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The political character of President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni: An indictment of Uganda's economic reforms and renaissance?

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Abstract

Politics, economy and development are inextricably linked as evinced by many scholars. Central to this thesis is that bad leadership and governance is the fulcrum upon which economic, political and social misfortunes of most African countries are anchored. Good leadership-the alternative-has remained elusive. As a result, the continent has oscillated between periods of hope and despair since independence. No amount of reforms-economic, or political-seem to bring relief. Thus, an African renaissance has failed to materialize. This paper seeks to problematize the question of African renaissance by examining one of the paradoxical cases on the African continent, Uganda. Uganda is unique in that, on one hand, it presents a case of successful economic and political revival since 1987 and on the other, increasing popular discontent. Why? To offer a thorough treatment of this problematic, the paper describes the economic reforms initiated by the incumbent regime and resultant improvements in the performance of the economy and juxtaposes them with an analysis of the political character and evolution of President Museveni from a revolutionary, "New Breed leader," (Oloka-Onyango, 2004) to a cunning dictator at whose hands the gains from the reforms are waning. The paper shows that what would have been a vibrant example of genuine revival and renaissance capable of setting a standard on the continent has been thwarted by Museveni's egoistic machinations, personalization of power, corruption, devaluation and fragmentation of state institutions, political violence, balkanization of the polity, and general indoctrination of the people. It reveals that a critical nexus exists between leadership as a political variable and economic reform as part of change culminating in a renaissance. It points to new conceptual directions in leadership and citizen action that could contribute to a renaissance capable of ending the constant drift in Uganda in particular and Africa in general.

1. Introduction

Politics, economy and development are inextricably linked as evinced by Shettima (2007); Mohiddin (1998); Forje (2007) and Ngowi (2007), among others. Central to these author's arguments is that bad leadership is the fulcrum upon which most economic, political and social misfortunes of African countries are anchored. Good leadership-the alternative-has remained elusive. The idea of African renaissance encapsulates the spirit of transcending the ills which the continent has suffered for centuries. It is an old idea which has been articulated by several generations of Africans. However, earlier concepts such as negritude and pan Africanism which urged renewal, rebirth and regeneration were criticized for being essentialist in terms of their reliance on race and ethnicity as points of mobilization (Ahluwalia 2002; Bongmba 2004). The new concept advocated by former South African president Thabo Mbeki revolves around economic liberalization, integration into the global economy, democracy and political stability. However, it has also come under attack for a number of reasons, most crucially for not prioritizing the role of bad leadership in the continuing development impasse on the continent (Ibid 2002; 2004 and Distiller 2006).

This paper seeks to build on the above critiques and problematize the question of African renaissance by examining one of the paradoxical cases on the African continent, Uganda. Uganda is unique in that, on one hand, it presents a case of successful economic and political revival since the coming to power of the incumbent government of President Museveni and, on the other, popular discontent with the political order and economy. Why? To answer this question, this paper does the following:

1. Describes the economic reforms implemented in Uganda since 1987, and the resultant economic dividends and shortcomings. Through this critique it demonstrates the limitations of the much-touted Ugandan renaissance.
2. Demonstrates the intertwined nature of economic and political reforms, and analyzes the political character and evolution of the incumbent president from a revolutionary leader to a cunning dictator thereby showing the extent to which leadership in Uganda has set limits on the renaissance project.
3. Adduces evidence of rising discontent with the regime among citizens to show the fallacy of the Ugandan renaissance.
4. Proposes a new way of looking at the Ugandan and African renaissance project

2. The dawn of a new era? Museveni and the National Resistance Army/Movement

The National Resistance Army/Movement (NRA/M) came to power in Uganda in 1986 after five years of a protracted guerilla war. From the outset, it was seen as a harbinger of economic and political renaissance by majority of the population. What with the political turmoil and tyrannical rule of the first two decades of independence, the country was ready for the real change that independence had promised. As if to respond to this yearning, the new regime promised to usher in a "fundamental change." In his inauguration speech as President, the brand new fire-brand leader emphatically declared:

"No one should think that what is happening today is a mere change of guard: it is a fundamental change in the politics of our country. In Africa, we have seen so many changes that change as such is nothing short of mere turmoil. We have had one group getting rid of another one, only for it to turn out to be worse than the group it displaced. Please do not count us in that group of people..."¹

The crowd that stood with Museveni in front of the Parliamentary building where the speech was delivered-we are told²-yodeled and ululated, for a dawn of a new era had descended onto Uganda. Few

imagined that the regime would soon renege on this promise. However, the fault lines that would continue to haunt the country had been planted before and during the protracted guerilla war- in the decision to take up arms to resolve a political question-the alleged rigging of the 1980 general elections. Those who knew chose to hold their breath in anticipation. Despite the fault lines that developed early in his leadership, particularly his abandoning of the socialist ideal upon which the revolution was based months after assuming power (Leefers 2004) and banning of political parties in favor of the all embracing “Movement”³ (ibid 2004, Mwenda 2007; Muriaas 2009), the president continued to be seen as the new hope for the country as exemplified by the genuine support and adulation of the population. He was seen as a “new breed leader” both at home and abroad; not only that, the “guru and chief mentor” of the so-called “New Breed Leaders” of Africa. According to Oloka-Onyango, (2004):

“...the guru and chief mentor of the group was undoubtedly Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the guerilla leader of the National Resistance Army/Movement (NRA/M)...He came to symbolize much of what was characterized as new, both within the politics of his own country Uganda, in the Greater Horn region and across the continent as a whole. Throughout the 1990s, he was ranked close to Mandela as a new-style leader of a country that almost all objective observers recognized had been pulled out of the doldrums into which it had been plunged in the 1970s and 1980s by successive civilian and military dictatorships...” (Oloka-Onyango 2004: 33).

Up until the late 1990s, he was one of few such leaders on the continent embraced by the Clinton government and glamorized by western media and political pundits. The “new breed” according to popular discourse:

“...had forever banished the archaic and exclusionary modes of governance, corruption and economic mismanagement, and the manifestly discriminatory and marginalizing methods employed by leaders of the past. Depicted as Davids who struck down gerontocratic and monolithic Goliaths, the members of the new breed were generally young, dynamic, determined, no-nonsense, development-minded, and progressive...(Oloka-Onyango 2004:30)

Like his brethren, Museveni cut the figure of a charismatic, nationalist, and pan Africanist. He is a true disciple of free-market economics and believes in the potential for globalization to emancipate all of mankind. On the theme of Pan Africanism, probably few leaders on the continent measure up to his zeal and articulateness in elucidating the problematic of Africa (Museveni 2003 & 1997). In his scholarly work, he has outlined the roadmap for Africa’s renaissance and insisted that Africa is a continent with a tenacity to survive and as such cannot be written off (Museveni 1999). No one can deny him the accolade of being one of Africa’s intellectuals (Oloka-Onyango 2004).

However, he has a dislike for pluralist competitive politics and prefers centralized governance structures. He rules by pragmatic politics rather than by ideology. He is intolerant, dismissive, and abusive⁴ and does not suffer fools gladly. Museveni disparages those who disagree with him and places much emphasis on discipline whether among soldiers or civilians (ibid: 34). He is arrogant and above all, a militarist who believes in military solutions and violence to solve almost all political problems⁵. It is these qualities-good and admittedly bad-that make him a sort of enigma. However, as Oloka-Onyango noted, a simple description of Museveni is likely to reveal only part of the truth (Ibid: 30). This paper sets out to reveal the whole truth about Uganda’s ninth president in respect to his handling of the country’s economic re-birth, albeit overly dramatised and eventual elevation of himself to the status of a deity imbued with exclusive powers over the country’s vision.

3. Economic reforms since 1987

True to its promise of “fundamental change”, the new government embarked on sweeping and wide ranging neo-liberal economic reforms supported by western governments and Brettonwoods institutions. However, this was after the new government had experimented with a socialist-oriented economic policy during the first few months in power which had awful results (Leefers 2004). It seems Museveni’s long years of association with Julius Nyerere had convinced him that people mattered, that they came first. Thus, his initial pursuance of centralized economic policies (ibid: 170). Besides, he seemed to be genuinely interested in establishing a peasant revolution that would liberate the people from what he lambasted as “obscurantist politics” of past regimes. But these policies soon backfired as the economy, which had collapsed, needed injections of huge capital not pious doctrines in order to resurrect. Under pressure from the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), Museveni capitulated and accepted to implement the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). Collectively, the new policies were called the Economic Recovery Program (ERP). Gradually, he abandoned the short-collar, short-sleeve Marxist-communist suit and embraced the European suit. He became a neo-liberal reformist.

But, where was Uganda coming from? Statistics gleaned from Baffoe’s (2000) work on structural adjustment in Uganda, help us to situate the economic quagmire into which the country had been plunged since independence that justified the reforms as painful as they turned out to be.

Table 1.0: Uganda’s select economic indicators: 1970-1984

ECONOMIC INDICATOR A: 1960-70 AND 1970-80	YEAR						
	1960-70	1970-80	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Real GDP growth (%)	5.2	-1.64	-3.4	3.9	7.4	5.4	-3.6
Inflation (%)	3.0	30.0	-	111.1	47.0	25.0	42.9
Budget deficit (million UGX)	-	14.4	26.9	75.1	69.1	36.2	79.2
Growth in exports (%)	5.0	-8.5	-	-	-	-	-
Growth in imports (%)	6.2	-9.8	-	-	-	-	-
B: 1970 and 1980	1970	1980					
Broad money supply (million UGX)	16.7	185.0	34.6	87.3	11.43	41.3	113.7
Current account balance (million UGX)	20.0	-18.0	-83.2	31.9	-15.9	10.3	-10.0
Exports (million US\$)	-	-	330.7	274.4	382.1	384.4	406.0
Imports (million US\$)	-	-	449.8	391.9	524.3	543.3	517.0
External debt (Million US\$)	128.0	669.0	695.4	728.9	892.5	1,011.6	1,065.0
External debt servicing as a % of exports	3.4	11.9	13.0	39.8	37.1	23.7	40.6
Gross international reserves (Million US\$)	57.0	17.0	-	-	-	-	-

Adapted from Baffoe 2000: “Structural Adjustment and agriculture in Uganda” pp: 3-4, with modification

This table shows that owing to the economic mismanagement during the Amin era, the country suffered serious fiscal deficits averaging UGX 14.4 million per annum, which necessitated massive domestic borrowing to keep the country running. As a result, money supply increased from UGX 16.7 million to 185 million from 1970-80. What followed was a soaring of inflation from 3 percent from 1960-70 to 30 percent over the next decade. Coupled with a decline in export revenue, economic growth plummeted to a low of -1.6 percent for the decade 1970-1980. When Obote returned to power in 1980, he automatically turned to international lending institutions which recommended austerity measures, the first of its kind in the country. During the implementation of the SAP, whose goals were among others to stimulate economic growth and exports, control inflation, and improve the overall balance of payments, the Uganda

shilling underwent two massive devaluations in the space of two years. As a result, there was a slight improvement in the economy. Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased from 3.9 percent in 1981 to 5.4 percent in 1983, and inflation declined from a high of 111.1 percent in 1981 to 25 percent in 1983. However, due to internal weaknesses in the economy and poor economic management, the reforms provided only very short lived relief. By 1984, the economy had been plunged into crisis again (Baffoe 2000).

By the time the NRM took power, things had completely run out of control. Only very disciplined and tough measures could lift the country from the economic, social and political abyss into which it had sunk. Commenting on the economy that Museveni inherited, Baffoe (2000) noted that,

“The magnitude of the economic problem facing the NRM was staggering. Production was low, the transportation system was in disarray, the social infrastructure had collapsed, inflation was over 150 percent, foreign exchange was limited, the budget was out of control, corruption and black marketeering were widespread and skilled personnel had migrated (Baffoe 2000: 5).

The key components of the ERP whose aim was to ensure macroeconomic stability were “tight monetary policy; contractionary fiscal policy; foreign exchange reforms; price liberalization; export promotion; financial sector reforms; better climate for private investment and savings; attracting foreign exchange inflows; and restructuring productive capacity to restore growth” (Baffoe: 6). For a review of these policies, see also Bromberg (1998); Green (2010) and Baffoe (2000) for details of specific policy measures.

From 1997-2009, government embarked on an ambitious poverty eradication drive, signifying a policy shift from policies largely aimed at achieving macroeconomic stability to poverty reduction. Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) was the over all development framework for economic transformation and improvement in living standards. Its overarching goal was the reduction of absolute poverty to less than 10 percent by the year 2017 (Economic Policy Research Centre-EPRC 2002). It had five specific pillars namely: economic management, improvement of production, competitiveness and incomes, conflict-resolution and disaster management, good governance and human development. Through sector specific plans, these pillars focused among others on the maintenance of macroeconomic stability, fiscal consolidation and export promotion, boosting private investment and debt sustainability, modernisation of agriculture; infrastructure, ending rebel insurgency, dealing with internal displacement, provision of human rights and democratisation, accountability and the elimination of corruption, improving primary and secondary education, and improving health outcomes⁶ (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development-MFPED, 2004 as cited in Mugisha and Ajutu 2005).

The National Development Plan (NDP) launched in April 2010 is Uganda’s latest innovation in its architecture for economic development. It covers fiscal period 2010/11 to 2014/15 under the theme “Growth, employment and socio-economic transformation for prosperity”. Its objectives include among others, increasing household incomes and promoting equity, enhancing the availability and quality of gainful employment, improving the stock and quality of economic infrastructure, strengthening good governance increasing access to quality social services, and defence and security. To achieve the above goals, the plan targets to make priority investments in three categories of sectors: primary growth sectors like agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, tourism, mining, construction and oil and gas; complementary sectors-energy and water, trade, land management and administration and urban development, health and education; and enabling sectors-defence and security, justice, law and order, legislature, public sector management, public administration, and accountability among others.

The success of the National Development Plan will be judged by the following indicators: per capita income, employment levels, life expectancy, enhancement of skills, level of development of the industrial sector, level of urbanization and the country's competitive position (MFPED 2010). The plan has been heralded as a new era in Uganda's long march to economic freedom. It marks a departure from poverty-focused development planning to deepening structural transformation of the economy. The plan seeks to build on the achievements realised beginning in the early 1990s in the wake of implementation of the ERP.

4. Growth and development accruing from the economic reforms: evidence for a renaissance?

According to Collier (1999), by the late 1990s, Uganda's economic performance was among the most successful in the world. As a result of the reforms mentioned above, the economy which had experienced negative growth in the early 1980s (-3.4 percent, -3.6 percent) began to emerge from limbo and posted positive economic growth indicators coupled with general uplifting of people's welfare. One of the most outstanding outcomes of the ERP was macroeconomic stability, in terms of an average⁷ 6.5 percent growth rate in the period 1987-2004. Despite increases in oil prices on the world market coupled with vagaries of weather at the beginning of the new millennium, the country continued to post positive growth rates (MFPED, 2003; see also Kappel et al., 2004). Improved economic growth rates resulted in reduced poverty levels with the proportion of the population in absolute poverty declining from 56% in 1992 to 44% in 1997, and further to 35% in 2000. Between 1997/98 and 2005/2006, poverty levels stood at 31% (MFPED 2010; Green 2010).

However, owing to the global recession, GDP growth declined slightly to 6.2 percent in 2008/09 from 8 percent in the period 2004-2008 and further declined to 5.8 in 2009/10 financial year. In 2009/10, the industrial sector grew by 8.9 percent, services 5.8 percent, while agriculture trailed with 2.1 percent growth (MFPED 2010). Table 4.0 shows real GDP growth in percentage points of key sectors between 2005 and 2010.

Table 2.0 Percentage real GDP growth rates for key sectors: 2005-2010

REAL GDP GROWTH RATES	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0.5	0.1	1.3	2.5	2.1
Industry	14.7	9.6	8.8	5.8	8.9
Services	12.2	8.0	9.7	8.8	5.8
GDP at market prices	10.8	8.4	8.7	7.2	5.8

Source: MFPED, 2010, 'Background to the budget 2010/11', Kampala, MFPED

Stemming from the decline in monetary growth, inflation was arrested and kept at single digits for most of the reform years. The country maintained competitive exchange rates and accumulated foreign reserves covering at least five months of imports. As a percentage of GDP, private local and foreign investment rose from 12.2 percent in financial year 2000/2001 to 20.6 percent in 2006/2007, while public investment averaged 5.1 percent over the same period (Kappel et al., 2004; MFPED 2010). Owing to enhanced capacity for tax collection, government revenue as a percentage of GDP greatly improved to an average of 11.5 percent from the mid 1990s onwards. Subsequently its capacity to deliver services greatly improved. However, while government capacity has improved, growth rates have not been high enough to enable it fully finance its budget.

Table 3.0: Trends in selected Macroeconomic indicators: 1987-2000

Year	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995 /96	1996/ 97	1997/ 98	1998/ 99	1999/ 00
GDP Growth rate	6.7	7.0	6.3	5.5	5.1	4.5	6.3	10.0	7.8	4.5	5.4	7.4	5.1
GDP per capita growth	3.8	4.1	3.4	2.6	2.2	0.9	3.0	6.8	4.7	1.7	2.7	4.7	2.5
Inflation rate	199.8	196.3	61.4	33.2	27.7	54.5	5.1	10.0	7.5	7.8	5.8	-0.2	6.2
Revenue (as a % of GDP)									11.0	11.8	11.5	12.3	11.9
Exports (Million US\$)	406	324	304	246	200	172.1	169.2	253.9	577.3	555.3	458.4	549.1	454
Imports (Million US\$)	600	682	712	676	658	450.6	533.4	671.9	1085.5	1179.8	966.1	1039.4	977.8
Total external debt (US\$)	1916	1946	2231	2638	2832	2647.5	2637.2	2999.3	3387.1	3443.3	-	-	-

Source: Background to the Budget, various years; Baffoe 2000; Kappel et al., 2004; MFPED 2010

The country has made some improvements in social sectors like education, and health (Jepsson, et al., 2000; MFPED 2003). For example, literacy rates stood at 64.3% and 47.5% for men and women, respectively, in the 1990s. However, with introduction of Universal Primary Education, enrolment in primary school rose to astronomical levels, reaching 82 percent of all eligible pupils enrolled. The introduction of Universal Secondary Education saw increase in secondary school enrolment by 25 percent. This has resulted in improvement of adult literacy rates from 69 percent in 2005/2006 to 73.6 percent in 2009 (UBOS, UDHS 2005/06 and HDR 2009 as cited by MFPED 2010).

Trends in health related outcomes improved slightly from 1995-2006. For example, infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) was 81, 88 and 76 in 1995, 2001 and 2006 respectively, while under five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) was 156, 152 and 137 over the same period. Although declining, maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births) remained high at 527, 505 and 435 over the period under consideration. Total fertility rates remained almost unchanged at 6.9, 6.9 and 6.5 over the same period (MFPED, 2010). Adult mortality rates for 15-49 year olds were 8.6 and 9.7 for women and men respectively (UBOS and ORC Macro 2001). There are serious concerns about the rate of change in this sector.

5. A critique of the reforms

One of the main factors frequently cited for the success of the reform program is the receptivity and commitment of the leadership to its implementation (Busingye 2002). In a neo-liberal economic sense⁸, the policies also proved to be sound. Unfortunately, as a growing volume of literature has pointed out, these reforms lacked a “human face.” Even in the most successful cases like Uganda, SAPs, according to Jauch (1999), “...imposed severe hardships on the poor.” The negative effects of the SAPs were felt more in the social sectors of health and education. As far as the poor are concerned these policies had severe effects on agriculture too. The main reason behind the negative effects in these sectors was the requirement for government to cutback on public spending. Generally, SAPs had the following effects: drop in formal sector employment to less than 14 percent of the economically active population, loss of jobs after retrenchment of over 170,000 civil service employees, lack of equipment and medicines in health facilities, collapse of small enterprises, decline of cooperative movements, and decline of trade unions who lost 60 percent of their members (Jauch 1999). See also Shaw & Nyang’oro (2000); Ngowi (2007) for a review of the effects of reforms in Africa.

Some scholars have argued that SAPs resulted in loss of sovereignty as poor countries ceded policy making to International Financial Institutions (Shaw & Nyang'oro 2000). These policies affected women more severely than they did men as demonstrated by Mugenyi (1992) and Busingye (2002). They argue that the cost of agricultural production has increased without a matching increase in the prices of the produce. As well, the cost of education and health care has increased, and, as such, women's health and education have become worse especially in rural areas.

According to Muhumuza (2004) and Kapel et al., (2005), contrary to popular belief, gains made in economic growth and poverty reduction have not led to tremendous improvement in the social and economic conditions of the poor since only a small component of this reduction was due to redistribution. This explains the observed widening inequalities between rural and urban areas and interregionally, with the north lagging behind the rest of the country, followed by the eastern region (MFPED, 2003; 2005; 2010; Green 2010: 96). Coupled with the war in the North, low spending on agriculture which employs over 75 percent of the population who live in rural areas could explain the poor performance and widening income inequalities (Figure 1.0). Although sectors like industry are growing, the economy is still heavily dependent on agriculture. Failure to prioritize it in government spending casts serious doubt on the sustainability of the gains achieved and government's ability to stem poverty.

According to Lukwago (2004), growth stimulation and increased access to basic social rights such as security, housing, nutrition and health care have to be developed in parallel with and in complimentary to pro-poor growth strategy. Unfortunately this has not happened in Uganda and, thus, the result has no doubt contributed to discontent which has manifested in discrepancies between surveys conducted to measure poverty and participatory poverty assessment studies (Lawson et al., (2006) and Kapel et al., (2005). Using data from household surveys of 1992 and 1999, Lawson et al., (2006) found that there were a core number of households which remained in chronic poverty and a substantial number that moved back into poverty after being non-poor in 1992 due to lack of key physical assets, high dependency ratios and large families. The findings also showed that one third of the chronically poor (30.1%) and a disproportionate number of households moving into poverty were from northern Uganda. More than 91% of the households that were chronically poor and those moving into poverty lived in rural areas. Similar studies (Krishna et al., 2006) have attributed the fluctuations to ill-health and health-related costs.

Uganda's impressive macroeconomic record during the 1990s was not matched by improvements in human development indicators. Cuts in spending in education led to, among others, increase in class sizes and student-teacher ratios, increase in school fees due to cost recovery programs, reduction in the number of teachers and morale due to wage freezes, drop in standard of public education due to deteriorating facilities, increase in private schools that only attracted students from wealthy families, and class disparities in education attainments (Jauch 1999). Unfortunately, after Uganda qualified for debt relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, which freed resources that were channelled to education, there was a tendency to focus on quantity more than quality at all levels⁹ exacerbating some of the problems mentioned above and casting doubt on the effectiveness of education to sustain the renaissance.

In the health sector, improvements have been too slow and minimal thus raising questions about the relevance of economic growth outcomes. According to Okuonzi (2004: 1632), the paradox of Uganda's impressive growth and poor social welfare can be placed at the door of a policy that, "extols export-oriented private-sector investment, and creation of the necessary macroeconomic environment for investment and the private sector, but restricts public expenditure particularly for social services." Analysis of spending on key sectors of the economy in the late 1990s up to mid 2000s shows that although there was an increase in spending in the health sector, it was not sufficient enough to deliver the Uganda National Minimum Health Care Package (MoH 2000; 2005). Additionally, funding remains below the US\$

28 per capita recommended by World Health Organization and considerably lower than that of other sectors like education and public administration and security. Similarly low spending on agriculture, which has direct linkages with health, has had serious negative consequences on health outcomes¹⁰ as depicted in Figure 1.0.

Figure 1.0: Expenditure for selected sectors: 1997-2006



Source: MFPED, (2010), 'Background to the Budget 2010/11', Kampala, MFPED.

The budgetary share of agriculture, at approximately 2.2 percent of GDP over the years is far below the 10% recommended by the “Maputo Protocol” and disregards the fact that the sector contributes 40% Growth Domestic Product (GDP) and is a source of livelihood to over 75% percent of the population (Muhumuza 2004). However, as argued elsewhere, high expenditure on security and public administration fit well in Museveni’s bid to entrench himself in the leadership of the country through building patronage networks.

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that although there have been great improvements in the economy from the abyss of the 1970s through the 80s; these benefits have accrued to a few people. There is high and widening income inequality with a gini coefficient ranging from 0.37 in 1992/93 to 0.41 financial years, nationally (MFPED 2010). Thus, economic growth has not been pro-poor. Not only has focusing on predominantly economic growth and raising income neglected key social sectors like health which explains the poor human development indicators and outcomes, it has tended to alienate many people without proper access to social services. This puts serious doubt on the much-touted renaissance.

6. Evolution of Museveni from a revolutionary leader to a cunning dictator

This section traces the trajectory which Museveni and the country have trodden since 1986 - a path of hope and despair, of re-birth and regeneration and, then, degeneration. One question that many scholars and commentators on Uganda's situation in the last twenty years or so have not posed is why, with high levels of economic growth, there is rising discontent among the population in rural and urban sites of the country? I have attempted to trace the reform process and resultant positive changes, but juxtaposed them with their shortcomings in order to caution against over dramatizing the re-birth of Uganda. However, this is not enough to show why trouble is brewing and threatening to overturn all the dividends of the economic renaissance as fragile as they may still be. I argue that for us to be able to fathom what is happening, and thereby interrogate the idea of Uganda's renaissance, we must turn to the question of leadership and with this assess the political character of President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni.

To do this, I map the key signposts in Museveni's transformation from a benign, revolutionary and reformist leader, to a "God father-like" patrimonial and cunning dictator. I posit that concomitant with championing economic reforms which brought the economic changes detailed above, Museveni masterminded political reforms that ensured his stay in power (see also Mwenda et al., 2005). Furthermore, I argue that while many Ugandans genuinely admired his effectiveness and commitment in steering the country through the reforms, clearly a herculean task, they did not notice his machinations to claim the position of sole suitor of the bride-Uganda. If some did, they were frustrated when they tried to challenge him, and thereby either acquiesced to the regime or simply hoped things might change. The following themes guide the analysis: personalization of power, patronage politics, Populism, devaluation and fragmentation of state institutions, balkanization of the polity, corruption and abuse of office, political violence and indoctrination of the people.

6.1 Personalization of power

A growing number of scholars including Makara et.al., (2009), Mwenda (2007), Carbone (2005), Oloka-Onyango (2004), and Muriaas (2009), have demonstrated Museveni's descent into a power hungry leader. Their work shows that over the years he has manipulated the population, state institutions and government in a bid to hang on to power. Through his machinations, he has virtually brought the state under his total control to the extent that it runs as he wishes. He has maneuvered what would have been genuine efforts towards democratization and economic reform so as to concentrate power in the executive and himself.

When Museveni came to power in 1986, the country was more than ready for change following years of misrule, violence and political mayhem. No one doubted his commitment to change. Makara et al., (2009: 187) noted that, "The NRM's rule was initially based on the legitimacy it had earned as the ouster of the hated Obote regime." Thus, every decision taken no matter how politically disastrous and arbitrary it was or would be in future was greeted with euphoria. For instance, as soon as Museveni settled in state house, he banned political parties under the pretext that all the woes the country had endured were due to political parties (Mwenda 2007; see also legal Notice number 1 of 1986) and obscurantist politics. According to him, parties had polarized the population along religious, regional and ethnic lines and created ethnic tensions that a return to party politics would plunge the country into turmoil once more (Muriaas, 2009; Carbone 2005). Citing Museveni, Makara et al., (2009) noted another argument Museveni gave for the stay on party politics:

"...parties were more suitable for developed countries where societal cleavages are based on division of labor and therefore, principled. However, in developing countries like Uganda, divisions were unprincipled and based on parochial considerations...lacking a sizable middle

class, it was not possible to practice meaningful multiparty democracy” (Makara et al., 2009: 189)

Those who lived through the Obote era concurred with him. But, little did they know his long-term and strategic intentions. After close to two decades as the only political force in the country, and to the chagrin of many, Museveni himself called for the return to party politics. However, no middle class has developed in Uganda, and social relations and politics are still based on primordial ethnic relations and religious ties. And, of course, like all societies (traditional and modern), Uganda has always had a certain form of division of labor.¹¹

To fill the political void created by the ban on party politics, Museveni introduced a new political system, “Movement,” which he argued incorporated everybody, even those who did not necessarily agree with its principles. It was a “Movement” out of Uganda’s nefarious past. The Movement system of politics which had developed during the bush war promoted popular participation, especially at the grassroots through Resistance Councils. In 1995, it was constitutionalized and became the system of local government. However, people vied for political office based on individual merit rather under the banner of any party (Carbone 2005). Muriaas (2009: 94) noted thus, “political parties existed, but party activities were subject to strict limitations prohibiting delegate conferences, public rallies, local branches and the sponsoring of the candidates for election”. This meant that the NRM had no competition and was poised to become a hegemonic, unsanctioned political force in the country (see also Carbone 2003; Oloka-Onyango, 2004: 44). By entrenching the Movement system and banning political party activities, Museveni had fully ensured his hold on power. The Movement became whatever Museveni decided it should be (Oloka-Onyango, 2004). After all, he was its chief ideologue and chairman, including that of its committees and organs.

Mwenda (2007) and Carbone (2005) have strongly argued that personalization of power and the state was Museveni’s long-term objective from the bush war days. Personalization of power has taken the following forms: authoritarianism, strong control of the army and control and management of almost all key decision making organs of the state, and presentation of self as out-of-the-ordinary person. Commenting on this, Mwenda noted thus:

“During his time in the bush, Museveni was the chairman of the NRM as well as commander of the NRA sitting atop both the Army Council and the High Command. He also presided over the legislative National Resistance Council, all the while acting as his movement’s chief theoretician and philosopher....when in January 1986 Museveni’s forces took Kampala and made him president, he gained the resources of a state to help him rent or if need be coerce political support from the distressed body of his wounded country” (Mwenda 2007: 27)

Twenty-four years on, he continues to be president, commander in chief, chairman of the Movement, and presides over all organs and committees of the army, even when he has officially retired. The army which he has built into a formidable force far superior to the rag-tag rebel group of 1986 has been and remains his major weapon of control of power and personalization of the state. He uses it internally to quell conflicts, run government and affairs of the state as well as to instigate and interfere in the politics of neighboring countries.¹² To do this, he has ensured that the army is well funded (see Figure 1.0), and in the hands of his ethnic kinsmen-the Bahima and increasingly, his son whom he has promoted rapidly (Oloka-Onyango, 2004: 38) to the rank of lieutenant colonel and tasked with the command of the ‘Special Forces’ an elite section of the large Presidential Guard Brigade.¹³ He has not allowed anybody in the army to supersede or outshine him by maintaining a firm grip on the institution. Not even reforming the army including changing its name to make it more nationalistic has altered its parochial outlook¹⁴.

In his ascent to political dominance, two major things have served as springboards: the economic reforms and circumscribed democratic gains¹⁵ made during his regime. As noted earlier, through the reforms, the economy stabilized, basic consumer commodities which had been scarce became available, service delivery improved and poverty was reduced. A number of these achievements benefited ordinary folks and demonstrated his leadership qualities (Carbone 2005; Green 2010). The introduction of grassroots democracy saw an increasing number of people for whom leadership had been foreclosed assumed office in their localities, and key segments of the population like women and youth who had hitherto been marginalized became actively involved in politics. Restoration of kingdoms endeared him to those ethnic groups which cherished a past glory¹⁶. For these he assumed a messianic position that put him beyond reproach within the Movement and among the general population¹⁷ despite his weaknesses. Once he gained this superman stature he was free to do as he wished.

Mazrui (undated:231) argued that most African leaders have a monarchical tendency characterized by the quest for aristocratic effect which takes the form of social ostentation; personalization of authority; sacralization of authority associated with the glorification of a leader and the quest for a royal historical identity. Included as well is a claim to immortality and patriarchal tendencies. According to him, this could explain why African leaders hold on to power. Museveni concretely possesses the first three of the above characteristics and is in the process of acquiring the others. Van Wyk (2007) has summed up the above characteristics as “stayism”.

The latest move made by the Ugandan political chess-master to claim a life presidency was removal of constitutional term limits in 2005 that enabled him to contest for a third term after the expiry of his two constitutionally mandated terms that began in 1996¹⁸(Oloka-Onyango 2004: 45; Makara et al. 2009). However, contrary to his claims that ‘the people’ yearned for his leadership, the removal of term limits and return to multiparty politics, which were done concurrently, was a strategic move for the political survival of the incumbent. Makara et al., (2009:190) noted that owing to factional divisions in the Movement (which had been simmering since Besigye published a critique of the Movement in 1999), that challenged Museveni’s leadership and the no-party political system, the Movement became intolerant and increasingly centralized around the president, his family and loyalists from his area. The constitution was overturned in a most uncouth, intolerant, arrogant, intimidating and manipulative manner as elucidated in Makara et al., (2009) thus:

“...the motion took many delegates by surprise, including some ministers who argued that they had not been briefed about it...the group supporting the motion argued that to change leaders (i.e. Museveni) during a time of transition would be destabilizing for Ugandan politics...Minister Ssali rejected the amendment of Article 105 (2) on lifting term limits. According to reports of the meeting, Museveni lost his temper and confronted Ssali with the question:” Who are you?” adding that he (Ssali) was a mere “spoke in the wheel” ...this was the clearest indication thus far that Museveni was determined to change the constitution and to stand for a third term...” (Makara et al., 2009: 193).

The authors note that Ministers who fearlessly raised opposition to the third term (*Kisanja*) project and resisted being arm-twisted, like Bidandi Ssali, Eriya Kategaya and Miria Matembe, were later sacked. One may argue that without the lifting of term limits, there would have been no parties (Carbone, 2005: 10). The way the transition was handled leaves no doubt at all as to Museveni’s wish to stay in power forever.

In this theme I have shown that the problem with Uganda’s renaissance has little to do with the failure of the economic reforms but rather the style of leadership of the incumbent. In any case, notwithstanding their weaknesses, the country would have built slowly, but surely on the gains made from the reforms and

would have probably had a chance to transform. But owing to the selfishness of the president the country's confidence has been shaken and there is fear of a return to the dark past.

6.2 Populism, devaluation and fragmentation of state institutions

Related to the above theme is a recurring idea of populism combined with devaluation and fragmentation of state institutions (Manyak et al., 2010; Carbone 2005). According to Carbone (2005: 1, 3), from the outset, Museveni's regime took an anti-institutional stance with the banning of political party activities. This was gradually extended to attacks on the judiciary, police and parliament. As he alienated these institutions, he took on a "pro-people" or populist discourse under the guise of hiding the inadequacies of his regime. This strategy has the following features:

"a strongly personalistic leadership style, outsiderism or the claim that the new leader does not originate from among the existing political class (*see excerpt from Museveni's inaugural speech at the beginning of this paper-emphasis mine*), an anti-system, anti-institutions and anti-organizations rhetoric; often targeting political parties and political corruption; a call for restoring 'the power of the people' by founding democracy (where a notion of 'the people' as an organic whole does not allow for the representation of particularistic interests), a two-fold mass mobilization strategy aimed at both legitimizing and implementing the above political project..." (Carbone 2005: 1).

On various occasions, Museveni has shunned, lambasted, disparaged and publicly undermined the above-mentioned institutions. This has resulted in totally cowed institutions, willing to do his bidding as he wishes. For instance, according to him the judiciary cannot decide the future of the country, but rather the people. Thus when some judges ruled against him in an election petition brought before the courts challenging his election in 2001, and later ruled that the 2000 referendum was unconstitutional, he simply shrugged off their decision. Yet, many of these "people" had not been given an opportunity to decide the future of their country when his army and political agents masterminded electoral fraud through violence and vote rigging. As he de-institutionalizes the polity, he cunningly manipulates the population by projecting himself as the sole protector and defender of their rights¹⁹.

"The people" discourse was taken a step further when he wrote a letter to the Cabinet in which he questioned the patriotism of the late Wapakhabulo, once speaker of parliament, minister and national political commissar. He wrote:

"I am writing to you so that you know my views in connection with certain aspects of the irrational and desperate efforts by those who, it seems, have been scheming for a long time to usurp the authority of the people and reverse the gains ushered in by the 26th of January 1986...What is wrong...is for somebody to argue...that there are certain areas of the constitution which are no-go-areas for the people and only a monopoly of parliament...My whole life, as you know, has been in the struggle for the liberation of the masses from oppression and marginalization...There is no way the population can demand the right to pronounce itself on any important issue and parliament of Uganda denies them that right...There is no way a referendum can be held and people pronounce themselves on an issue but that popular decision is only of 'propaganda value' (as defined by Wapakhabulo). This would be a counter revolution against the authority of the people...When a constitutional or legal arrangement pays more attention to philosophically irrational procedures rather than the basic, genuine aspirations of the people, it loses legitimacy and then it is ignored...`All power belongs to the people'..." (Carbone 2005: 12).

As Carbone noted, Museveni does not cite the remaining part of Article 1(1) of the constitution which adds, the people "...shall exercise their sovereignty in accordance with the constitution". Museveni's policies have fragmented the state in a "divide and rule" style akin to that of the British who colonized Uganda in terms of setting the executive (cabinet) against the legislature (parliament), instead of creating harmony between them. Yet, all members of cabinet are also part of the legislature.

Fragmentation of the state and public service through the creation of political offices that serve his interests is another way the president has dexterously ensured he stays in power. For example, he has created the office of the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) which does nothing other than serve as the 'eye' and 'ear' of the president. In addition, a vast and varied security apparatuses right from the village to national level including institutions like the police, Internal Security Organisation (ISO), External Security Organisation (ESO), Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence, (CMI), the army, Special Branch ensures that the civilian population is dominated and thoroughly intimidated. Others are illegally constituted such as the Kalangala Action Plan (KAP). He has also expanded the size of cabinet by creating various positions of minister of state. For instance, in the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development alone, there are five ministers of state! Furthermore, Mwenda et al., (2005) show that because the traditional civil service was not trusted to implement the economic reforms, a multitude of semi-autonomous institutions were created. By 2002, there were 70 agencies-secretariats, autonomous bodies such as Uganda Revenue Authority, Coffee Development Authority, and National Environment Management Authority and non-constitutional commissions among others. Within ministries, projects were created through which funds to run specialized activities were channeled. Those who benefited most are officials who had the knack for writing successful projects (Mwenda et al., 2005).

What all these have amounted to is a bloated public sector, increased public expenditure, building of patronage networks, militarization of society, and political violence especially during elections. In addition, it has led to decline in morale and efficiency partly because of the salary differentials between mainstream civil servants and employees working in these agencies. It also led to the growth of a "political class" (table 4.0) both in central and local government beholden to the ruling Movement. Mwenda et al., (2005) have posited these ills in the manner below:

"By 2003, the size of the traditional civil service was approximately 200,000, while the numbers employed in the semi-autonomous agencies and commissions had reached nearly 50,000...The creation of many new specialized agencies enabled the ruling Movement to use these enclaves to give jobs to its supporters and evade the ban on recruitment in the civil service...but these institutions seem to be afflicted by the same ills of corruption, political patronage, over manning, red tape, and lack of accountability which led to the demise of the old (public enterprise) corporations..." (Mwenda et al., 2005: 457).

Yet, as part of the civil service reform, government had conducted a harsh retrenchment exercise a few years before which had led to massive job losses and created untold misery as elucidated further:

"By 1996, it (*government*) had succeeded in halving the numbers in the civil service from 320,000 to 156,000 employees...the number of government ministries was cut from 38 to 17...the size of the army was reduced from 100,000 to 40,000 between 1990 and 1996...But despite civil service retrenchment and army demobilization, public service and military budgets have grown, particularly since the late 1990s. For instance, the defense budget was \$44 million in 1991, \$88 million in 1996, over \$155 million in 2003 and \$196-203 million in 2004. The public administration budget has grown rapidly over the past few years at an average rate of 16%..." Mwenda et al., (2005: 456-457):

The above shows that the benefits that accrued from the painful austerity measures are going to a select few, in a number of respects: those who were recruited irregularly in these institutions as there was a ban on recruitment; and those who were or are linked to powerful people in government and political apparatus. In addition, government has used these agencies to build its power base. Owing to the fact that some people are holding more than one job, it is difficult to discern who is employed in these agencies and main stream civil service. Overall, one can argue that the reform process in Uganda has contradicted and negated the theorized and expected general trickle down benefits of economic reforms, which could account for the rising discontent among the general population.

Table 4.0: Size of political class in Uganda 1990s-2000s

CATEGORY OF OFFICER	NUMBER	LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT
Ministers	67*	Central
Presidential advisors	71**	Central
RDCs	224***	Local (<i>but appointed by president</i>)
DISOs	224***	Local (<i>deployed by ISO</i>)
LC 5 chairperson's	112***	Local

*Number in 2001; ** number in 2003; *** number in 2010 (minus assistant RDCs, Gombolola Internal Security Officers)*

6.3. Patronage politics

Closely linked with the above, is the system of benefaction²⁰ established by Museveni over the years characterized by co-optation, creation of new districts, tight control of the army, and elevation of family members to key political and military posts among others (Carbone 2005; Makara et al: 190; & Mwenda et al., 2005; Mwenda 2007:34; Tangri et al., 2006; and, Tamale 2003). Co-optation has followed two major patterns: recruitment of elite from universities (mainly Makerere University) and those in opposition. For example, vocal university professors who were co-opted into government include the current prime minister Apollo Nsibambi, and minister of Justice and constitutional affairs, Kiddu Makubuya. Members of the opposition who have been wooed to the ruling Movement include former Democratic Party's (DP) Maria Mutagamba and Museveni's most avowed critic and nemesis Aggrey Awori of the Uganda People's Congress (UPC). The two and a couple of others have been given ministerial posts. Outspoken female activists like Miria Matembe who were spearheading the women's liberation movement in the country were also brought on board. The above has led to weakening of the opposition and dissent, appeasement of ethnic demands and appeals for a fair share in "the national cake" and projection of the Movement as a broad-based and inclusive government and of Museveni as a benevolent leader. Most critically, though, it has led to creation and maintenance of patron networks, ensuring that all decisions taken in government institutions are sanctioned by the president, entrenchment of cronyism and virtually creation of a bloated state and local government (see also Awortwi, 2010; Mwenda et al., 2005 and Green 2010). Museveni has used the benefits of the reform to buy patronage.

Mwenda et al., (2005) and Tangri et al., (2006) raised an important reason for the thriving patronage networks Museveni has created by placing part of the blame on donors who have been reluctant to use the whip on him even when he has grossly violated all democratic standards (international and local). Instead, they have heaped praise on him for turning around the economy showing their major preoccupation with the country's ability to gain stability in order to be able to pay its debts.

Mwenda (2007) has powerfully argued that it is not what Museveni has done since he assumed power (the reforms, creation of local democratic institutions, and a strong army), but how he has done it. It is in the process and tools he has utilized that we are to locate his true colors. Consider the creation of the office of RDC and his deputies in the ever increasing number of districts. The work of the RDCs is, allegedly to

ensure that government programs and policies are implemented and to oversee security. However, this office is not necessary as it is merely a duplication of roles that could easily be handled by main stream civil servants in the districts and other security personnel²¹. For instance, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), who heads a team of highly qualified technocrats implementing these programs and policies and the district executive can ably ensure that programs are implemented. After all, they are monitored by line ministries which ensure that they adhere to government policies and programs. Similarly, the security function can ably be handled by the District Security Officer (DISO) and his deputy, together with the District Police Commander (DPC) and his force. Therefore the post of RDC is controversial. In addition to RDCs, Museveni has surrounded him with an army of so-called Presidential Advisors, 71 in all (most of who are political failures) who ‘advise’ him on everything, including “how Ugandan men sleep with their wives”- in popular parlance! Clearly, this is merely a gimmick through which he maintains a stranglehold on the population, rewards his cronies, and ensures his stay in power.

The above raises a pertinent and dangerous issue of leadership, particularly selfishness, which Van Wyk (2007:12) has referred to as neo-patrimonial leadership featuring ‘presidentialism’ and ‘clientelism’. “Presidentialism”, according to him “establishes imperial presidencies and produces strong presidents centralizing all power in the office of the president”. Unfortunately, Van Wyk does not identify Museveni as a ‘presidentialist’ leader, though he noted his contemporaries like Muamar Qaddafi of Libya and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. Thus according to Mwenda, the benefits of the economic reforms have virtually served to entrench Museveni in power as it is what he uses to maintain this wide patron network. Important state-society mediating institutions, on which democracy could have anchored, have not developed. No wonder despite the impressive economic growth indicators, services like health and infrastructure like roads are in a very deplorable condition and declining.

However, I contend that we also need to focus on the ‘when’ question as timing has been of essence in building up Museveni’s patronage networks. An example is his method of reshuffling ministers, army officers, permanent secretaries, RDCs, virtually every officer whom he appoints either before or immediately after a major election or referendum. This ensures support by rewarding “good” performers and sidelining “non-performers”, particularly those that have run out of favor with him. I have already given the example of how in the middle of a political transition he dismissed three cabinet ministers, two of who had been among the longest serving members of his cabinet. Gilley (2010: 94) suggested that the phenomenon of patrimonialism where power is concentrated in the leader (who does as he wishes and tolerates no challenge to his power) is called ‘big-man-rule in Africa. Clearly Museveni now rules as the ‘big-men’ of yester years.

6.4. Balkanization of the polity

It is paradoxical, even contradictory that Museveni who is an avowed critic of the balkanization of Africa that occurred during the colonial era has presided over one of the most far-reaching national fragmentation programs in the world (Awortwi et al. 2010; and Green (2010). Yet, he has often lambasted colonialists for being “obscurantist” because they drew arbitrary boundaries that tore asunder long lasting economic, social and political relations among Africans. Due to this, he has lamented, Africa has been unable to forge meaningful national entities that could evolve a truly African development program. Africa must unite and integrate, which according to him is possible because African people are linked culturally, historically and have been cooperating in spite of the arbitrary borders. In his dream of an African renaissance, regional integration and cooperation are cited as cornerstones:

“There is growing conviction among Africans that it is not wise to have small political units. The colonialists who took over most of Africa were able to rule small dominions because of the political fragmentation of the Africans at the time. Today, Africa comprises 53 countries,

some with less than one million people. Many are too small to be viable, and survive only as appendages of other countries-if not in name, then at least in fact. Because of the problems that have dogged Africa as a result of political fragmentation, there is now a great sense of realism that its countries cannot go it alone...This is where the hope of Africa lies-this group will eventually provide a solid foundation for progress and will ensure the modernization of Africa...In East Africa we have started with economic cooperation and integration. But we are also considering political integration because as long as we have different leadership, implementing economic cooperation will not be easy..." (Museveni 1999: 78).

Why he would work to disintegrate his country can only be understood in the context of the foregoing discussion which centers on his desire to stay in power. Only this can explain the apparent turn around, using "the people", and "deepening democracy" as excuses for destroying the viability of the country. If some African countries are not viable due to their small size and populations, then it is utopian to think the 112 (and still increasing) number of districts in Uganda would be viable!

According to Awortwi, et al., (2010) and Green (2010), at independence, Uganda had only 17 autonomous local government jurisdictions, however, since 1994; the number of local districts has grown from 39 to 112, in 2010, almost a threefold increase. Yet, the number is still increasing, as the precedent set for some areas must apply to other areas as well. By 2008, Uganda had the fourth-largest number of local-governments in the world (Green 2008 as cited in Awortwi et al., 2010). However, in 1987, the Commission on Local Government chaired by Professor Mamdani recommended a review of existing districts in which it anticipated some would lose their district status as they were financially unviable and unnecessary. What this implies is that the commission envisaged a down-sizing, not expansion of Local Government. Instead the size of local government has expanded to monstrous proportions that the commissioners (many of who are still alive) must be flabbergasted. Table 6.1 shows the number of local governments, and their trend of increase against the size of population.

Table 5.0: Number of local governments in Uganda: 1959-2010

YEAR	NUMBER OF DISTRICTS	AVERAGE POPULATION PER DISTRICT
1959	16	443,000
1962	17	456,365
1968	18	513,711
1971	19	526,853
1974	37	292,211
1980	33	368,115
1990	34	513,412
1991	38	476,474
1994	39	514,256
1997	45	455,718
2000	56	427,786
2005	70	402,843
2006	80	383,071
2008	83	381,408
2009	103	310,679
2010	112	289,285

Adapted from Green 2008:88; Awortwi et al., 2010: 14

In their study, Awortwi et al., (2010:3-10) and Green (2010: 88-94) found that most of the reasons cited for creation of new local governments such as economic efficiency, the subsidiarity principle, inability of central government to resist local demands, ethnic-linguistic conflict management, improvement of service

delivery thesis, (neo) patrimonialism and political resource curse theories, did not hold true for the Ugandan case²². Green found that patronage and desire to create jobs was the main reason behind the proliferation of districts in Uganda. On their part, Awortwi et al., (2010) favored the gerrymandered decentralization thesis as the most significant explanation for the creation of districts in Uganda as it enables political leaders to stay in power. To support the gerrymandered thesis, Awortwi et al., (2010) further argue that most districts were created either before or after political elections to lure or reward those who supported the Movement or to stem future electoral losses (see also Green 2010: 87). Otherwise, most districts are financially unviable for the argument on service delivery to stand.

Mwenda (2007) also favored the gerrymandering thesis, in addition to creation of jobs (Awortwi et al., 2010) used to maintain patron networks. For example, according to Awortwi et al., (2010), with 39 districts in 1991, there were 6,039 jobs in local government. However, by 2006 when the country was divided into 83 districts, the number of jobs jumped to 12,948. Most of these jobs go to supporters of the Movement, their children and relatives. It is worth reckoning that most of the tasks and services decentralized to new districts would be delivered by the “mother” district, if efficiency was ensured.

Wooing voters seems to be the main reason for the creation of new districts. Otherwise, the president’s violation of procedural etiquette and the law creating districts (Awortwi et al., 2010), of which he is aware, cannot be explained. Certainly the “people” thesis, which was dispelled by Green (2010) as lacking explanatory value, cannot be invoked. For example, the president’s impertinence and arbitrary use of power in allocating districts was documented by Awortwi et al., (2010) in the case of Ngora district:

“I will discuss the idea with the Movement caucus and recommend to them that Ngora be considered for district status because I love the people of Ngora. Whether your MPs Francis Epetait (*Ngora County, FDC*) and Agnes Akiror (*Kumi woman MP, FDC*) cross to NRM or not I will give you your district’ said Mr. Museveni (*the Daily Monitor, 19 August 2008*)” (cited in Awortwi et al. 2010:21)

Furthermore, the authors show that over the years, more districts have been granted in Northern (26.8 percent) and Eastern (28.6 percent) Uganda where the Movement has traditionally had little support. Comparably fewer districts have been created in Central and Western where the regime enjoys good support. They also point out that, in order to deal with the problem of competition within the NRM, jobs in the new districts such as RDC and deputy RDC have been dished out to vanquished NRM members. Others have been supported to contest district level electoral positions like that of LC5.

Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to critique the conclusions of these authors, I find their arguments are related and offer strong explanations for what had happened under Museveni’s leadership. To illustrate this further, in a study completed in 2007, (Mugisha 2007), it was found that Kisoro district, which was decentralized in the 1994/95 financial year, lacked capacity to implement government health policies and programs owing to lack of human resources, low funding, and other managerial and administrative constraints. Until it was carved out as an independent district Kisoro was part of Kabale district. However, as Tukahebwa (1997) has shown, Kabale district also lacks capacity to implement decentralized policies and programs. These examples show that other than the regimes’ interest in gerrymandering for political gain, there is no justified reason for the continued fragmentation of the country.

6.5 Corruption and abuse of office

Uganda has been consistently ranked among the most corrupt countries in the world. According to Transparency International's (2010), corruption perceptions index, world wide, Uganda ranked 127th out of 178 countries surveyed. It scored 2.5 on a scale ranging from 10-0 (where 10 is very clean and 0, highly corrupt). In sub-Saharan Africa, it ranked 27th out of 47 countries surveyed. Corruption in Uganda presents a paradox as its intensity seems to worsen as more institutions to combat it are created. Every sphere of life in Uganda is permeated by corruption in government (central and local), business, institutions like the army, and I dare say, families! Yet, the present government has had the greatest number of institutions for fighting corruption-constitutional and non-constitutional²³. However, corruption simply persists.

An increasing number of scholars have documented the dynamics, character and reasons why corruption has persisted including Muriaas (2009); Mwenda et al.,(2005); Tangri et al., (2006); Mwenda (2007) & Manyak et al., (2010); while others have implied it in their treatment of other questions (Green 2010); (Carbone 2005); (Makara et al., 2009) and (Awortwi et al., 2010). Some of the themes emerging from the above works point a finger at the presidents' role including the lack of political will to deal with the malaise exemplified by his failure to crack on ineffective state institutions and those specifically created to combat corruption; encouraging proliferation of institutions to fight corruption whose duties are simply duplicated, and indirect orchestration by placing family and ethnic group members in positions where they engage in corrupt practices such as in the military over which only he has oversight. Another area where the president has been complicit in corruption is in the creation of new districts meant to serve as avenues for his continued stay in power.

Political factors close to the president have been implicated in failure of anti-corruption institutions such as lack of independence of the executive, and influence, manipulation and pressure, quasi-authoritarianism and a powerful president (Tangri et al., 2006). According to these authors, corruption in Uganda is used as a tool for private gain and regime consolidation. As such, high ranking officials, especially those close to the president, implicated in corruption are not touched²⁴. Instead many like the President's brother Salim Saleh²⁵ are promoted or transferred to more 'juicy' ministries. Some of the reasons for the president's acquiescence are that some of the stolen funds are used to support his election campaigns, retain loyalty of the officials and keep them within the ruling Movement (Mwenda et al., 2005). No wonder, none of the military officers accused of inflating the army payroll through creation of ghost soldiers has been punished or dismissed from the army. Commissions of inquiry, a tactic used by Museveni to placate citizens demanding action against the corrupt have ended only producing huge volumes of reports, many of which are not made public or acted upon. Others, the president simply dismisses as incompetent.

Corruption has been part and parcel of the economic and political reform process. For instance, it has been noted (Mwenda et al., 2005), that the privatization of government agencies in the 1990s was marred by practices such as insider dealing, influence peddling and conflict of interest. Furthermore, it has been reported that proceeds from privatization were used to build patronage networks for regime consolidation.

A growing volume of literature on decentralization reforms in developing countries has shown that decentralization has often resulted into transference of corruption from the centre to the periphery (See the literature reviewed in Mugisha 2007). Local governments in Uganda have been cited as some of the most corrupt institutions in the country. Corruption in local government manifests in dubious procurement deals and practices cited above. Although the Inspector General of Government and Public Accounts Committee of Parliament have brought some of these 'small fish' at district level to book, many remain out there depleting government resources. In the central government, institutions meant to stem corruption have not done much. Muriaas (2009) has found that transition to multiparty politics which is

supposed to provide checks and balances against corrupt tendencies at all levels of government is being marred by fear of top NRM leadership in districts and deep seated corruption.

There is evidence that corruption has tremendous negative consequences on countries' development as it leads to diversion of resources meant for service delivery, increases rent-seeking and other predatory behavior. In this vein, it is instructive to note that the best performers in Transparency International's (2010) corruption index in Africa like Botswana, Mauritius, Cape Verde, Seychelles, South Africa, Namibia, Ghana and Rwanda are also some of the fastest growing economies on the continent. There is no doubt that persistence of corruption in Uganda is a strong reason for the growing discontent among Ugandans as demonstrated by decline in support for the government and increasing popular protest. For a total renaissance to take root there is need to deal with the malaise of corruption in a decisive manner by government, civil society and individuals. Unfortunately, as Mwenda et al., (2005), & Tangri et al., (2006) have shown, the donor community which supports at least 50 percent of the budget of Uganda government has not used its clout to demand more action on the part of government. The population also seems resigned in the face of an inept regime.

6.6 Political violence and muzzling of the press

A close look at Museveni's political career since his youthful days reveals a streak of violence that threatens to overthrow the achievements of his regime. While in college, he wrote his Bachelors' degree thesis on the justification of the Fanonian use of revolutionary violence in post-colonial Africa. In the 1960s, he got his military training and took part in Front for the Liberation of Mozambique's (FRELIMO) rebel activities under Samora Machel (Oloka-Onyango:35). In addition he recruited a couple of young men who joined him in Mozambique including his brother, now General Caleb Akandwanaho (a.k.a Salim-Saleh Ruufu). This demonstrated not only his militaristic attitude, but also his belief that Uganda's political problems would be solved by war. As such, he prepared early. Thus, it could be argued that the reasons he gives for staging the 1981-85 rebellion in Uganda-rigging of the 1980 elections-disguises this long term belief in use of violence as a political weapon (see Museveni 1997).

There are many examples to elaborate the above. However due to limited space, this paper shall highlight just a few. According Oloka-Onyango militarism and violence are Museveni's modus operandi. He relies on the military to collect taxes, and deal with smuggling, which tasks would ordinarily fall in the ambit of the police and civilian institutions. He relies on specialized units of the military, especially his Presidential Guard Brigade and Military police to intimidate political opponents during elections and has generally been intolerant to opposition²⁶. Mwenda aptly presents how political space for meaningful dissent has increasingly and regrettably become narrow in Uganda, partly as a direct outcome of the president's close embrace of violence:

“On November 14, (2005-*emphasis mine*) the government jailed Besigye. When his supporters attempted a peaceful demonstration, soldiers crushed it with tanks and armored personnel carriers, leaving three people dead. Kampala looked like a war zone; newspaper headlines began comparing it to Baghdad. Besigye was taken before the High Court and charged with treason plus a rape allegedly committed in 1997. When the High Court granted bail, the military accused Besigye of terrorism and placed him in the custody of a Court Martial. Foreign diplomats whom the minister of foreign affairs has accredited to attend the trial found themselves ejected and locked out of the courtroom by soldiers....In one macabre incident, the government sent hooded gangs sporting sun glasses and brandishing automatic weapons into the High Court to kidnap 21 of Besigye's co-defendants in the event that they receive bail. Looking on as the thugs waved their guns at jurists and diplomats, the terrified

detainees decided to remain in custody. The courts later released Besigye himself, but only after almost two-thirds of the campaign period had gone by (Mwenda 2007: 26)

The attack on the High Court akin to the excesses observed during Idi Amin's regime was described by the Principle Judge as a "raping" of the courts of law. More recently, the excesses of Museveni's regime reached zenith when demonstrations by female members of the opposition who were challenging government's failure to reform the electoral commission, which has been implicated in rigging elections, were brutally crushed. In a bid to quell them, state agents, including the police sprayed insecticide in the women's eyes! These horrendous acts, however, went unpunished. In September 2009, the violent riots that broke out in Buganda region were brutally repressed. All these occurrences demonstrate not only Museveni's willingness to use all manner of force to crack down on the opposition (which he has failed to use on corrupt officials), but also his regimes' disregard of the rule of law. Yet, as Gilley (2010:93) has noted in the metaphor of the cheetah transmuting into a hippo, this is a characteristic Museveni shares with other African leaders who were once glamorized by the West as the embodiment of the African renaissance. It is a trait that he shares with past Ugandan leaders whose regimes he refers to as "swine regimes" and the leaders as "swine" for the wrongs they committed against Ugandans.

By arbitrarily intervening in regional conflicts, he has worsened tensions and volatility of conflicts in the region. Coupled with this, is his insistence on solving internal political challenges to his authority militarily in total disregard of peaceful methods ²⁷(Oloka-Onyango: 38, 43 & 45). For example, despite causing untold misery to the people of Northern Uganda, and probably one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world, the president could not relent to peaceful means of ending the war in the north. Contrary to popular belief, president Museveni has spawned a wave of violence at home and abroad and generally militarized local populations. Besides, the endless wars have trapped millions of people in poverty and squalor, psycho-social trauma, de-culturalization, and dehumanization. As mentioned earlier, Northern Uganda ranks lowest on all human development indicators in Uganda, which explains why this region has never supported Museveni. To counter their discontent and increasing opposition, the regime has resorted to gerrymandering so as to appease the people and woe them back.

Although there was a leap in the growth of the media in the 1990s characterized by mushrooming of over 100 FM radio stations and Television houses which have provided a forum for expression of political views and ideas for development, the space for free expression began to dwindle in the new century. Mwenda (2007) has decried the gagging of the press which has been on the increase, the longer Museveni remains in power²⁸. Violation of press freedom has manifested in arbitrary imprisonment of leading journalists critical of government policies, impromptu searches of media houses, closures and withdrawal of operating licenses and sometimes, physical violence on journalists. For example in August and November of 2005, KFM radio station and its sister newspaper 'The Daily Monitor', respectively, were closed. This way, the spokespersons for civil society are intimidated and cowed. In view of this, one can only guess what is likely to happen in next year's elections with a president who has chosen to hang on to power, even as the political odds are clearly against him.

6.7 Indoctrination of the people

When leadership degenerates into a game of survival, the once true heroes of renaissance become pawns in the game of political chess. Although "the people," who, as shown in previous sections of this paper, were fronted as the 'owners' of the Movement revolution, institutionalized mechanisms of doing things in normal governmental processes were set aside in a bid to blindfold them²⁹. As time goes by and the motivations of the leaders change, as has happened in Uganda, "the people" begin to recede in importance and are relegated to the political back-seat.

For most of those conversant with Uganda's politics since independence, the idea of a Ugandan renaissance is not a strange idea at all as shown in this paper. Uganda has truly come a long way under Museveni. A few remarkable changes occurred in the political realm which most literature tends to ignore. For example, political re-awakening of the population by demystifying the power of the gun through Mchaka-Mchaka³⁰ or the making of the citizen-soldier (Snyder, 2003), improving civil-military relations by disciplining the army³¹, and rallying the people around core economic ideas of resource mobilization- "*kulembeka*" and creating a reasonably calm environment for its possibility³². Notwithstanding their weaknesses and many caveats different commentators have placed on them, some institutions to support the economy such as banks and micro-lending institutions also did grow. Whether these worked for Museveni or not, they certainly have long term implications on the future of the country. But as argued above, the truly revolutionary fervor in Uganda came to demise in the mid or late 1990s, exactly the time when Museveni won a resoundingly high vote³³. Why?

Observers have argued that if he had ended his presidency after the first constitutional term (1996-2000), he would have averted plunging the country into a downward spiral which has occurred since then. Instead, he overthrew the constitution he helped put in place and hang on to power. Coupled with the fact that the re-birth was limited in scope as it concerned itself with economics not the general transformation of the country, the president's decision to hang on to power has meant that even the above mentioned real positive outcomes of his revolution will soon be lost. Moreover, a politically awakened population in rural and urban areas (as was seen during the 2009 September riots) cannot just be pushed around. The likely outcome is that Museveni will resort to excessive force and violence to subdue the population. Where is the renaissance? I see only a repeat of history, albeit a bad one. This excursion into the labyrinths of the regime in a bid to locate some markers for a renaissance offers us a firm footing upon which to base the theme of indoctrination, hoodwinking and arm-twisting of the people that have come to characterize the last 10 years of Museveni's rule. It is said that when a visitor overstays his welcome, the host becomes unconformable and is not willing to host him or her again. This is what has happened in Uganda. Museveni has overstayed his welcome and, because he knows people are not willing to host him again, he has resorted to using all means to enforce his stay.

Although not the first instance of Museveni's tactics of indoctrination and manipulation, the worst came in 2005 regarding the return to multiparty system of governance, and the almost putschist removal of presidential term limits, as stated elsewhere in this essay. The banning of political parties was probably the first instance. To do it successfully, Museveni undertook a well orchestrated and consistent attack on parties couched in philosophical terms on development and factors antithetical to it that many Ugandans could not understand. However, in the build up to the 2006 elections, which would guarantee him not only another term, but a shot at life presidency, the only stumbling block Museveni was confronted with was the constitution he had helped to create. One way to circumvent this bottleneck was for him, a vehement opponent to parties, to campaign for their return. Yet, only three years had elapsed since "the people" had endorsed his Movement system in a referendum. Another referendum organized very swiftly was to settle the new question. For most of the people, this was confusing and misleading (Muriaas, 2009: 106). Why return to parties when they had just endorsed the Movement? Makara et al., (2009), help us to fathom this complexity:

"Some MPs, the opposition parties, civil society, and international donors argued that a referendum was unnecessary and costly procedure to decide the issue of a return to multiparty politics in a context where both the opposition and the government supported the change. Regardless of the concerns voiced, the NRM went pressed ahead. The argument voiced most explicitly by the president was that the referendum was a 'house-cleaning exercise' through which the NRM-O "would rid the movement of saboteurs"...The low voter turnout may in part be attributed to general confusion as to the purpose of the

referendum. Museveni, as the head of state and leader of the NRM-O was campaigning in favor of a return to multi-party politics despite the fact for nearly two decades he had emphasized the virtues of the Movement system. During the referendum campaign, the president did not adequately explain his change of mind, but continued to criticize political parties. The NRM-O was represented in both the pro-change camp and in the camp advocating the status quo. Thus voters were faced with a situation where the executive parts of the NRM, together with the opposition parties campaigned for a return to multi-party politics, whereas other parts of the NRM system campaigned against this position” (Makara et al., 2009: 195).

In the presidential campaigns that followed, Museveni’s campaign slogan was, “no-change”. Yet, people had just voted for change in the referendum! The shifting of political goal posts between ‘change’ and ‘no-change’, have been the hallmark of Museveni’s regime. However, he deploys this discourse when it suits him most, thus my assertion of Museveni’s past masterly of indoctrination. There is no doubt that these have been deliberate, calculated and well-orchestrated moves by the incumbent and his cadres to hoodwink people into believing that Museveni had transformed into a democratic leader willing to face competition as Muriaas (2009) has shown:

“At rallies and on the radio, people were told that if they voted for the ‘tree’, the symbol for opening up the political space, they also voted for president Museveni to stay in power. If they voted for the ‘house’, it meant that they were against the president. A journalist from an independent newspaper covering the campaign reported that he got very upset when a minister said in his speech that, ‘we are not campaigning for the return of political parties, but for the retention of the president!...’” (Muriaas 2009: 106)

The about-turn from an anti-to a pro-party position was a deliberate ploy by Museveni to stay in power. After manipulating parliament³⁴, ministers and members of the Movement (Makara et al., 2009), the president’s only challenge was how to convince the people (Muriaas, 2009). Other factors, such as international pressure to free-up political space as well as pressure from local opposition parties would not have made him budge. After all, opposition parties and pressure from international community had always been there but he had managed to wad them off for twenty years. Therefore the sole reason for a return to multi-party politics in Uganda was to entrench himself in power, which he managed by indoctrinating people. As noted above, this summation agrees with his campaign slogan for that year’s (2006) election of, “No Change”. These events, clearly illustrate the evolution of the president from a revolutionary leader kin on ensuring a fundamental change and transformation of his country to a selfish one hell-bent on clinging to power. As said by one of Uganda’s late president’s, “*entebb’ ewooma*”, which literary translated means, “power is sweet”. Unfortunately, if one over indulges in its sweetness, he or she ceases being productive.

7. Discontent sets in: an indictment of Uganda’s renaissance under Museveni?

The main reason why Museveni enjoyed adulation of the majority of Ugandans in the late 1980s to the mid-1990s was that they believed in his promise of fundamental change. Not only that, those first years, although difficult owing to the harsh economic reforms, bore fruit on many fronts-economic, political and even social. However, since then, he has increasingly turned dictatorial (Carbone 2005: 15); and Makara et al., 2009). More worrying is that even his wife, who has recently been catapulted to the political scene as Member of Parliament, fully endorsed her husband’s dictatorship when she campaigned on the ‘no-change’ slogan during her 2006 parliamentary elections. According to Makara et al., (2009):

“The successful parliamentary campaign of Uganda’s First Lady, Mrs. Janet Museveni, illustrates the importance of the continued Movement structure throughout the 2006

multiparty elections. She was accompanied on her campaigns by state security agents and the Presidential Guard Brigade. Her campaign slogan was “*okubiba embibo yentura*”, which literally means “planting a permanent seed” (Makara et al., 2009:200).

I have shown in the preceding sections the build up to this situation which has seen the president’s family taking centre stage in the political and military spheres of the country, practically closing out any doubts of a clinically planned and orchestrated maneuver to stay in power. Besides appointing his wife Minister of Karamoja Affairs, he has elevated his son Muhozi Kainerugaba to head the ‘Special Forces.’ Many close relatives including sons in law, cousins, and brothers occupy high positions in the army, government and business. Members of his Hima ethnic group virtually dominate key areas of social, economic and political life. As such the benefits of the reforms are concentrated in a small section of the population, while the majority must toil for daily bread. The result is popular discontent among the citizens that has manifested in low voter turnout for elections and declining support for the incumbent and his party (Mwenda 2007); (Awortwi et al., 2010); Makara et al., (2009: 192); Muriaas (2009); Green (2010) as shown in table 6.0.

Table 6.0 Declining support of the NRM

POLL	YEAR	TURN OUT (%)	NRM (%VOTES)	OPPOSITION* (% VOTES)
Presidential	1996	60.7	75.7	**
Referendum	2000	52	90	**
Presidential	2001	55.7	69	29
Referendum	2005	47	92.5	**
Presidential	2006	67.8	56	37.4

Source: adapted from Makara et al., (2009); Green (2010); Awortwi et al., (2010); Mwenda (2007) with modifications

*Includes only votes won by the major opposition party/individual in the election year

**Data still missing

From Table 6.0, it is obvious that the Movement is no longer basking in the glory of the late 1980s and early to mid 1990s. The political tide changed beginning 2000 as seen in marked declines in voter turnout in referenda and presidential elections³⁵ as opposed to the gains made by the opposition spearheaded by the FDC between 2001 and 2006. Yet, both these elections were marred by rigging, violence, gerrymandering and other election irregularities as confirmed by the highest courts of law. Following these past trends, many observers and commentators have forecast tough times for the incumbent and his party in next years’ elections. It is with hindsight of past losses that the regime has orchestrated one of the rarest gerrymandering gimmicks in the world to increase its chances of survival.

Apart from expressing their indignation with the regime by withdrawing support during elections and limited participation in referenda, citizens, especially those in urban centers who are more politically active, have resorted to staging demonstrations and riots which we alluded to earlier. Demonstrations of female members of the opposition, youth, and business vendors have also taken place. As varied as these groups are, their concerns are similar- political and economic, and are aimed at challenging lack of democracy, dictatorial tendencies and corruption and jettisoning of economic resources. As stated before, these popular protests have been met with high levels of barbaric violence by agents of the state. What all this demonstrates is an indictment of the regime’s increasingly poor record and faltering renaissance.

8. A fresh look at Uganda's and Africa's renaissance: A way out of the impasse?

The issue of Africa's renaissance is split between Afro-optimists (Shaw & Nyang'oro 2000) and Afro-pessimists (Gilley 2010: 88-92). However, as this paper has shown, it is not simply a matter of having or lacking enthusiasm and hope for the continent. Rather, support for the renaissance or its denigration should be based on a proper reading of facts as shown in this case study. Therefore I argue that although there are improvements, (Uganda, Botswana, Mauritius, Cape Verde, Seychelles, South Africa, Namibia), of which we must be proud, generally, the African renaissance is not very promising. The continent continues to oscillate between hope and despair.

A more nuanced and objective interrogation of the renaissance requires that we look very seriously at issues pertinent to the inner workings of governments, and of leaders, as they are mandated to ensure meaningful transformation occurs by rallying people behind well thought out development policies and programs. Governments and their leaders either spur or undermine prospects for a renaissance. This approach would reveal, as it has done in the case of Uganda, that economic growth, while important and forms a basis of a renaissance, is not a panacea. The problematic of leadership needs to be revisited as a growing number of scholars have shown (Gilley 2010; Oloka-Onyango 2004; Mwenda et al., 2005; Tangri et al., 2006 Mwenda 2007; Mohiddin 1998; Udogu 2008; & Forje 2007). The quality of leadership in Africa and Uganda in particular and their motivations is clearly in question. In this section, I would like to argue that what Africa needs is a brand of leadership that is selfless and capable of forging a development ethos and mobilizing all the forces for development in a nation. How this leadership will materialize in Uganda in particular and Africa in general is a question that cannot be resolved by leaders themselves as evidenced in the failure of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), which is at the core of the Mbekian renaissance project. Rather, it will materialize from a combination of various internal and external forces working together.

I posit that Museveni's leadership for the last twenty-four years has lacked one core element of good leadership: selflessness. I define this form simply as a leadership that precludes aspiration for individual gain, postpones the leaders' gratification, does not seek or engage in self glorification, orients itself to the led, puts the led at the centre of its daily travails, is respectful of the led, allows for participation, is moral, and developmental. Instead of harnessing this form of leadership so as to set a precedent for those that would follow him, President Museveni has reneged on his promises to change the character of leadership in Uganda thereby betraying the trust people invested in him and the constitutional and emblematic title, "fountain of honor." Museveni has crafted a government and economy built on his personality and has almost become synonymous with the country, its politics and economy. The revolutionary leader of 1986 now claims to be the only person with a "vision" for the country. No wonder the renaissance for which he is credited is dissipating.

Through various machinations, he has ensured that no meaningful opposition blossoms in the country so that he remains the only "bull in the Kraal". Unfortunately, this has alienated the people. Therefore, Uganda's problem is not the failure to reform the economy or polity as we have already shown; rather, it is with the nature of Museveni's politics and leadership. Yet, economy, politics and development form a complex nexus, the proper management of which (through leadership) would lead to a meaningful renaissance. Here I would like to echo the words of Shettima (2007) who commented thus:

“...while some economic and physical development may be possible even in systems that are undemocratic in nature, it is difficult to conceive of the possibility of any meaningful and holistic development under a regime of bad governance and poor leadership. Underdevelopment and its many concomitant ills-poverty, repression, ethnic, religious and

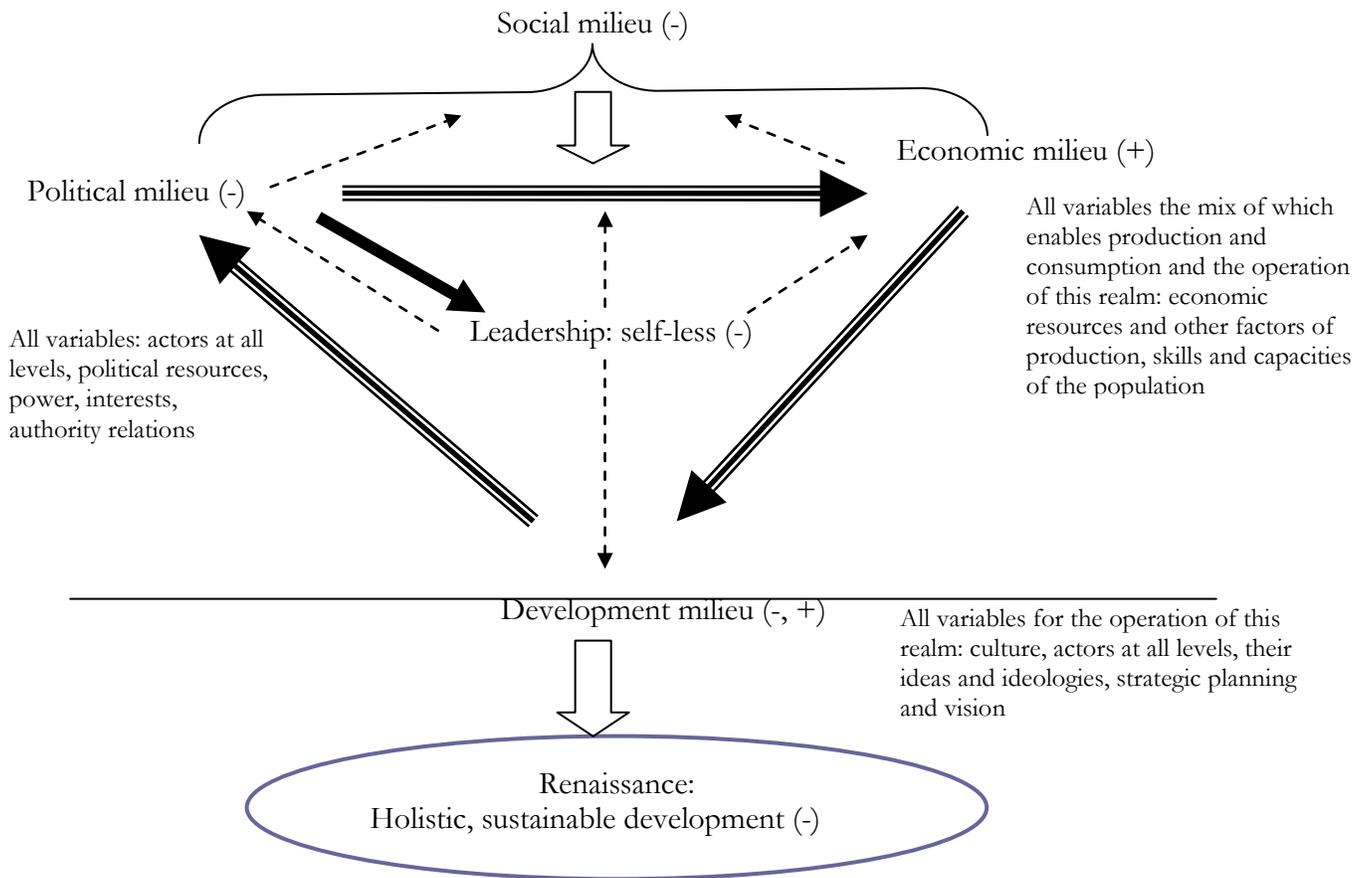
gender-based exclusions are all at once an outcome of lack of leadership, democracy and good governance” (Shettima, 2007: 3).

What Africa and Uganda in particular need is what Shettima has called “holistic development”. This is the renaissance, not mere economic growth. Yet, this development cannot be delivered by cunning but morally decadent and conceptually bankrupt leaderships common in Africa. Good leadership, particularly the selfless strand, is likely to materialize through sustained and concerted effort of key actors, forces and institutions focused on jettisoning all the immoral individual, cultural, institutional and societal tendencies, frameworks and inclinations in African polities. The conceptual framework and diagram below highlight the different milieus that produce these forces, and how they can interact to produce selfless leaders capable of delivering a renaissance or a proper balance of economy, politics and development.

It depicts an ideal situation that can apply to any African country. What follows is a brief elucidation of some of the forces that are likely to bring about the desired outcomes. The main tenets of the framework are:

1. Any country’s renaissance is *situated* in the political, economic, social and development milieus and history and is sensitive to the path trodden by its people since from this history stems the desire for a renaissance or the lack of it.
2. The social milieu is the *overarching framework* from which leaders emanate. It includes culture, various actors and their dispositions (the ‘significant others’ from whom we draw experiences, lessons and subjective motivations and who in turn draw the same from us); mechanisms and rationales for social interaction and belonging, and context for social action. The social milieu is the context in which future leader’s character is formed, nurtured and molded through the process of socialization. A dysfunctional social milieu, for example one where violence or self aggrandizement and appropriation underlie all social intercourse will have a significantly negative effect on shaping future leaders as they will imbibe these traits in the process of social interaction. In the course of executing their leadership duties, they are prone to imposing actions stemming from such tendencies on the led or, in the case of presidents, the entire polity. Yet, the social milieu mediates the political and economic spheres and situates actors in these realms (Gane 2005).
3. The political milieu is the *springboard* of the selfless leader who (assuming the social milieu is functional and capable of producing such leaders) binds society and nationalities together in a constant and ceaseless yearning for its transformation. He brings to bear on the process of development, social, political and economic forces that exist in society and those that he galvanizes and mobilizes among various actors and institutions. The leader is at the centre of the complex intersection of forces of development.
4. The development milieu is a *complex mixture* of local, national and international issues, ideas and ideologies as well as *outcomes* of efforts of various actors at these levels. It also includes the development architecture of the country-vision and strategic plans. These forces are blended together by a leader to give rise to a development ethos of the spirit for renaissance.
5. A renaissance encompasses *gradual, sustainable and holistic* development and the *emancipation* of the populace. It transcends the economic and instead marries and blends the political, economic and social realms of a society. However, it is made possible by the application of dedicated, selfless efforts of a leader. What this means is that it is expected that selfless leaders, while products of these milieus, will rise above them by realizing the onus of the responsibility placed upon them, which is the calling of leadership. If, and when this is not possible, as is the case of Uganda which this paper has treated extensively, then there ought to be resort, by members of society to the actions outlined below the conceptual diagram (*the mathematical signs show Uganda’s standing on the tenets of this framework*).

Figure 2.0 Conceptual relationships between different contextual milieus for a renaissance



Source: Author's conceptualization

Citizen action

Over the years, there has been considerable growth in the size and diversity of civil society in Uganda spear headed by the mass media, non-governmental organizations and churches. It is clear that the more government and its leadership have appropriated the state and displaced the citizenry, the more civil society has grown and become committed to securing the rights of the citizens. There is a stronger bonding between civil society and the population at all levels of society than there is with government. Therefore, despite challenges from the state, civil society is well positioned to mobilize citizens to press harder for their rights, good leadership and to press donors to put pressure on government. In Uganda, there are strong indications that this is materializing, although against many odds.

Despite the fact that Uganda's return to plural democracy was marred by irregularities aimed at entrenching the incumbent in power, it is a good sign for the reclamation of the renaissance and the search for the selfless leader born and bred from competition not hegemony. This paper has shown that although the opposition is operating in a very constrained environment, its strength is growing. However, to affect the course of Uganda's transformation and that of its leadership, the opposition needs to do much more to reach out to strategic groups in the population like universities, women and youth which in turn could help in mobilizing grassroots people. But, to be more effective, opposition groups need to clean their houses to rid them of bickering, infighting and accusations of impropriety like corruption. They also need to be the vanguard in nurturing selfless leaders. With a good image to project, they would be in position to put legitimate pressure on government to reform its practices.

The international community, particularly donors need to set standards that must be met before any form of financial assistance can be offered to any government. Concomitant with this is a need to redefine their interests in Africa and Uganda in particular in terms of what a stable, strong Africa would yield for their countries not a weak and collapsing one. After all, with globalization, developed countries can no longer seclude themselves from troubles of poor developing countries. However, donors may not do this by themselves as they may be constrained by issues of sovereignty. As such, civil society and opposition parties must do more to engage them and call upon them to pressurize the leadership to engage in democratic practices. In Uganda there have been instances where civil society like Uganda Debt Network (UDN) lobbied donors to reduce the country's debt burden.

Leadership training must be incorporated in all education curricula at all levels of the education system (see also Mohiddin 1998). By teaching virtues of good leadership and statecraft, a new generation of Ugandans could be raised that appreciates and upholds important leadership values like honesty, integrity, selflessness and service that are at the core of the leadership style conceptualized in this paper. In Uganda, all national leadership training institutes such as Kyankwanzi and Oliver Tambo are controlled by the president, headed by military officers and used for dissemination of Movement ideas or retreats when the movement is in crisis. The opposition and parliament should demand that these schools be reformed and used for training national leaders.

There is need to interrogate decadent and anachronistic social and political cultures that do not augur well for the creation of stable democracies, such as those implicated in violence, monarchical tendencies, and disorder. For example, the culture of appropriation and mercenarism (Maundeni 2004), and ethnic favoritism need to be checked. It is in this cultural milieu that future leaders are raised making it difficult for them to transcend parochial and destructive tendencies. This can be realized through more education, public sensitization and cultural reform. Within the milieu created by the interaction of all these forces, and leaders' own self examination, economic and political reforms would have a fair chance of bringing the desired benefits of growth, redistribution, poverty reduction, political stability, democracy and development, which is the renaissance.

¹ Museveni's inaugural speech 1986

² Some of us writing now were quite young and enjoying village life

³ A contradiction developed early in Museveni's regime because the socialist ideal was based on reversing the losses the population had suffered during the long years of misrule by main-streaming the general populace into the economy. The "Movement" which ought to have been broad-based, thereby compensating for the abandonment of the socialist project, ended up alienating majority of the population politically and economically when neo-liberal economic policies were adopted.

⁴ On several occasions has referred to his predecessors as "swine" and their regimes as "swine regimes" for leading the country into a mess. To Kony, his nemesis and his men, he gave the names, "bandits", "thugs", and more recently, "terrorists". It is also alleged he summed up a former Inspector General of Government (IGG) who was contesting for a parliamentary seat against his wife as a "puppy".

⁵ His Bachelor's thesis was written on the applicability of Franz Fanon's revolutionary violence to post colonial Africa. Despite many appeals to end the war in Northern Uganda through peaceful means, Museveni has always preferred the military solution. When civilians demonstrate he believes in quelling them with force, then on hindsight, talk to them. Museveni has fought wars in Mozambique, Uganda, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia-as combatant and Commander-in-chief. Probably more wars than any other leader has fought in Africa.

⁶ In the health sector, the government drew and implemented the Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP) aimed at improving service delivery in the health sector, while in the agricultural sector; the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) was designed to provide a major tool for the eradication of mass poverty through improving agriculture-based livelihoods. For the infrastructure sector (which covers transport, housing and communications), government focused mainly on transport infrastructure, particularly construction and maintenance of roads in districts.

⁷ There are many and varying figures depicting Uganda's economic growth rate for the last twenty years. Government sources suggest either 6% or 7%, while donors suggest 8%. This paper takes the 6% average in consideration of the fact that the economy has succumbed to both internal and external shocks that at different times affected projected growth of the economy.

⁸ SAPs are aimed at improving macroeconomic indicators and to this extent, they were adhered to and worked in Uganda

⁹ Commentators and educationists are concerned that the country is raising a pool of semi-illiterates who cannot take the renaissance dream any where. On the president's insistence, no pupil in primary school or secondary schools supported by government funds can be made to repeat a stream when he/she performs poorly. Unfortunately this tendency has also cropped up in higher institutions of learning.

¹⁰ Although I do not wholly share Muhumuza's (2004), view that government prioritized the social sectors at the expense of the real sectors specifically agriculture and infrastructure, as I believe that the social sectors are equally important, I concur with him on the extreme marginalization of agriculture, which is the economy's major foreign exchange earner and has cross sector linkages and effects especially on health and education.

¹¹ Max Weber's work on division of labor in society clearly demonstrates that every society has a form of division of labor. However, he makes a distinction between organic and mechanical solidarity with the former referring to the division of labor in modern, differentiated societies and the later, to division of labor in traditional societies or the less differentiated societies. For an extensive review of this work, see Max Weber (.....).

¹² See Oloka-Onyango, 2004: 37

¹³ It is important to reckon that the more Museveni entrenched himself in power, the more he sought protection of the army. But because he cannot trust anybody outside his ethnic group to protect him, he has elevated his close family members, ethnic group and son to the helm of the force.

¹⁴ Until 1995, the army continued to go by its bush war name- National Resistance Army (NRA). But concerns had grown about its lack of a nationalistic character ingrained in the name itself, being as it were a rebel army and composed of mainly officers and men from Museveni's ethnic group the Banyankole and westerners from the western part of the country where he hails.

¹⁵ Efforts to democratize were geared toward ensuring that he stays in power. I argue that what has been obtaining in Uganda during Museveni's rule is not genuine democracy, but rather one aimed at entrenching him in power forever.

¹⁶ See Van Wyk (2007: 14) on restoration of Kabaka Muwenda Mutebi. Note too the cliché that although the King may have the crown, Museveni retains the scepter-real power.

¹⁷ Many stories abound about his ability to transform into different shapes and objects that it was popularly known these powers enabled him to elude capture by government forces

¹⁸ Ideally, when Museveni stood to be elected president of Uganda for the first time, he had been in power for 10 years. It is imperative to recall that Museveni had promised Ugandans he was presiding over an interim government that would last four years. But by a stroke of politically masterly, he maneuvered another six years as he argued that the country was still going through transition and preparing a constitution upon which its future would lie.

¹⁹ Following the Constitutional Court's ruling that the 2000 referendum was unconstitutional, his RDCs mobilized local supporters in districts to challenge the courts. Consequently, when the government appealed, and the Supreme Court reversed the decision of the Constitutional Court, noting, that "to declare the referendum a nullity would have far reaching consequences". The same court "rigged" a petition made by Besigye in regard to the rigging of the 2001 Presidential elections, alleging that although there had been malpractices they were not significant enough to annul the outcomes of the elections! The courts had been gripped by fear and Museveni was free to do as he pleased.

²⁰ Van Wyk (2007:5) has explained the characteristics of patrimonial/neo-patrimonial politics as: spoils-oriented, centralization of powering one individual who uses for his self-interest and to reward loyal supporters, power being located in an individual not a traditional political environment, conducting politics in a closely-knit network of dependent relationships, personalization of power, politics as business...

²¹ According to Carbone (2005) the real role of the RDC is to act as the 'eye' and 'ear' of the president. These roles connote and belly a dangerous implication of a spy system Museveni has created up to the grassroots. No wonder almost all RDCs have a military background and must be strong Movementists.

²² Also see Manyak 2010:6 for contending reasons for creation of new districts

²³ This is not to say that there was no corruption in Uganda before or to deride the regime's efforts to fight this malaise. However, it is to show the absurdity of the situation in which a corrupt regime has trapped itself!

²⁴ According to Tangri et al (2006), then Brigadier Jim Muhwezi, who was Minister of state for primary education in 1998, was censured for abuse of office, influence peddling and failure to account for his wealth and violation of an army order. Instead the president later transferred him to Ministry of health as full minister and on his retirement from the army promoted him to major general. Later him and his deputy minister Mike Mukula (both staunch members of the ruling NRM) were implicated in the mismanagement of GAVI funds. Up to date, nothing has been done to them, other than relieving them of their ministerial positions.

²⁵ Salim Saleh has been implicated in many corruption scandals such as the purchase of junk military helicopters, illegal siphoning of natural resources from the Congo and privatization of Uganda Commercial Bank (UCB).

²⁶ See sections on personalization of power, and patronage politics

²⁷ Although the president allowed peace negotiations with the elusive Kony and his rebels, he did this grudgingly as he believed his army would end the conflict on the battlefield. Many times, the olive leaf was extended intermittently and after extended appeals from different stakeholders.

²⁸ He notes with disdain the way in which Museveni has cracked on the press, including leading journalists like Mwenda himself

²⁹ See excerpts from Museveni's letter to cabinet, some of which are cited in section...of this paper

³⁰ These were citizen-soldier training courses. Although controversial and said to be serving the indoctrination of the people by the NRM, very many Ugandans learnt the past political history of the continent and Uganda and were poised to defend themselves and the gun, which had always been used to terrorize the people could no longer serve this purpose as they were trained in its use. Unfortunately this waned off the more the goals of the revolution shifted to securing the president in power

³¹ Although there were gross violations of human rights especially in the Northern and Eastern parts of the country and few isolated incidents else where, generally Museveni succeeded in bringing them army which had in past regimes run civilian populations down into control

³² With the exception of the north and parts of the east where there has been war

³³ The ban on parties and anti-competition stance of Museveni partly explains the high vote. But this does not diminish the fact that the president was still popular then.

³⁴ It is alleged that some members of parliament were bribed with lump sums of money to remove term limits on presidency

³⁵ The figures for 2006 increased because more people wanted to vote for the opposition following the way the government had treated Besigye, the main opponent. Mwenda 2007 noted how in 2005 voter registration was stopped even when long queues of people eager to register braved the sun. Likewise, there has been high registration for next year's elections as people are eager to demonstrate, once again, their discontent.

9. References

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