the major government hospital in Uganda. Therefore their time in Uganda was important and worth retelling.” Or: “The missionaries brought modernity to Uganda, like, they built hospitals, which are still operating and are one of the major referral hospitals in Uganda today, for example, Mulago hospital was built by missionaries and it is a major referral hospital today in my country.” In this way, the many changes introduced by the missionaries were understood as signs of developments, developments that are still important today. A religious dimension was of course apparent, but the impact of the missionaries is mainly discussed in terms of the introduction of health care and education, as well as unity and righteousness. The building of hospitals and schools had a social impact. The colonial and missionary era was therefore understood to have been important because of these changes that were introduced during the time. The narratives concluded that without the introduction of education, health care, and Christianity and the development of infrastructure, Uganda (and also Africa) would lack schools, hospitals, and roads and would most definitely still believe in traditional Gods. The very fact that hospitals and schools built by the missionaries are still in use made them historically significant in the narrators’ eyes: they were seen as signs of development. The

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310 2FCU10.  
311 2FCU9:16-21.  
312 2FCU2:4-8.
coming of missionaries was the one event that enabled the history of Uganda to become a story of progress, worthy of retelling.

So we keep on retelling the coming of missionaries in my family because they opened our minds and showed us the way to righteousness, and we shall keep on retelling the story to our sons and daughters, grandchildren and the message shall be passed over and over again to our family members of what the missionaries did in our family.313

The themes of colonialism and mission were therefore juxtaposed to the tribal theme. Significant changes introduced during this time were recognized by the narrators, making this an episode that needs to be retold and passed on.

The theme of African traditions and culture also had a societal dimension. The narratives that included this theme were not as specific as the two tribal narratives above. Half of the narratives on this theme were set in Africa rather than being specific to Uganda. African traditional societies or African traditional marriage were referred to, and references to taboos, and traditional music and dances made. The following is a typical narrative categorized as societal-level and discussing African tradition and culture:

The African traditional society has nowadays contradicted with the modern forms of lifestyle. However, here are some aspects which must be considered or valued although there is change in social ways of life as noted below: There was emphasis put on informal education of children where practical skills were taught to the young ones and this must be emphasised as one way of reducing unemployment or uplifting the standard of living among Africans. The people in the past promoted relationships through communal work. Where everybody was supposed to contribute towards the development of the community. This therefore is very important in promoting unity, the support of the public in development of a country. The extended family systems were emphasised. However, this has been destroyed now days because of economic hardships fear of responsibility hence destroying the set up of the family and bringing hatred among the family members. The community education of children by every member of the community was very important. This helps to groomed and upbring the children morally upright therefore this it’s very important aspect of life which must be considered in the country. The traditional dances, beliefs songs poems must also be considered since it helps the youth to know the norms and customs of their respective culture, besides, it also helps to impart good morals in the society and teach them through poems, songs, drama among others. The sharing of family properties like portis, [- – -] are ways in which Africans used to developed relationships among themselves this has helped to

313 2FCU16.
avoid evil practices like greed, corrupt because people belief in sharing among themselves.

The narrator recognized that societal changes had taken place, superseding aspects of traditional life that needed to be valued. “Togetherness” and “unity” are frequently used words in narratives like this. In the example above, the narrator referred to communal work and community education as a means of creating unity. Formal education brought unemployment, and the destruction of extended families brought hatred among the family members. The narrator concluded that African traditional society was good and did not inherently include corruption and greed.

These narratives on a societal level evoke African traditions and culture as something that needs to be protected as a means to fight foreign bad influences. The narratives may even suggest that, to resolve issues seen as un-African, there should be a revival of African culture, tradition, and values. As such, the theme is the most “borderless” theme among the three and the one most clearly framed by Africa.

An element of criticism was hence noticeable among the narratives themed as African tradition and culture. The narrator above suggested that modern forms of lifestyle contradict with more traditional ways; and that traditions need to be appreciated. Criticism voiced against Western influence and neo-colonialism is common among the narratives, for instance: “… due to the high rate of spread of neo-colonialism in Africa hence this local chief are use to revive our culture and languages.” Another example is, “The way our grandparents used to back the young wants [ones] in form of informal education is so important and worth retelling because it made children disciplined than nowadays due to Western influence and permissiveness.” The past, referred to as traditional African society, was contrasted with the modern society that was characterized by Western influences. None of the narratives define “traditional African society,” but reading between the lines allows us to deduce that Africa was organized politically, economically, and socially before colonialism brought Western lifestyles and influences. Still, not being defined, the traditional African society remains somewhat mythical.

314 5FNU3.
315 5FNU10:14-17.
316 1FNU6:22-27.
The first of the next two quotations refers to what could be interpreted as African humanism, whereas the second is critical of the “permissiveness” and “immorality” of today.

There were story telling, riddles and jokes among others. Which helped to provoke the intelligence of an individual person growing to become a responsible person in the community.\(^{317}\)

And,

There was high respect accorded to sex and sexuality. Sex abuse or immorality like incest, adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism among others were not in existence.\(^{318}\)

Nearly half of the societal-level narratives were placed in a broader African context; which applied both to the narratives themed as African tradition and culture, and to those about colonialism and mission. To some extent, therefore, both these themes have some similarities with the narratives on a supranational level as they speak about an African experience rather than about the narrators and their family. However, they also include a social dimension, which is why they are being discussed here, under the heading “Societal-level narratives.”

The theme of colonialism and mission, as well as the African tradition and culture theme, seem to be framed by a meta-narrative. Where the former is characterized by development and progress, the latter is characterized by postcolonial criticism, i.e., criticism of Western influence. In the former, historical events have been given significance in terms of the developments they brought, developments whose importance is signified by the fact that they are continuing to be used and are beneficial to the society (e.g., infrastructure, hospitals, and education). In some sense, the African tradition and culture theme could be categorized as Afrocentric, while the theme of colonialism and mission can be seen as Eurocentric. One narrator explicitly wrote about Afrocentric and Eurocentric perspectives:

It should be noted by the world that Uganda had a Kingdom called Buganda. The king of Buganda had all powers including even the power to take away life. He ordered his soldiers to kill the African Christians in Uganda (Buganda) Mumgongo. This teaches me and my family that we have to respect authority however to God (God’s issues)

\(^{318}\) 4FNU13:6-10. The quotation and the narratives themed as African tradition and culture can be better understood in the light of the current historical culture in Uganda. During the time of collecting empirical data, three different Bills were debated in the Ugandan Parliament and the media: the Anti-Pornography Bill, the Bill on Marriage and Divorce, and the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. See also pages 78-79.
should be respected. This history has taught me that Christianity brought about by the missionaries brought about change and civilisation to Africans stated by the Eurocentrics. However, these missionaries brought about colonisation which brought about massive death and torture of people for example the Mau Mau, Apartheid policy in South Africa as stated by Afrocentrics (view).\textsuperscript{319}

To the narrator, from a Eurocentric view, the missionaries brought development, but from an Afrocentric view, they brought colonialism and, in turn, “massive death and torture.” Authority should be respected, according to the narrator, but both the examples of the king of the Buganda killing African Christians, and of the colonialists, who are to blame for Mau Mau and South Africa’s Apartheid policy, show uncivilized acts.

Of the two themes, African tradition and culture, and colonialist and mission, the former was common in narratives from the Northern region and the latter in narratives from Central Uganda. While the colonialists and missionary narratives spoke about development and progress, the African tradition and culture narratives spoke of neo-colonialism and/or the revival of indigenous language and culture. A plausible explanation for this disparity may be that the majority of the students from Central Uganda were Baganda, and that Buganda was allied with the British colonial rulers throughout the colonial episode.

\textit{Family-level narratives}

Lastly, the category of family-level narratives includes narratives that relate what from the past has been important for the narrator and his or her family and has been worth retelling. Twenty-seven of the 73 narratives have been categorized as family-level narratives, including all the narratives that referred to either a self-experienced event or an event in the family history. Twenty of the 27 narratives were about events in the narrators’ own memory, whereas only six referred to events that happened before their birth or in early childhood.\textsuperscript{320} These narratives were all about the family and referred to events that were of direct importance to the narrator and/or his or her immediate family. Often the narratives involved a hardship the family had endured, for instance sickness of a

\textsuperscript{319} 2FCU22.

\textsuperscript{320} Here, early childhood is to be understood as younger than 5 years old. For instance, a time reference could be given in the following way: “In the past, I was told a story which happened back at my home village [...]” 2FNU2.
parent, or a happy occasion worth remembering, such as a wedding or graduation from school. Two family-level narratives will be presented before turning to the function of this type of narrative:

What I find important for me and my family and is worth retelling is my elder sisters studies and graduation. She is called Miriam and the eldest child. She was born at the time that my grandparents were still alive and it was a time when some Africans still believed that education was not important for girls because they easily got destructed by men and got married. So my grandparents kept on telling my father that he was wasting his money on Miriam but she was determined to study and accomplish what she had started and challenged the grandparents. She met a number of challenges but this story is worth telling because now that I speak she has a degree, a diploma in counselling and guidance and she is working. All of us in our home are happy. I remember during her graduation celebration she said she wished the grandparents were there to witness what they always doubted and she told us the siblings to study very hard because who ever drops out of school will cease to be her sibling anymore and she won’t even give him or her a piece of soap, not even to respond to his/her knock on the door. This statement she made is still pushing me really hard that is why her story is worth telling. My mother and father were proud of her and we the siblings were proud to be related to her too. Thanks for making me remember a great story in my past.321,322

The story sends several messages: It is a success story regarding the narrator’s sister managing firstly to graduate and secondly to find work. The story also talks about gender at a time not too long ago when people did not believe in educating girls. Despite the grandparents’ reluctance to see money spent on girls’ education, the older sister persisted in her struggle to get an education. The narrative is consequently an example of changing views on gender. The memory of the sister’s words to persuade her younger siblings to get an education is not likely to be forgotten. The sister’s success, a success that made everybody proud of her, was exemplary to the narrator.

As an example of a typical narrative on family hardships, we turn to the following narrative, which tells about conditions during the student’s upbringing:

321 The last sentence added thanks to the researcher and the assignment. The sentence raised the question whether this truly was an important memory or story, or whether it was the assignment that had rendered the story. However, given that the narrator was about to finish the last year of upper secondary education and chose to tell a story about a sibling’s education, a plausible guess is that it was really an important memory. It may even be that the narrator thanked the researcher for eliciting the story at that precise moment of his or her education, as a reminder of the importance of the memory.
322 1FNU5:1-41.
As a young girl I grew up not knowing my father. I never had a chance to lay my eyes on him. He died when I was so young. I think around 3-4 months. My mother was left with 3 young kids. By then our first born was six, second born 3 and me, the last just mere months. Just like most African traditions, when my father died, my paternal relatives decided to inherit everything that is to say from materialistic things to children and even my mother was to marry my father’s brother. She knew this was wrong and she managed to save herself from marriage but the rest where left in the hands of my uncles. This all happens when she is in Hoima, a village in Uganda. After realising that she has lost everything, mom decides to move to Kampala to start a new life. She had troubles finding a job. Here she had left us to stay with my grandma back in Kabale, a village in South Western Uganda. With trying out every job, mom finally gets a stable job and settles in Kampala. After a few years, she decided to bring us to stay with her. Here we begin getting used to the luxuries of being in town that is to say going to nice schools and being exposed to different necessities. I end this by Thanking the Good Lord for all his work, because if it wasn’t for him, I wouldn’t be where I am right now. And also thank my mother for not losing hope and for being so hard working in order to support us because not all women can withstand all that she went through without having any supporting hand.323

As with many of the narratives on hardship, the narrator thanked God for helping her family through the hard times following the death of her father. In this narrative the mother is also thanked for being strong and for not quitting. Both of the above examples of family-level narratives are examples of women being strong. The references to the past have been made either because the events were memorable, or to show that the family has made it, no matter what hardships they faced. The references in the former case are often about handling change. References to the past were often references to a family event based upon hardship, a difficult situation that was either improved through the unity of the family, or that made the narrator more determined to proceed with whatever she or he was engaged with, despite the outcome of the situation described. Often the narrator comes to the conclusion to not give up or lose hope – another instance of exemplary narrative.

Using Somers’ terminology on family-level narratives demonstrates that they have aspects of both ontological and public narratives.324 “Public” because the narratives say something about what the narrator wanted to tell about the family; “ontological” because they often also contain a message for the narrator. For instance, the following narrative publicly illustrates how the family became

323 1FCU17.
poor, while at the same time recognizing that the family had not always been poor:

In the early 1990s, my father had a large herd of cattle and many varieties of poultry species ranging from ducks, turkeys, hens and pigeons. We would feed on those animals and birds as much as we wished. Some of the animals were sold for money and others exchanged with other items that we never had at that time. We had the largest herd of cattle in the whole of our village and the entire neighbouring communities really admired my father’s achievements, I was indeed very proud of my family because of the assets we had. Unfortunately, in early 1997, we were attacked by the Karamojong warriors who raided all the livestock that belonged to my father and our major asset at that time. We lost them totally as most of them were taken along by the warriors and the few that we remained with were sold out by my father and from thence to date we completely remained without a single livestock.325

The narrator dealt with change by explaining how the family became poor. The memory of being raided by Karamojong warriors could easily have triggered hatred against the Karamojong as a group. But the narrative merely explains how the family became poor, after describing how the family had once been rich. In this sense, the story is open-ended with regard to future prospects. Whether remembering the experience will ultimately produce hatred or ambition is to be seen. But that the story works ontologically is plausible.

The following narrative, telling a story about family lineage, works in a similar way. This family history has made the narrator more determined, a message learnt:

Personally, what I find important for me and my family and it is worth retelling is that the background history of my family lineage on the side of my father is quite hurting and recallable privileged in a way that one day we as a family sat down to know our roots and surprisingly my father narrated a story that left us in grief. He told us that our grandfather (RIP) was a royal guard in the Palace of Rwanda and due to the upheavals and the inconsiderate invasions between the Hutu and the Tutsis in Rwanda, my late grand father led his way to Uganda together with his wife with whom they managed to sneak into Uganda and but this, they settled in one district in Uganda, Masaka and by this they secretly settled there and bore children including my father. However, surprising and worth telling is that when they settled in Masaka, they acquired material and became wealthy due to the practice of agriculture. On the people seeing this advancement, they started hating our late grand fathers family and they killed my grandfather when my father was at the age of 9 yrs. However, so determined as my father was he went on to care for the mother who was later on killed also. His brothers and sisters

325 2FNU3:1-19.
were killed living him with one brother who also earlier died in 2008. My father has lived a life of being lonely and has raised us till now. This is a story that makes me more determined.\footnote{1FCU23.}

This narrative also relates to historical events, as the grandfather’s reason for moving to Uganda was the civil war in Rwanda. The hardships the family went through in Uganda, which had made the narrator more determined, were all due to the Rwandan civil war. Other narratives are also both an ontological (or personal) narrative and a public narrative.

My past life was very bad being a close relative Konyi, the lord resistance Army commander. I was faced to join the army at an age of 9 years were I acquired military training and that when I was taken away from my mother Konyi my uncle Claiming that I was destined to fight alongside them. Since all our grandparents were had been Fighting. By the age of 12 years I was a spy and going to school but according to what was done was very bad the acts of raping women, Burning schools and students. Many people I knew were Cut … Gender to stay happy and smiling or either were given an option of being Put a Padlock on their mouth to stay Sad and quiet forever in life. One day was forced to do many bad things which when I think of I cry sometimes they expected very much from me since I was on leading Family blood line and I hated the day most there for holidays coz that’s the day they captured me. But I saw many people [⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻㈣

This narrator condemned the actions of the rebel army and was deeply regretful of his own deeds. Being given the chance to interact with “good people again” made him give thanks to both God and the UPDF. The narrative does not present any message for the future. It merely explains how the narrator had become a child soldier and how he had succeeded in getting out of the army, demonstrating how a story can be used to make sense of a personal past experience. It is unquestionable that the narrative had ontological aspects and at the same time bears testimony of personal connotations to national history.

The next narrative is yet another story that connects family history with the bigger picture, but in a different way:

\footnote{1FCU13.}
The time I finally discovered and came to appreciate my tribal roots in Uganda. Being born in Zaire I was exposed to the unique “Bakanga” culture, it language (though I could not speak it) and the French system of administration there since I grew up speaking French. So when my family and I moved to Uganda in 1997 I believe, I got the chance to experience the British effects of imperialism as I started to learn English and forgot my French and was exposed to the tribal sides of both my mother and father. I learnt “Luganda” since my mother was and is a Muganda and up to now I am some what influenced by it but I am truly a Butooro because of my father and even though I do not speak the language [I] am greatly aware of their cultures and norms so I guess I experience both sides of my family and thanks to this my family looks stronga than ever because I notice how my parents and some of my siblings can freely interchange languages with those around them and yet be able to communicate without confusion.\textsuperscript{328}

The narrator was grateful for the chance to have experienced both the French and the British system of administration. In addition, he or she was grateful for the many languages the family was able to speak as a result of tribal roots and intermarriage in the family. This has made communication with others unproblematic, even though the narrator him/herself did not speak the Butooro or Bakanga languages and had forgotten French.

Gratitude is a common theme in the narratives. In the following narrative, memorable past events involving the family were recalled by giving thanks in a prayer:

The following below are from the past I find important for me and my family and worth retelling. The acquisition of [- – –] that are use in ploughing the garden. the wedding ceremony that happened between my parents in the past is important and worth retelling. The graduation of my elder brother after completion of his education course from Gulu University. The twin ritual in the past is important to my family and worth retelling. The birthday celebration of my grandmother that gathered almost all the relatives was enjoyable and important and I find it worth retelling. My excellenc in my Uganda certificate of education (U.C.E) brought happiness to my family and it’s worth retelling. The good harvest that our family attain in the past is important and I find it worth retelling. Good recovery from flooding that destroys all the food crops in the garden. The returned of my elder sister from the bush after the abduction by lord resistance army and after rumours spreading out that she was dead.\textsuperscript{329}

\textsuperscript{328} 1FCU34.
\textsuperscript{329} 6FNU7.
Happy occasions such as a graduation or recovery from flooding are listed as events that were memorable to the narrator. At the very end, the narrator introduced a more political dimension by alluding to historical events, through the happy memory of the return of an abducted sister. The personal memories of the past were hence connected to a historical memory of the LRA-UPDF war.

**Historical orientation in the genealogical personal narratives**

We have seen that the assignment asking what from the past that was important to the narrator and their family, and worth retelling, rendered answers on a variety of different levels. Answers on a supranational, national, and societal as well as a family level were recorded. To tell of an African or a Ugandan experience was common on all levels except the family level. At this level, references to the private family history were more common. Both supranational and national-level narratives focused on a political dimension, where references were made to colonialism, the struggle for Independence, and postcolonial leadership. References to this content were also found on a societal level, but were chiefly socially motivated rather than politically. Those narratives that include several of these levels or spaces acknowledge different episodes depending on what historical content they refer to. In the following, the different levels and the episodes referred to will be discussed, and also, to whom the narratives were historically significant.

Narratives on a supranational or a national level position themselves as political depending on their outlook on history, and are placed, for obvious reasons, either in Africa or in Uganda specifically. The narrators of these stories either included Africans or they included Ugandans. The important historic events had significance to many, Ugandans or Africans, which, by extension, excluded everybody else. Being framed by Africa, the narratives can easily affirm a pre-given understanding of culture and, hence, identity formation: as Africans, not Europeans (or Asians).

Narratives on a supranational level were framed by either Africa or Europe. There was a range of episodes referred to. Narratives in this category referred either to the colonial episode, the slave trade, or the Pan-African movement. The reference to colonialism did, however, include contemporary events, through the concept of neo-colonialism, and in this manner invoked a sense of
continuity in colonial relations. The narrative referred to as the School History narrative (Page 103) started with the rise of civilization and ended with the contemporary era. Nevertheless, in the concluding line, the narrator reiterates the importance of the impact of colonialism on African culture.

Though the different narratives deal with different historical episodes, the colonial episode always seems to appear in one way or another, which appears to bias in favor of colonialism. The narrative on Europe does stand out, however, as it does not deal with colonialism, but instead, with European history. The narrator used European history as an example of how to achieve democracy. Europe, among the narratives, controversially, appeared both as a role model and “goal” to be achieved, and as an intruder that disrupted African development. However, there were only five narratives on a supranational level and conclusions should therefore be drawn with caution.

The themes of the national-level narratives are Independence and leadership. The postcolonial episode is hence recognized as a significant episode. The narratives on the theme on Independence mainly celebrate the achievement of Independence; those with the theme of leadership criticize postcolonial leadership. Tribute stories are also included. These, too, are critical of past leadership, but see salvation in Uganda’s contemporary leadership. Embracing Independence and retelling the celebration of this achievement, while judging the colonial era, is common among these stories. Sovereignty seems to be the historical goal. But whereas the supranational-level narratives are historically significant to all Africans, the national narratives are mainly significant to Ugandans. It should also be noted, however, that the students were asked what from the past that was important, which many interpreted to imply a singular event. Others did, however, refer to several events and individuals.

The societal-level narratives display even more disparity, both regarding content and regarding episodes referred to. Narratives themed as tribal refer to the pre-colonial episode or the deep past, almost mythological times. These narratives contain aspects of what Jörn Rüsen calls “traditional narratives” as the stories told give a sentiment of a past eternity.330 Here is the retelling of the story of origin. To include mention of traditional enemies further enhances the feeling of a past eternity. Narratives on the theme of colonialism and mission refer mainly

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330 Rüsen 2005:12.
to changes introduced during the colonial era and discuss how these changes have impacted on the society. These are not criticisms and could be said to re-tell an authoritative story. The narrators’ conclusions were that, without the missionary and colonial era, infrastructural developments such as hospitals, schools and roads, and, even more importantly, Christianity, would not have come to Uganda and Africa. Lastly, the narratives themed as African tradition and culture are mainly concerned with the postcolonial episode and present times. These narratives are more critical towards changes from abroad and foreign influences, and can therefore be said to have aspects of “critical narratives.” Thus the societal-level narratives can be said to hold both critical aspects and traditional aspects, as well as exemplary aspects.

The narratives on a family level are memorable as they largely refer to joyous memories, for instance a wedding. These narratives do not deal with change, but, rather, refer to a memory whose function has been to maintain the family as a collective group. In short, memories that brought the family together. Seeking further perspectives on the future from these stories is troublesome. The narratives work only to identify and unite around a joint memory. In this way, these narratives work “traditionally” as they relate to memories of the family. Not all retold memories were joyous, however. Many of the narratives tell of family hardship, referring to a past family experience from which something may be learnt about themselves. These stories would inspire the narrator to either struggle or simply to have faith and “always rely on God in devastating times because no condition is permanent.”\(^331\) It is likely that these stories would serve as exemplary narratives, even for the narrators themselves when faced with other hardships in the future, even though some of the stories were closely connected to their present context, schooling. The stories are not just memorable, but sometimes made the narrator more “determined” to “not ever throw in the towel.”\(^332\) In this way, the narratives are a reminder to the narrators to never give up, no matter what hardships they are facing. Nevertheless, the fact that 27 out of 73 were family-level narratives shows that the past, to the students, was not an exclusively political dimension of history framed by the nation.

To summarize, the different levels on which the narratives were told were the supranational, national, societal, and family level. The narratives on different

\(^{331}\) 1FCU16:26-27

\(^{332}\) 1FCU23 and 1FCU6, respectively.
levels were able to mobilize different groups. In this respect, the stories were significant to different people. The different levels were characterized both in terms of whom the narrative was significant for, and in terms of the dimension of history, i.e., political or social. Through the lens of historical significance, however, the theme of colonialism and mission of the societal level has a lot in common with the narratives on a national level.\textsuperscript{333} Also, the theme on African tradition and culture resembles the supranational level. The narratives on the theme had a critical view of foreign influence. However, this influence was on African traditions and not on specifically Ugandan or tribal culture and traditions. Lastly, the bulk of the family-related narratives were significant to the family alone, either by constituting the unity of the family in a “traditional” matter or, in more “exemplary” manner making the narrator, him or herself, more determined. These narratives have, however, been categorized as descriptive since the level itself, family, excludes other members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Central Uganda</th>
<th>Northern Uganda</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ugandan</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focusing on whom the narratives were significant for and disregarding the dimensions of the narrative altered the categories. The family level was intact. This was because family-level stories were regarded as descriptive because the level itself excluded other members of society. This does not, however, imply that the narrators lacked connotation to national history. The reader is reminded, for instance, of the narrative about being a child soldier.\textsuperscript{334}

The theme of tribes in societal-level narratives has also been intact. The two cited narratives on this theme have elements of a “traditional narrative” and

\textsuperscript{333} It could be argued that the theme has a lot in common with the supranational level as well. But since references were made to Ugandan hospitals and schools, the researcher has opted to make this statement, that the theme has a lot in common with national-level narratives.

\textsuperscript{334} 1FCU13. See also, 2FNU2.
speak of tribes and the origin of the tribe (Baganda and Madi). What changed the most through the lens of historical significance was that narratives that can be said to have significance for Ugandans and Africans as target group increased drastically.

The narratives that were significant mainly to Ugandans numbered 24. The regional difference between the narrators, was, however, also noteworthy. North Ugandan students wrote seven of the 24 narratives in this category, whereas Central Ugandan students wrote 17. In these narratives, three developments were identified that can be said to be important for Ugandan nationals: Independence, since Ugandans got to rule themselves – hence, this was important to retell. The coming of the missionaries, because of the development of infrastructure, such as building of schools, hospitals, and roads in Uganda. Thirdly, the development of leadership in Uganda, where examples of both bad and good leadership were given. A limitation of the study was not investigating religious affinity among the students. References to the coming of missionaries possibly suggest a Christian identity rather than merely a Ugandan identity; hence the possibility that Ugandan Christians invoked the coming of missionaries the most. Nevertheless, the narratives mainly were stories of progress. Even when the narratives were critical, for instance when describing the brutal and harsh leadership of Idi Amin, they could be interpreted as stories for Ugandans to remember his leadership by.

Fewer (20) narratives were significant to Africans. However, even here there was a difference between regions. Eighteen of the 20 narratives were written in Northern Uganda. The five supranational-level narratives held aspects of “exemplary” narratives. Two narratives on Pan-Africanism found prominent Pan-Africanists important to remember, but also warned of neo-colonialism, adding that the Pan-African movement could be held up as an example to neo-colonialists. Both the slave trade story and the narrative named School History were critical of historical developments, where the latter ended by discussing colonialism and the former with the impact of the slave trade on African culture. To the fifth narrator, European history served as an example for the states of Africa, since similar events in Africa could be handled the same way, and mistakes avoided.

335 2FCU17 and 4FNU9.
The societal-level narratives, which were themed African tradition and culture, mobilized Africans generally, rather than Ugandans specifically. These narratives were critical of how African traditions were affected by modernity and foreign influences. However, they also held aspects of a traditional narrative, invoking traditions as a model of unity. However, most often these narratives were not specific regarding traditions. Different ethnic groups in Uganda have different traditions, but the narratives spoke of Africa in general. Being a foreign researcher may of course have influenced the outcome. However, Africa as space also occurred in other narratives. Nevertheless, these traditional aspects of family life are being challenged. Consequently, modern changes were described in terms of Western permissiveness and it was suggested that, if revived, the old systems could be used to combat neo-colonialism. As one narrator said, it would be “an act of a fool not to reduce the wide spread of neo-colonialism”.336 Others had a different outlook. One narrator concluded,

> Introduction of nuclear family through monogamous marriage by the white man also made responsibility taking very easy. For example provision of basic needs such school fees, food, shelter among others, which proved joy and happiness in the family.337

The genealogical enquiry searches backwards into the past to find the cause of the experienced change. Neither the “exemplary” missionary narratives nor the more “traditional” African traditions and culture narratives seem to have achieved this. In this sense, neither developments in infrastructure and health care, nor the changed lifestyles of Africa seem to be part of any historical development. Rather, they are connected to events that have changed the society once and for all.
Chapter 8: Conclusive Discussion

Historical orientation mobilizes ideas of the past to examine the present and envisage future possibilities. A narrative could be viewed as a place where this mobilization takes place and, hence, the narrative expresses historical orientation. The aim of this thesis has been to explore historical orientation among 73 Ugandan upper secondary students through narrative analysis. The analytical units were 219 written responses to three assignments. The analytical units were therefore elicited narratives. The case of Ugandan students was, however, problematized by including students originating from two different regions in Uganda: Central Uganda and Northern Uganda. The “cases” therefore consisted of Ugandan History students, further subdivided into two groups: Central Ugandan History students and Northern Ugandan History students. To choose two different regions was a way to handle “nation” as a presupposed category, since several of the assignments were framed by Uganda as a nation. The students’ regional origins also largely correspond to tribal affinity and, as a consequence, two main tribes or ethnic groups are represented in the study. The students considered themselves either Baganda, from Central Uganda, or Acholi, representing Northern Uganda. From the perspective of historical consciousness, this has been important since it is presumed that meaning of history stems from everyday life and that a discrepancy between students from the two regions suggests that history influences historical orientation in society and not only History in school.

To explore historical orientation among the students, two research questions were asked: What references to the past do Ugandan students use in order to understand their contemporary society? And, Which patterns, in terms of historical orientation, can be found in the students’ stories? The elicited narratives were explored through narrative analysis focusing both on what the stories told, and how the stories were told. The approach to the narratives was, hence, both descriptive and analytical, where thematic analysis was used to explore what topics and themes surfaced in the narratives, whereas structural analysis focused on the overall sequential composition of the narratives.

I will present three arguments on how the study can shed light on the way Ugandan History students relate to, and use, history in their everyday lives. It is hoped that this study will also contribute to a global discussion on historical
consciousness and its place in History education, with the Ugandan History education serving as an example.

**A genealogical or genetic approach matters**

Genealogical and genetic approaches to history differ, and narratives will differ depending on approach. Narratives taking a genealogical approach evaluated developments much more compared to narratives adopting a genetic approach. Also, it was as common for narrators to identify with Africa as it was for them to identify with Uganda, which raises questions regarding “national” school narratives. Moreover, the comparative approach of the study reveals a discrepancy between the narratives depending on regional origin of the narrator.

Findings of the study that support the argument that the approach taken to history, whether genealogical or genetic, matters are related to three aspects: the structure of the narrative; the evaluation of historical developments; and the discrepancy between the two regions (Northern and Central Uganda) where the study was conducted.

Analysis of the empirical data has shown that the students referred to four different episodes to structure Ugandan history prospectively (genetically). These four different episodes that structured the genetic (public) narratives were: the precolonial, colonial, Independence, and postcolonial era or episode. These four episodes should be seen not only as four different chapters of Ugandan history, but also as four distinct episodes of narrative plot. The four different episodes of the genetic narratives correspond to the narrative plot of Létourneau, who presents a “structure” based on four states: an initial state, a state of change, a state of liberation, and, finally, a state of uncertainty. The fourth state, undertainty and in this case postcolonial uncertainty, was where disparity in views showed the most among the genetic narratives in this data. Postcoloniality should not be referred to as an achieved state beyond colonialism. Hence, the postcolonial episode also includes future perspectives.

The precolonial episode was the least referred to, with only 35 narratives. Themes referring to this period were either migration to the region that was to become Uganda or the fact that the area was controlled and organized political-

ly, economically, and socially by kingdoms before the colonialists appeared in the late 19th century. Both themes referred to a time before the coming of colonialists. The episode was scarcely described and descriptions often started with, “Long ago …” or “Before the coming of … .” Hence, the episode can be viewed as an initial state that was to be disrupted by the next episode, the colonial episode.

The colonial episode appeared in almost all of the narratives (66 out of 73 narratives). Colonialism was scarcely described although themes of the precolonial episode were presented against colonialism as the reference point. Some narratives condemned the colonial episode and the harsh rule of the British, but mostly the colonial episode was merely mentioned. Nevertheless, the episode can be viewed as a state of change from the initial state – and, according to those who condemned it, a state of crisis. This interruption of “Ugandan” development was, however, ended by the next episode, the Independence episode.

The gaining of Independence and the Independence episode was despite its short time span, an often reported event (63 out of 73 narratives). Independence appeared at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of narratives, which tells us something about the significance of the event. Some narrators ended their story on Ugandan history with Independence as the “happy end,” concluding that Uganda was now free and democratic. Though Independence can be viewed as a state of liberation, however, for most narrators, history continued on into the postcolonial episode.

The postcolonial episode also frequently featured in the narratives (62 out of 73 narratives). The episode was characterized by the appearance of prominent personages, some of which had already happened during the Independence episode. The narratives mentioned them and formed an opinion about them. Consequently, the postcolonial episode was the era that elicited the most disparate opinions and can therefore be seen as a state of uncertainty: the narrators judged the heritage of Independence and the ensuing time of uncertainty, as well as the future. The future was important, as postcoloniality should not be seen as an achieved state but as an ongoing process. The narratives were interpreted as either descriptive stories, or stories of progress or of decline (16, 22, and 24 narratives, respectively).
Descriptive narratives often referred to the presidential timeline. The narrators were either content that Independence had achieved its ultimate goal of freedom and self-rule, and referred to the country’s leaders since Independence who had ruled according to the goals of Independence; or they were more or less indifferent to the postcolonial past. Often, progress stories were tribute stories that praised the achievements of a president, most often the current president, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. Stories of decline criticized the postcolonial era, either by describing Ugandan history as a story of continuous decline since colonialism, or by judging the achievements of certain people, mainly presidents. Thus, historical orientations were presented in stories of either progress or decline, mostly making references to a postcolonial episode.

The basic structure of the genetic narratives hence included four episodes: the precolonial, colonial, Independence, and postcolonial episodes. These four episodes corresponded to four episodes in a sequential plot, summarized as the initial state, a time of crisis, a time of liberation, and, finally, a time of uncertainty. The last episode, the postcolonial, was a time of uncertainty when the historical developments were assessed as either bringing progress or causing decline. (Some few narratives were mere descriptions.)

The comparison between the regions showed slight differences between the two regions. Northern Ugandan students were generally more critical towards development in Uganda and expressed their disapproval about the postcolonial episode (Seventeen narrators from the North versus seven in Central Uganda were critical of the postcolonial episode). In the narratives of the Central Ugandan students, references to the precolonial episode were more common. This regional discrepancy between the views on historical developments suggests that the present situation of the individual, and region, matters and will influence the narrative. This makes a genealogical approach to history interesting to explore.

The narratives that used the past to explain the present situation in Uganda were likewise categorized as either progress stories or decline stories. The stories in this category referred to either a colonial episode or a postcolonial episode. Four different historical orientations were noted: firstly, a progress story referring to the colonial episode that focused changes introduced by colonialists during the colonial era. In this orientation, both Independence and the postcolonial episode were characterized by taking care of this heritage and ensuring
development and continuity based on it. Secondly, a progress story referring to a postcolonial episode. Narratives in this category can be described as tribute stories to the present government and Museveni, the president. The narratives often emphasized historical agency and ascribed development and peace to the president. Thirdly, there were narratives in which the colonial episode was a story of decline. These narratives described a state of continuous decline ever since the colonial era and few, or no, changes during the postcolonial episode. Fourthly, there were stories of decline that referred to the postcolonial episode, accused postcolonial leadership of corruption and dictatorship, and criticized the regional imbalances. The content of the genealogical public narratives resembled the content of the genetic public narratives. However, genealogical narratives expressed historical orientations more directly.

That historical orientation was expressed more directly retrospectively than prospectively implies that history in itself matters and gives perspectives on students’ contemporary society as well as perspectives on the future. But also, approaches to history, genealogical or genetic, matter. On the whole, the number of both stories of progress and stories of decline increased from a prospective approach to a retrospective approach (there were 16 prospective versus 23 retrospective stories of progress, and 24 prospective versus 48 retrospective stories of decline). This suggests that a genealogical approach to history is more inclined to assess developments compared to a genetic approach to history, regardless of whether the development is seen as progress or decline.

Worth noting was also that none of the genealogical public narratives viewed the precolonial episode as having influenced the present situation; this was also the least cited episode among the genetic public narratives. This also suggests that the genealogical approach was associated with more historical evaluation.

Furthermore, the regional differences in the narratives were even more noticeable among the genealogical public narratives compared to the genetic public narratives. This implies that Northern Ugandan students have different experiences of the past compared to Central Ugandan students. No fewer than 30 out of the 48 stories of decline came from the Northern region. Only five out of 23 progress stories were told by a Northern narrator.

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339 For instance, see 1CCU6, 1CCU17, and 1CCU34.
Periodization can be problematic as it implies a certain view of, and approach to, history. In Uganda and elsewhere, this should be used with care as the blocks of time are derived from a conceptual narrative dimension and often use presupposed categories. Historical episodes can be viewed as abbreviated narratives. Reid concludes his discussion on the use of the term “precolonial [episode]”: “We appear, however, to be stuck with the term for the time being: it is convenient, and readily understood.”\(^{340}\) This conclusion is somewhat problematic as it is not clear what “readily understood” actually means. The statement therefore highlights the problem with presupposed categories and abbreviated narratives. The Ugandan students referred to certain historical events along a structure that used colonialism as the reference point, against which the other episodes were measured. This structure implied an African meta-narrative about handling a colonial past in terms of stories of progress and decline. Another presupposed category that is “readily understood” is “nation.” However, views on what constitutes the national story seem to differ, which is particularly noticeable when the study of history is approached from a genealogical perspective. Inviting the students to personally choose and invoke public stories, not framed by “the nation,” was therefore important from a historical consciousness perspective.

**History important to me – and my family, Uganda, or Africa?**

Ultimately, the historical orientation of the narrator establishes the identity of the author according to Rüsen.\(^{341}\) Somers concludes that the ontological dimension of narrativity derived from public narrativity.\(^{342}\) Public narratives, in the present study, were altered and tailored to suit the individual. The genealogical public narratives focused Uganda as a society and/or nation. However, it was also of interest to explore what the students would narrate if able to invoke the past that was important to themselves and their family and, hence, that was not framed by the nation of Uganda. The analysis of the genealogical personal narratives showed that the students identified themselves as African just as often as they thought of themselves as Ugandans. Discussing the Acholi tribal identity, Finnström writes in his study titled “Living with bad surroundings: War, History and Everyday Moments in Northern Uganda” that his study participants referred to themselves as Ugandans as often as they referred to them-

\(^{340}\) Reid, 2011:136.

\(^{341}\) Rüsen, 2005:11.

\(^{342}\) Somers, 1994:618.
selves as Luo or Acholi (their language being as common a marker of identity as their tribe). In addition, he concluded that young participants in his study referred to themselves as Africans “more than anything else.”

To personally choose to invoke public narratives showed that the narratives were delivered on four different levels – a supranational level, a national level, a societal level, and, fourthly, a family level – and, hence, were also significant to different groups. That historical significance alters depending on group belonging is an example of history connecting to everyday lives.

Narratives on a family level were either about hardship or related to a fond memory. These stories had an “exemplary” or “traditional” function. Stories telling about hardships had aspects of “exemplary narratives” as they invoked an event reminding the narrator of poor conditions and how to overcome them. Stories about a fond or a happy memory, on the other hand, focused on memories of the family unit. As they involved the family unit these narratives held aspects of “traditional narratives.” Family-level narratives, however, exclude all non-family members. A few narratives nevertheless connected to national history by discussing important events relating to themselves and their family, referring for instance to an abducted sister, being a relative of LRA commander Joseph Kony, or a family’s migration due to the Rwandan Civil War.

Among the other three levels, the supranational level referred to historical events and episodes such as colonialism, the slave trade, and Independence: This was often African, not specifically Ugandan, history, and thus significant to the narrator being African. By contrast, a national-level narrative was significant to the narrator being Ugandan. Finally, references made in societal-level narratives were not exclusively political, and included a social dimension. The main bulk of the narratives were critical of foreign influences on African traditions and culture, and of the decline of culture. References to missionaries affecting the community positively through their work to introduce health care and education to the region were also found on this level. The societal level therefore focused on a social dimension rather than a political, but at the same time appeared to extend beyond national boundaries.

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343 Finnström, 2008:37.
Disregarding the narratives on a family-related level and two narratives on societal level that had a tribal theme (29 narratives in total), the stories told were all significant to the narrator/reader as being either Ugandan or African. Asking what past was important to the narrator and their family hence rendered narratives that spoke of Ugandans and Africans, rather than the immediate family, and consequently that were significant to the narrators as primarily Ugandans or Africans.

Out of 44 narratives, 24 were regarded as significant to Ugandans. These narratives included three developments of importance to Ugandans: Independence, the coming of the missionaries, and present day leadership in Uganda. The two former developments were positive and can be viewed as progress stories. The referred historical processes can be seen as continuous developments and consequently contain aspects of traditional narrative. Narratives about leadership in Uganda, on the other hand, could include both positive and critical views. Overall, many of the positive narratives referred to missionaries and it may be argued that these narratives were significant to Christian Ugandans rather than Ugandans on the whole.

Narratives of significance to Africans numbered 20. The supranational-level narratives referred to African issues, such as Pan-Africanism and the slave trade. These themes were not exclusive to Uganda, but to many African post-colonial countries. Other narratives significant to Africans mainly consisted of societal-level narratives discussing African tradition and culture. These narratives addressed Africans rather than Ugandans. Their main message was criticism of the impact of modernity and foreign influences on African culture and traditions.

The above findings suggest that an African meta-narrative is strong – a meta-narrative whose sequential plot consists of an initial state, followed by a state of crisis, a state of liberation, and, finally, a state of uncertainty. A meta-narrative focused on an African, rather than a national, experience and also influenced the narratives of an important event in the personal lives of the students and their family.

As previously discussed in the context chapter on School History, the History taught in upper secondary schools in Uganda can be understood as framed by African history, rather than national Ugandan history. Even though the content
of the papers *History of Africa, 1855–1914* and *Africa: National Movements and New States* covers different African countries, the periodization of African history in School History suggests that colonialism and Independence are the main focus.

This suggests that School History has an impact on the historical narratives of the students. However, the analysis showed that 18 of 20 African narratives originated from Northern Uganda while 17 of 24 Ugandan narratives originated from Central Uganda. Hence, it appears that Northern Ugandan students may be more inclined to invoke a narrative that is significant to Africans whereas Central Ugandan students invoked a narrative of significance to Ugandans.

**Historical cultures matters**

The design of the study was comparative as two different regions of Uganda were included in the study. This was a strategy to manage the presupposed category of “nation” as well as “society.” It was also a strategy to include a historical consciousness perspective as regional differences could imply that different patterns among the narratives could be derived from different historical experiences and cultures. The discrepancy between the regions suggests that School History is influenced by the history told in the society.

As mentioned, the comparison between the two regions in the genetic public narratives showed that Northern Ugandan students more often referred to a postcolonial episode and generally were more critical of developments in post-Independence Uganda (there were 17 Northern versus seven Central narratives of this kind). Through analysis of the genealogical public narratives, this discrepancy became even more apparent. Out of 48 stories of decline, 30 came from Northern Uganda. Further, out of 23 stories of progress, only five were told by a Northern narrator. This suggests that the origin and, hence, the historical culture of the narrator influenced the narratives. Moreover, as previously discussed, Northern Ugandan students more often identified themselves as Africans compared to students from Central Uganda, who more often identified themselves as Ugandans. It should be borne in mind that identity can change from time to time, according to Finnström.344 This finding should therefore be interpreted with caution. However, since the study was conducted in a classroom setting and revealed a clear pattern, the discrepancy cannot be disregard-

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344 Finnström, 2008:37.
ed. This disparity could not derive from school education, but must be down to the everyday lives of the students and their different historical cultures. The regional patterns could be due to the different regions and/or the majority ethnic group representing these two regions. The lack of conformity between the regions consequently shows variation in identity, revealing that there seems to be no single national identity.

Why, and in what way, factors like region and/or ethnic belonging affected the narratives is an issue that requires further investigation including an exploration of specific historical cultures. Nevertheless, the narratives on national history written by Ugandan upper secondary students lead to the conclusion that history permeates further than the classroom in which it is taught.

**Implications for School History**

There were almost twice as many stories of decline among retrospective narratives of Ugandan history as there were among prospective narratives of national history. One conclusion to be drawn is that retrospective approaches to history, in society, compete with prospective approaches to history. The findings of this study support the assumption from a historical consciousness perspective that history is connected to the everyday lives of the students through their personal connotations of the past. In addition, variation in identity among the narratives implies that a single national identity or narrative in school may not be the sole influence for students’ historical orientation. Resistance, among students, to identity construction through a school narrative is a possible conclusion. Further, the study shows that a meta-narrative on Africa with the sequential plot of an initial state, followed by a state of crisis, and a state of liberation towards, finally, an era of uncertainty was used by students to express their historical understanding regardless of whether their historical orientation was expressed as a story of decline or one of progress. The structure of the school narrative worked for the students regardless of their views of history.

The narratives of the students were informed not only by School History or a patriotic progressive story of the nation, but by several public narratives as well as both conceptual narrativity and meta-narrativity. Understanding and presentation of historical processes, hence, depends on group belonging and

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the historical culture of the certain group, which points to the nature of history as a construction. It is important for History students to understand that different individuals and groups see different historical events and processes as historically significant, and also, that an event or process may be valued differently. The study shows that a retrospective approach to history may be one strategy to acknowledge this, since narratives adopting this approach seemed more inclined to pass judgment on the past compared to prospective narratives. This result indicates that students’ contemporaries and their perspectives of the future influence students’ historical narratives. It is hence of great importance that School History should not disregard the students’ own views on society as these views impinge the way they receive the History taught in school and, ultimately, on the story they will tell. Findings of this study suggest that the objective of School History should be to further the development of students’ narrative competence in assessing both their own and others’ narratives. However, in a society with a war-torn past, this is not an easy task and should be handled with caution. Barton has shown that, for political reasons, School History in Northern Ireland uses different narrative frameworks though including the same events. Instead of addressing issues of identity, History taught in schools in Northern Ireland focuses a balanced and more neutral education. In Uganda, the meta-narrative on Africa clearly shows that School History is not irrelevant to identity formation, but is used in different ways and becomes a resource in the identity formation of each student. The variation in students’ historical orientation, presented in this study, should be used as a tool to understand that interpretation of history depends on which group the sender and receiver connects to, and also, that it changes over time. The symbiotic relationship between past, present, and future seems to be stronger in society than in the History classroom. This relationship should be acknowledged also in the classroom as history permeates further than the classroom in which it is taught.

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Student narratives 20130121 - 20131002
Significant history and historical orientation

In 2012, Uganda celebrated 50 years as an independent state after having been colonized for more than half a century. Since Independence, Uganda has experienced a period of political turmoil and civil war within its constructed colonial borders. Given these historical experiences, what do students find important about their nation’s history, what history do they relate to when asked to explain their contemporary society and what do they envisage for their future? School history is often associated with a transmission-oriented instruction that transfers a content of heritage and uncritical narratives: best described as a progressive story of the nation. But, what do students find significant to retell?

This study explores 73 Ugandan students’ narratives of their country’s history, their society’s contemporary situation and what pasts they find important to themselves and their family. The thesis argues that a retrospective approach to history, departing from the contemporary situation, influences students’ narratives. For example, value judgments were more common with a retrospective approach to history. Furthermore, the thesis shows differences among the narrations depending on the geographical origins of the students. The students identified themselves as African as often as Ugandans, which raises questions in relation to national school narratives as well as Uganda’s colonial past.