Examining the Contribution of the Colonial Education System Vis-à-vis Leadership and Service Delivery in Uganda

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Abstract

Having a good command of the English language accompanied with the constitutionally required academic qualifications seems synonymous to leadership ability and better service delivery in Uganda. However, the experience of some political leaders, who have failed to offer sufficient leadership and good service delivery, yet possess the minimum academic qualifications for their particular offices is found to be controversial and raises critical reflections on the contribution of colonial education system in postcolonial societies such as Uganda. Through a postcolonial theoretical framework the paper advances a finding that colonial education in Uganda and its linguistic tool of English speaking, reading and writing has succeeded in establishing a hierarchized society that locates individuals in categories of the 'educated' and 'uneducated'. The paper thus argues that these categories have reinforced an assumption that the 'educated' individuals [as far as the colonial education system is concerned] are the most favorable in taking up leadership positions, a position that undermines the success of service delivery in Uganda.

Keywords: colonial education, leadership, service delivery, Uganda, colonialism.

1. Introduction

Being endorsed for political offices in Uganda has become a struggle for the fittest. Education acquired through the western system commonly known as formal educatiion, has the ability to play a decisive role in influencing the public on determining who leads whom especially in political leadership. This struggle seems to come with a risk of having some political leaders with considerable inefficiencies as far as leadership commitment and service delivery is concerned.[1]The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda states that for one to stand for political leadership at Presidency, National Parliament and District levels, one must have a minimum formal education of advanced level (A-level) certificate or its equivalent. The Constitution also recognizes English as the only official language. Being the country's official language used at the national assembly and a language of instruction in schools, English has therefore become a key player in the selection of political leaders.The ability to speak, read and write the English language seems to portray an academic horizon achieved by someone.

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[1] The term 'Service delivery' is used in reference to a "relationship between policy makers, service providers, and consumers of those services, and [it] encompasses both services and their supporting systems. Service delivery is a mechanism used by an organization to meet the needs and aspirations of the people it is meant to serve" (Principles of Service Delivery in Uganda's Local Governments 2013:16).

In post-colonial Uganda, education and English speaking play a decisive role in influencing the public on determining who leads whom in political offices. Individuals with speaking, reading and writing skills in English are less questioned of their ability to contribute positively towards service delivery could they ascend to political offices as compared with those that lack the good command of English. In this sense, having good command of the English language accompanied with the constitutionally required academic qualifications is synonymous to good leadership and better service delivery. This creates further consequences.

For instance, many people within the Ugandan electorate assume that a person who meets the above requirements is a "savior", and can represent them in the national assembly as well as other key leadership positions and can therefore offer better services. In most cases, one who lacks formal education and with inability to speak clear English is ridiculed and spoken of as 'illiterate' by the public. Even in cases where some people have leadership abilities but lack the minimum academic qualifications, they are often denied opportunity for leadership positions. Those who feel they should take on leadership but don't have the required academic qualifications have resorted to forging academic papers in order to secure leadership positions. In the Ugandan context, formal education and mastery of English language are fundamental for political leadership positions at Presidency, Parliament and higher local government levels. However, the experience of some political leaders who have failed to offer sufficient leadership ability and good service delivery yet have the minimum academic qualifications for the particular offices motivates this paper to question the theory that seems to argue that formal education and mastery of the English language are synonymous to leadership ability and service delivery.

The paper approaches this problem through a postcolonial theoretical framework. It advances an argument that colonial education and its linguistic tool of English speaking, reading and writing has succeeded in establishing a hierarchized society that locates individuals in categories of 'the educated' and 'uneducated'. It also argues that these categories have reinforced an assumption that the educated individuals [as far as the colonial education system is concerned] are the most favorable in taking up leadership positions. This paper is divided into three major sections. The first section discusses the western notion of education. The second part presents the theory which underpins the study. The third part examines the colonial formal education system in Uganda and explores how it defines leadership ability and service delivery in the Ugandan context. Finally the paper concludes by proposing a way forward for enhancing better leadership and service delivery in the Ugandan context.

2. Western notion of education

Everyday experiences rightly demonstrate that our human society has categorized people into the elites and non-elites groups. The elites are presumed to be "literate" or "educated" while the non-elites are "illiterate" or "uneducated". In this paper we argue that such divisions and inequalities are not a coincidence but seems to be embedded in what characterized the notion of western education before and after colonialism. Before we move forward, it is important to revisit the concept of education.John Dewer describes education as that which "signifies the sum total of processes by means of which a community or social group, whether small or large, transmits its acquired power and aims with a view to securing its own continuous existence and growth" (1978:425).Due to the need to survive individuals attempt to understand the world around them and how best such a world can be used for their ultimate survival. A critical review of this definition shows that education is a continuous process which involves imparting and receiving knowledge in order to develop attitudes, abilities and forms of behaviour which are of positive value to society and guarantee rational direction to the society. The definition seems to suggest that education, in whichever form, should prepare people to be responsible citizens. It should also inculcate the right values of selfless service towards the people.

From the history of civilization it could be rightly stated that human epistemologies have always developed in response to either immediate or eminent challenges that threaten human existence. Responses to challenges of existence have given way to broad movements within the history of education that have shaped the growth of civilization. In the West for instance, significant epochs such as Greco-Roman classicalism, medieval scholasticism, and Renaissance humanism have all emerged as epochs of western education (Gutek 1995: ix). However, although education has been described as key to opening parameters for human survival, its dispensation and availability to human beings has not always followed principles of equality as we have them today embedded in international statues. Human beings have not always been exposed to equal education opportunities. The history of western education shows that in its beginning education was seen as a privilege to certain people. This privilege took concern of certain elements such as gender, social class, and race.

A critical inquiry in the history of renowned intellectuals would reveal that certain classes of people or genders are documented to have produced more intellectuals than others. Philosophers, astronauts, theologians, geometricians, mathematicians were far by large men of certain social class across epochs of civilization. For instance, the Hellenistic formula for education, although it vigorously advocated for an education that aimed at developing the mind, body and character of human persons, such an education was not placed at the benefit of all.

In the Greek-Hellenistic world of civilization philosophizing and poetry was broadly seen as a male intellectual domain. However, it also didn't serve all males but was thought to be an activity of a few. Homers a renowned poet, whose work influenced philosophers such as Plato believed that "most men could not be educated" as they naturally lack necessary qualities. Pindas an aristocratic poet, also argued that "education be limited to those who were born "good men" (Beck, 1965:10). Pindas appears to suggest that education only polishes the natural virtues. His argument assumes that there are certain people who are naturally born with vices that limit their ability to be taught. Beck (1965) observes that "this point of view fitted well into an aristocratic and conservative social philosophy that maintained that some men are born to govern, and others to work and be ruled."

Among other factors that influenced western education is patriarchy. In the Greco-Hellenistic society, the ruling class, law experts and leading philosophers were men. Men were more thought to have the ability to engage in philosophical contemplation as compared to women. Furthermore, men unlike women were seen more favoured to produce the elite and noble class of citizens from which rulers were chosen. As such, both leadership and education were thought to be public affairs from which women were restricted. Education in the early centuries of the Roman republic followed certain patriarchal guidelines. Especially in its informal state, it was by and large, more instructive to male children and less to females. Sons unlike daughters received educational instructions in preparation for future responsibility such as serving in the army as officers. Through this education, fathers deemed it a necessity to equip young men with skills of leadership and public speaking. When education gradually transformed from informal to formal with emphasis being made on imparting reading, writing and rhetoric skills, gender bias didn't take a different course.

Riley notes that different gender expectations yielded different educational expectations for Roman children and families. Although the Greco-Roman system of education had co-educational opportunities for both girls and boys especially at the elementary levels, the system did not favour many girls beyond the elementary level (Riley, 2011:88). This is not to argue however that there were no educated women in the higher respectable class of citizens. James Bowen a renowned historian in western education remarks that "[m]ost Roman education was intended for boys but there is some evidence for the instruction of girls and even for women teachers" (1972:183). The argument that we are trying to stress is that most of the girls and women who received education came from noble and wealth families who belonged to the upper class. Notably, even in the upper class the ratio of girls who received education did not equal to that of boys from the same social class. Generally, as Riley holds, "pursuing higher education for women was regarded as not truly necessary considering their role in the Roman family and society" (2011:86).

Riley's observation is rightly affirmed by Jeffer who states: "Boys and girls in the upper classes may have been educated equally up to the time of the boy's coming of age (age fourteen), when he became a voting citizen and began preparing for a public career. Fathers in the upper classes then began taking their boys to public meetings, law courts and business meetings. The formal education of girls in the upper classes probably did not go beyond their middle teens since their arranged marriages would soon begin" (2009:255-256).

Western education was further influenced by western thinkers among them was Plato.[2] Plato's philosophical thoughts developed alongside his conviction on the role of education in the state. Education for him was a special tool necessary for the State and for living a virtuous life. Plato proposed that individuals had no choice but ought to undergo a compulsory education for their own good and the good of the State. From his point of view Plato "favors the same education for boys and girls, although he would segregate students by gender, a practice still recommended by some in our day (Lines, 2009:40). Plato believed in a natural distinction of abilities and functions. According to him, individuals are not endowed with equal abilities. While some are endowed with ability to play the role of guardians, others are endowed with the ability to be peasants.

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[2] Plato (428 BCE–c. 348 BCE) was a Greek philosopher. He is one of the Greek thinkers credited with the foundation and the development of Western philosophy. He is also credited for having founded the Academy in Athens, considered the Western world's first institution of higher learning (Berit & Strandskogen 2009:98).

Beck insists that "unlike the sophists (in ancient Greek) who held the view that society was evolving and could progress if men learned to guide their affairs effectively, Plato believed that men were born destined for a low or a high social position, for subservience or for leadership"(1965:14).

In other words the ideal state was hierarchical by nature. The education system proposed by Plato had a duty therefore to identify who belonged to either of the classes. This is reiterated by Renato that: "Plato thinks it is necessary to submit the students to hard tests capable of evaluating their abilities. This evaluation includes testing their memory, their resistance to pain and seduction, and their ability to carry out hard works. The ones approved should go on with the educational process, learning math and, afterwards, dialectics. The ones reproved should work for the community, making all kinds of services: trade, manufacture of consumer goods…" (Renato, 1999:1).

The hierarchical dimension of western education was further carried forward in Europe's mission of colonialism. Western education was believed to be the propeller that ushered civilization, enlightenment, and modernity. In western thought, achieving western education was to counteract primitivism, backwardness, and barbarianism which were seen as hindrances of human ascend to liberation and autonomy. This development though, did not happen without consequences. Western education soon emerged as a defining measure of who was civilized and who was not. It soon raised comparisons between the West and the rest of the world. The aspect of colonialism was seen as a worthwhile mission through whom the educated west could offer itself to bring civility and modernity to the rest of the world. Brutt holds:

"Above all, the civilizing mission centered upon a growing feeling that peculiar style of society, culture, and thought being achieved by westerners was somehow superior to that of the peoples of the Old World of Asia, and Africa as well as to that of the indigenous people of the New world of the America. This was the Westerners fact impelled to carry their civilization to the rest of the world, and if need be, to impose it upon others for their good as well as for the good of the West. They felt the mission to civilize those who were less fortunate or less informed or less intelligent was an obligation laid upon them either by God or by their national destiny, or by both" (1973:485).

The colonial education system was often accompanied with the stress on colonial languages. Colonial languages other than the multi-diverse languages spoken by people outside Europe simply appeared to be carrying a certain quality linked to the mission of civilization. The study of European languages such as English, French, German, and Portuguese was part of the curriculum. Although some colonial administrators encouraged educating local people in local vernacular(Snow 2009: 173-184), civilization was perceived much more possible if societies receiving instructions were well equipped with the skills to write, speak and read the colonial languages. Colonial languages where not only a tool to establish individuals who could eventually take up leadership roles along with colonial administrators, they also became a guarantee of racial differences. For instance, Brutt notes that it "seemed to be easier to believe that African blacks with no tradition of literacy were an inferior race when they found it difficult to learn Christian catechism or to read the Bible in English or French" (1973:488).

3. Discussing the theory

The expansion of Europe to other parts of the world in view of extending its power and dominance has been described and categorized under terms such as colonialism and imperialism. Human experiences and the language that attempt to denote colonialism have preoccupied human history for centuries (Horvath, 1972). Despite this preoccupation, the connotations on the meaning of colonialism have often met controversial critiques. Questions such as what is colonialism? Who is a colonialist and whom is not, still confront human intellectual inquiry. One of the stumbling blocks to the understanding of colonialism is whether the process of colonization ought to be understood in a positive or negative framework or both. But Ronald Horvath has long noted that "we can hardly talk about colonialism without referring to the way people feel about it…" (1972:45). However, is it enough to explain what colonialism is by simply relying on how individuals or communities feel about it? Or is it possible to speak of a conversional feeling of individuals that can offer the possibility of a conversional understanding of colonialism? The meaning of colonialism seems to be complex. How then can we define colonialism? Colonialism is rooted in the verb 'to colonize'.

According to Oxford dictionary the verb means "send settlers to (a place) and establish political control over it" or settles among and establishes control over (the indigenous people of an area)"[3]. The definition attempts to point out the element of *power* as being central to the understanding of the term 'to colonize'. Power in this case is symbolized by the terms 'sending' 'establish,' 'control,' and 'settlement'. In this case, to send, to establish a settlement and exercise control over a certain territory or group of people could be spoken of as having dominion over such territory. However, although the definition seems to be more political, domination may come in various forms. Such forms could include cultural, religious, economic and political.

According to Horvath, "colonialism in general terms is a form of domination-the control by individuals or groups over the territory and/ or behavior of other individuals or groups…It could also be explained as a process through which the colonizer takes control or dominates another nation or group of people" (1972:46). Historical records today indicate that for the last four hundred years Europe extended its colonial might in a systematic manner, motivated by a web of interests (Ashcroft, 2001). Such a manner included but not limited to establishing particular systems of rule. While some colonialists applied a direct rule system in some of their colonies, others opted for an indirect system. This systematic manner also included a great use of partners such as explorers, missionaries, anthropologists and traders among others who constructed certain kinds of knowledge about particular lands deemed beneficial to the colonial states. Colonialists therefore conceived their plan towards the colonization of other parts of the world outside Europe for reasons such as economic pursuits, scramble for cheap labour, demonstration of military and political power as well as being moved by senses of pride and superiority (Ashcroft 2001; Ridgell 1995; Holden 2013). Ridgell rightly states that "there was also the 'White man's burden' the idea that modern Christian Europe was obligated to help the people in the backward areas of the world"(1995:46). The relationship therefore established between the European colonialists and the colonized was not only political but also cultural, religious and economically motivated. This doesn't mean that the colonizer and the colonized were equal participants. The approach used by the colonizers in their colonies guaranteed aspects of differences explainable in terms of seniority, modernity and civilization, in contrast to inferiority, primitivism and uncivilized.

Such differences helped to demonstrate that between the colonizer and the colonized was a hierarchy and an imbalance of power whereby the civilized ruled the uncivilized and the modernized became a model of life to the primitive. Within the context of the colonized, there was a struggle to assimilate. In order to accelerate the system of assimilation of the colonized and to modernize them, the colonial masters introduced the colonial system of education. This education involved the use of the colonizer's language. While the colonial education system attempted to describe its object of study as a search for the new knowledge for a modernized and civilized society, colonial language was seen as the only way through which such knowledge could be imagined, reflected upon, dispensed and reproduced to ensure the survival of the human race. As a result, colonial education and language became tools of power. Studies such as that of Kofi Busia that emerged in the earliest years of post-independence Africa pointed out some of the influences of the colonial system of education and why it was able to attract the mind of the colonized. Busia noted of the colonial system of education:

"It introduced new ways of earning a living, and new skills and professions; work in the mine, the commercial city or harbor or the factory offers new opportunities; men have formed new associations to pursue new interests; the bicycle, the car, the train and the airplane have accelerated mobility have accelerated mobility; the school, the radio, the press and television have widened men's horizons. Possibilities not previously conceived have been revealed: that more babies can survive; and men and women's expectation of life can be extended beyond middle age; the earth can be made to yield more food for all to enjoy; more durable and comfortable houses can be built; water can be brought to the farm and distant home; men and women can be more mobile…" (1964:29).

Colonial education viewed Africans as having little or no knowledge of their own, which meant they had to learn innovative, systematic and sophisticated skills. These were believed to be impacted by the colonial education system.

4. Colonial education 'hierarchism' vis-à-vis leadership and service delivery in Uganda

The hierarchical nature that informed western systems of education found its way to Uganda through the colonial mission of civilizing the Ugandan public.

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[3] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/colonize

One of its characteristic is the establishment of levels of education that included elementary schools, colleges and Universities. Institutions of learning in Uganda as did Plato's academy follow an established curriculum that teachers and students must abide by. Aspects such as academic assessment and evaluation of students that are followed in the contemporary western education system are not unique to how Plato, the ancient Greek philosopher, had long ago thought. Plato had earlier on proposed that the best of the students had to be exposed to rigorous academic scrutiny whereby those with 'qualities' would progress to another lever of instruction. Such a theory is well embedded in the hierarchical structure of the western education process today. Universities and colleges of higher learning in Uganda seem to represent the class of students who are supposedly of a better quality. Western education systems of grading such as first class, second class or third as well as awards such as Doctorates, Masters and diplomas all symbolize Plato's hierarchy of individuals.

While the best in the academic performance seem to be rewarded with the highest grade, a student graded as least is awarded the least grade. To emphasize the difference between western/colonial education[4]and other systems of knowledge, colonial education conceived categories such as formal in contrast to informal.[5] Such categories are still present in Uganda as the case may be in most post-independent African States. In most cases, what is called formal education is also privileged to produce the formal language. Similarly, what is categorized as informal education is left for the production of informal language. But it is imperative to investigate the question of: what kind of power does language produce or reinforce in a colonial context? During colonialism, language played a great role in establishing colonial authority. Ashcroft et al. speak of language as:

"One of the main features of imperial oppression is exerting control. During colonialism the colonial authority through its education system installs a 'standard' version of the metropolitan language as the norm, and marginalizes all 'variants' as impurities… it (language) becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order' and 'reality' become established" (1989:7).

Colonial education especially in Africa intended to bring about Africans who could communicate confidently in the language of the colonisers (Mosweunyane, 2013:51).The ability to read, write and speak the colonial language also earned a certain privilege and class. Local English speakers were also most likely to win leadership roles and some could act as interpreters between locals and the colonial administrators. But what happens when the colonized speak a colonial language? Fanon, in his work "*Black skin, White masks*" theorizes the power of language. He posits that: "To speak…means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization…A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language" (1967:17-18).

Fanon's theory suggests that language as a tool of power and the means through which formal education is communicated is one of the problems of post-colonialism. Although Fanon's theory tends to meander between metaphor and the literal, it underlines the view that there is a feeling of an ontological change within the colonized. When one speaks the colonial language which is deemed superior to local dialects, Fanon holds, "he/she is elevated above his /her jungle status in proportion to his/her adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He/she becomes writer as he/she renounces his/her blackness, his/her jungle" (1967:18). This 'feeling' of an 'ontological change' transforms the behaviours of the colonized before his/her fellows. In other words, the pre-colonial identity of the colonized is subverted by the new identity intrinsically carried in the colonizer's language. Formal education in Uganda was initiated during the colonial period. It is attributed especially to the evangelizing mission of Christian missionary organisations during 1880's.

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[4]The phrase Western education and colonial education are used interchangeably to describe that form of education introduced in Uganda by the colonialists and Christian missionaries. This education introduced skills such as reading, writing and speaking in English.

[5] Formal education is defined as the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded educational system running from primary school through to University and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialized programs and institutions for full-time technical and professional training (Baguma and Oketcho, 2010:2). Informal education is defined as a lifelong process where every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment from family and neighbors, from work and play, from the marketplace, the library and the mass media. It accounts for a very high proportion of all that any person even a highly schooled one accumulates in a lifetime (Coombs, 1973:289).

However, like many other ex-colonial states, Uganda has retained its colonial master's language and the system of education as part of its national identity (Busia, 1964).Skills such as reading, writing and speaking the English language are imperative in the country's current education system. Important to note is the fact that although started on religious background, formal education in Uganda has always been under control by the State. It is the Ugandan government position that all citizens must be educated for their maximum service towards the country's national development (Mbabazi et al.2016). As per its defining character attainment of formal education is competitive and hierarchically structured. A primary level leaver is considered less educated compared to the secondary school leaver. Similarly a secondary level leaver is considered much less educated as compared to the tertiary or university graduate.

A critical evaluation of Uganda's system of education reveals that its liberation and modernizing principles inaugurate new identities and cultural spaces that separate the educated from the none/less educated. While the educated are known as '*abaasoma*'-the learned or the civilized, the uneducated are disguised as '*abataasoma'* the unlearned or uncivilized. This divide also goes further than mere words. The educated are highly perceived as capable of holding offices of leadership, whereas the uneducated are as unfit for similar responsibilities. The ability to hold office is also defined by what academic level one has achieved. Levels such as ordinary secondary education, advanced secondary education, diplomas, and degrees play a vital role in identifying which category of the educated one belongs. Such categories seem to construct social inequalities and a false assumption that an individual who has attained an advanced level certificate for instance, is ontologically better than the one with an ordinary certificate.

In a similar way, individuals who have attained university degrees may presume themselves to have been elevated to a rather 'superior class' to those who hold at most a diploma certificate. These categories and feelings of superiority resonate with the colonial education mission that championed class division between the educated and the uneducated.

European superiority was based on the conviction in the hierarchical difference of races. This hierarchy had to be expressed in carrying out the duty of civilizing and educating the lower or inferior races (Serequeberhan 2010). As such one of the colonizer's educational achievements was to expose the colonized mind to its supposedly 'inferior thinking' and understanding of the world. The claim of colonial superiority as far as its education system was concerned down played any educational structures that had advanced before colonialism. One of the ways through which colonial superiority was advanced under education was through linguistic choices. The linguistic or semiotic choices of the colonial legacy are still felt in contemporary Africa as having been established as projects of conquest and control (Mazrui, 2009:361).

In Uganda, English is the official language. It is also a distinguished medium of instruction in schools. Speaking English in many Ugandan schools is often made compulsory to the extent that students who dishonour this regulation are exposed to shame and punishments. Furthermore, as the only official language, English is a language of expression in government institutions such as the national assembly and higher local governments. This further, shades light as to why government laws and policies are all in English. Although English is still a language of minority (mainly those who have been able to go through school) in Uganda, it has become a tool of political power. As a political tool, and a sign of modernity English is employed by politicians in order to demonstrate their suitability for particular leadership opportunities. From local councillors to members of the Ugandan Parliament, English is unchallenged as a distinguishing factor between the illiterate and the literate.

During national elections where Ugandan citizens exercise their right to choose political leaders English plays a critical role in defining the capable from the incapable. While the public hilariously chant the capable names as the learned leaders, those with difficulties in English speaking are dismissed ashamedly. One of the incidences that can be pointed out is when elected leaders assemble to take the oath of offices. For instance, in the recently concluded local government elections in Uganda, those who demonstrated difficulties in taking the oath of office in English became a laughing matter as the English speakers hurriedly offered to read the oath for them while they repeated after. In his article '*Councillors should take an Oath in local language'* Boaz Muhumuza (2016) expresses how the English language distinguished *who saves whom* during the 2016 swearing in ceremonies of a number of the Ugandan councillors at local council levels.

The swearing-in of these councilors, which most television stations, radios and social media platforms have now made a habit to extensively capture, is so theatrical that it will make anybody that appreciates the queen's language both laugh and angry.

 In one of the videos depicting the swearing of local council councilors in Uganda, a female councilor is seen attempting to take the oath with considerable struggle. Despite the support, and help from someone who looks half her age the lady hardly pronounces any word correctly. In another, councilors are seen butchering the oath in the presence of a magistrate who is visibly laughing her head off but encouraging them to go on. Words such as '*solomonly*' instead of 'solemnly' and '*apod*' for 'uphold' are used, to the excitement of spectators. At another swearing-in, the Chief Administrative Officer of one of the districts who was administering the oath decided to be innovative. He read the entire oath himself and told the councilors to say the last phrase…. "So help me God." (Muhumuza, *The Observer*)[6]

From Muhumuza's observation, it seems almost *un-contradictable* to hold that English speaking defines one's position in a postcolonial state such as Uganda. Political positions are thought to be positions of power for which individuals often fight tooth and nail to emerge victors. During this season it becomes rather theatrical as candidates struggle to convince the electorate of how educated they are by attempting to speak a few words in English. Ironically, it doesn't usually matter whether the audience understand what the candidate says so long as she/he can demonstrate to have gone to school. But this observation raises significant questions. For instance, why citizens who hardly understand the English language are compelled to take oath of political leadership in English other than their local tongues? One could question further as to what extent do leaders who can't understand English claim or be expected to understand what they commit themselves to while taking the oath of office in the English language? Or can it be argued that English other than local languages communicates more the abilities of leadership and commitment to service delivery?

We argue in this paper that questions of accountability with regard to service delivery are hindered since it would be difficult to hold to account an individual for violating an oath of office which was taken in a language he/she hardly understood. Further, we argue that using English as a defining factor for leadership positions in a society where the majority are non-English speakers not only undermines the search for committed leaders but also succeeds in establishing a social divide among the citizens. We however hold that the existing social divide that seems to appear between the literate and the illiterate, the educated and uneducated, the learned and unlearned has roots in colonial linguistic project which the colonialists and missionaries established through the colonial system of education.

Gyaviira Kisitu and Errington argue that:

"The linguistic project laid a systematic legacy in which language became a tool to categorize the educated from the uneducated, by establishing reading, writing and speaking of colonial languages as the appropriate measure. While the literate individuals became those who could speak, read and write most especially the colonial language, locals who only spoke local languages remained categorized as illiterate. Language as a measure of knowledge classified the literate Africans as subjects of power, and the illiterate as objects of power. To be subjects of power other than objects of power also meant being able to use the colonial grammar books, and dictionaries following the guidelines as written down by the colonial and mission schools' masters" (Kisitu 2015:107; Errington 2008).

This is not peculiar to Uganda's situation.

For example, according to Uganda's Constitution, one may not successfully contest for offices such as Member of Parliament, District Chairperson or President without attaining an advanced certificate of education or its equivalent (Article 80(1) C, *Uganda Constitution,* 1995). With the advanced certificate of education it is assumed that the individual is educated, and learned enough to undertake leadership positions. In the Ugandan context it seems to appear less disturbing to have candidates with the minimum academic qualifications yet possess no leadership abilities. This is confirmed given the fact that the Ugandan Constitution is silent on questioning for example moral qualities, skills and experiences of the leaders before being granted green light to run for leadership positions. Furthermore, the Ugandan Constitution does not explicitly articulate terms and conditions through which elected leaders are evaluated and vetted. The minimum requirements based on the colonial education system and the ability to speak, read and write the English language unequally defines leadership opportunities across probable leaders.

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[6]Available at: http://allafrica.com/stories/201606100564.html [accessed on 17th, July 2016].

Although the Ugandan constitution rests power under people's control (article 1 *Uganda Constitution* 1995) and leadership is defined to belong to the people, the so called "uneducated" of the society do not seem to enjoy much of this provision especially when they are restricted in taking up leadership positions in society. The literacy and proficiency in English is therefore a benchmark for local elite class formation that replicates a caste system created by imperialism. Such situations are inadequate and are an impediment not only to democracy but also undermine the achievement of sustainable national and local development.

In Uganda, as the case may be in other ex-colonial contexts, categorizing citizens into classes of educated/uneducated, learned/unlearned seems to create unnecessary competition. Very often, some people who have gone through this system of education undermine and even despise those whose abilities cannot be verified on academic transcripts. This could be one of the reasons why some members of the Ugandan society often resort to forging academic certificates as the only alternative to assume the prestigious political offices. It remains a question of critical enquiry as to what extent does the contemporary education system in Uganda succeed from time to time in forming an egalitarian society where all citizens have a right to participate in the affairs of their state at all levels? Faced by the challenges paused by strict reliance on formal education in selecting leaders it may be reasonable to revisit the exercise of leadership in pre-colonial Uganda. Documented history of some Ugandan societies prior to colonialism shows that kingdoms such as Buganda, Bunyoro and Ankole among others chose leaders on account of the abilities to serve their kingdoms and chiefdoms (Kodesh 2003: 461).Although many of these leaders only had informal education, their ability to lead was less questionable. It is important to note that traditional knowledge and wisdom passed on to the young in stories and daily instructions contributed towards the creation of politically knowledgeable leaders who were able to provide services to the people.

Before the British renamed and reconfigured the territory, what is now Uganda was then an array of kingdoms…it was a homogeneous area, with a variety of customary practices, social and political structures…Elders were elected to serve on community councils…They were responsible for selecting clan leaders who, in turn, chaired the councils. Clan leaders were responsible to the council, and could not make war or peace without consensus. Similarly, elders had joint responsibility for resolving disputes (Moncrieffe 2004:10-11). It is therefore rightly suggested that the question of reading and writing was never an issue to suggest inefficiency or incapability among the probable leaders. On contrary it was commitment, royalty, hard work, demonstration of wisdom and responsibility that defined to which leadership responsibility was entrusted. It is not the position of this paper to argue that informal education is exclusively independent in conferring skills and abilities to probable leaders consequently disregarding the relevance of formal education in postcolonial societies such as Uganda. On contrary, we hold that formal education alone cannot respond to the challenges of modern Uganda with regards to good political leadership and better service delivery. It is the view of this paper that attaining the formal education qualifications, with skills to read, speak and write colonial languages is not necessarily enough to demonstrate committed leadership.

For example, recent statistics on leadership and service delivery in Uganda demonstrates how such measure still leads to begging questions especially with the appalling cases of corrupt leaders (World Development Report 2015).According to the 2008 National Integrity Survey in Uganda, about 20% of public officials were reported to have embezzled public money within their institutions (Inspectorate of Government 2008). Furthermore, despite having leaders thought to be well educated in the colonial system of education Uganda was ranked 130th out of 176 countries and territories, with a score of 29 out of 100, by the 2012 Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International, 2012). Such corruption negatively impacts service delivery and is a sign of poor leadership.

5. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to outline challenges posted by an exclusive reliance on formal education in selecting leaders in postcolonial states such as Uganda. As Uganda continues to embrace democracy, institutions of learning should not only teach learners how a democratic form of government works but also engage in participatory open forum to ensure social improvement, and a rediscovery of the traditional values initially initiated through informal education. Formal education in postcolonial societies should not be seen as hybrid that necessarily replaced informal education but a co-party in inculcating values and skills true of responsible citizens. As such, Uganda's formal education system needs to be reconstructed. Its present framework which has the ability to influence policy makers and decision making at higher levels does not seem to satisfactorily give back to the community committed leaders worth of their call to leadership and service delivery.

Could the current assessment of who leads whom at political levels be more inclusive? To what extent can informal education be utilized alongside formal education so as to equably contribute to the formation of capable and committed leaders? We therefore hold that in cases where community members have no formal qualifications in terms of education to stand for political offices despite their abilities, non-formal adult education should be provided and encouraged. This may help to provide a leeway for them to take on leadership offices and thus benefit the society.

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