

The Context of Fighting Poverty and the Process of Social Transformation in Uganda

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1.0 Introduction

For undertaking economic reform under globalisation, Uganda was portrayed as a role model in reducing poverty to be emulated by other Third World countries (Kuteesa et al., 2010). However, the poverty reduction was not felt by the majority of the people who increasingly faced economic hardships and their welfare was worsening while the poor were becoming poorer as was reflected by the voices of the affected (in Kakande, 2010). Moreover, agriculture from where the majority draw a living was performing poorly; its growth has been generally very low. For instance it averaged less than two per cent between 2004 and 2008, erratic and sometimes declining while its contribution to the GDP has greatly declined. Food crop production grew negatively for three consecutive years from 2004 to 2007 (Uganda, various). For that matter, the claimed fastest declining poverty levels are disputed because they are not linked to the local production of goods for consumption (Byekwaso, 2010). The poverty reduction to 24.5 percent in 2011 and further down to 19.7 percent in 2012/13 (Uganda, 2014) does not make sense to very many people who are increasingly facing economic hardships and consequently are fed up with the figures as reflected by the popular song of Walukagga: *Abantu bakowu* – translated to mean that people are fed with situation.

The above creates a puzzling situation that can only be resolved by understanding the context of poverty reduction under the ‘modernisation’ strategy of development. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to rethink the meaning of poverty reduction within the context of social transformation and establish the measures cleverly undertaken to achieve such a transformation in Uganda.

In the name of fighting poverty, Uganda began to seriously implement a market-oriented economic from 1987 onwards with the launch of Economic Recovery Programme (ERP). This was in line with the globally-inspired policies of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) imposed on most, if not all, Third World countries as a conditionality of acquiring credit from World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (de Rivero, 2001; Peet, 2003). The policies were generally concerned with deregulation, divestiture and compressed demand.

To operationalise the policies, the government of Uganda came up with the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) in 1997, revised in 2004 and succeeded by the National Development Plan (NDP) in 2010. The first PEAP was followed by ‘Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA): Eradicating Poverty in Uganda’ in 2000. The vision of the PMA was ‘poverty eradication through a profitable, competitive, sustainable and dynamic agricultural and agro-industrial sector (Uganda, 2000 p. 26). The mission of the plan was “eradicating poverty by ‘transforming subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture” (ibid, 27). The same principles of PMA were carried over into the Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP) that was launched in 2010. Under DSIP, the government expects to attain development through ‘development of the private sector, supported by market-led development, regional integration, continued maintenance of macroeconomic stabilisation and favourable policy, fiscal and regulatory environment’ (in Asiimwe 2011 p. 9).

Therefore, according to the strategy of modernisation, peasant farmers sometimes referred to as smallholder producers are to be transformed into commercial farmers by compelling them to produce for the market as the best way for guaranteeing household food security rather producing food for own consumption. To achieve the above objective, the government purportedly created a stable macroeconomic environment for promoting farming as a business (Uganda, 2000).



The paper attempts to answer the following questions: Did the reform, using macroeconomic stabilisation framework programme together with a series of other measures by commission or omission, really create a favourable environment for peasants to engage in farming as a sustainable profitable business? How did the mentioned measures affect the survival of peasants? Were the measures undertaken to eliminate the peasantry from the scene as a way of creating room for land grabbing currently under way in Third World countries in general and Uganda in particular? After the justification of the work, the paper discusses at length the meaning of poverty reduction within the context of modernisation and social transformation. Then it proceeds to examine the measures used to work upon the peasants as a way of promoting ‘modernisation’ and the extent the intended social transformation has taken place in Uganda. It

ends up with concluding remarks by discussing the additional measures to eliminate the peasants in the country.

1.1 Justification and the Contribution of the Paper

The Government of Uganda and the development partners, especially the World Bank, have created an impression that measures under economic reform were put in place to improve the lives of the peasants through ‘modernisation’ as a way through which rural transformation can be achieved (see for example World Bank, 1993 and Uganda, 2000; 2004). However, according to the logic of rural transformation under the model of modernisation, the peasants are considered to be a hindrance or a constraint to development and therefore should be replaced with a capitalistic mode of production (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2009). Is it possible to improve the livelihoods of the peasants while destroying the peasant mode of production? The paper rethinks the concept of ‘poverty eradication’ in Uganda within the capitalistic strategy of accumulation by dispossession and/or displacement (Guliano Martiniello, 2013).

Without considering the aim of capitalistic modernisation above, scholars have also created an impression that they are genuine efforts being made to improve the conditions of the poor in the Third World countries. For instance, it is depicted by perhaps the most commonly used textbook in Third World countries on development that: ‘No civilised people can feel satisfied with a state of affairs in which fellow humans exist in conditions of such misery, which is probably why a very major religion has emphasised the importance of working to alleviate poverty and is at least one of the reasons why international development assistance has nearly universal support of every democratic nation’ (Todaro and Smith, 2011 p. 219).

Even critical works, with putting into consideration what poverty eradication under modernisation strategy of development entails, came up with reports illustrating how the market-oriented economic reform under globalisation negatively affected the lives of peasants and agricultural development. For instance, Oxfam (2002) came up with a report that illustrated how the price fluctuations that occurred as result of liberalising agricultural marketing ruined the lives of the peasant farmers in Third World countries. Furthermore, it illustrated how the reform was not appropriate for promoting development in agricultural economies of Third World countries as clearly argued below.

When a Ghanaian farmer plants a cocoa tree, there will be a three year wait before it starts producing, and five years before it becomes fully productive. Similarly, when a Peruvian coffee farmer plants a coffee tree, the first harvest will take place in two years’ time before optimal yields occur. Although farmers can influence production levels, for example by applying fertilisers, output is weakly related to world prices. Plants will grow crops – whatever world

prices do. For household dependent on coffee or cocoa for their cash income, it may make good sense to harvest the fruit, even during periods of very low prices...

Like supply, demand for primary commodities is less responsive to price than demand for goods in other markets. When the price of cars goes down, more cars are sold; there is a strong link between price and supply. In most primary-commodities, that link is far weaker. Falling world prices have a limited impact on demand, partly because of the natural limits to consumption, and partly because the price of a commodity typically represents a tiny share of the value of the products bought by consumers (Oxfam 2002 p. 159).

This created an impression that the architectures of the economic reform were not aware of its negative effects on the peasants. If peasants are considered a constraint to development under the modernisation strategy of development and therefore should be dismantled, then the reform was intentionally designed and implemented to inconvenience and later eliminate them as a necessary outcome but not to improve their livelihoods as we are made to think by Oxfam.

The work that has so far attempted to reveal the intention and purpose of the reform was by Asiimwe (2011). Although he is still bogged down by the myth that there has been a failed attempt at improving the conditions of the peasants as illustrated by the title of his dissertation: *Peasant Struggles and Agriculture modernisation in Uganda: The failed attempt agriculture transformation for development*, he nonetheless brings out some pertinent issues on the motive of modernisation. The work questions the validity and appropriateness of modernisation strategy aiming at integrating peasant farmers into the national and international as 'commodity producers, labour source, and consumers and users of industrial, agricultural and non-agricultural in-puts (Asiimwe, 2011 p. 18). It correctly rejects the promotion of production for trade as a way of guaranteeing food security because price instability both at home and on the international market has direct adverse effects on food security of the poor and vulnerable groups. It points out that the modernisation strategy is aimed at dismantling the peasantry taken to be savages and "non-people"; it predicts 'the demise of the peasantry if the market-oriented, agro-non-traditional export promoting agriculture with capitalists ordering ends up concentrating agricultural production and marketing processes in the hands of a few private corporations, wealthy landowners, money mongers and money vultures posing as investors'.

However, the work has a number of shortfalls and is uncoordinated without a clearly spelt out argument. Although the author is aware that the modernisation strategy is premised on the assumption that the peasants are a hindrance to development, it does not develop a linkage between the economic reform and the goal of eliminating the peasantry even it means exposing them to hardships. Therefore, the work does not examine the selective state's intervention in the economy to fight the peasants, which this paper attempts to bring out. The work of Asiimwe claims that gradually the peasants have been forgotten and abandoned, especially under the new agricultural Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP). The argument of this paper is that the peasants have never been forgotten and on the contrary, they are still being hunted to be

finished off as be illustrated later. The main research question of Asiimwe's work is: 'does increased market share and export promotion as a manifestation of agriculture modernisation make any relevant contributions towards poverty reduction among rural households in Uganda?' But he does not examine the business environment created by the reform and the meaning of poverty reduction according to the context of the reform to disadvantage the peasant, which this paper attempts to assess.

The work that fits in within the scheme of this paper is by Giuliano Martiniello (2013) concerning land grabbing. However, even if it is critical of the economic reform, it is mainly concerned with how the 'neoliberal agricultural and land reforms by enhancing the emergence of more commercially oriented, large scale, farming, and agri-business paved the way for the current wave of large scale land acquisition' (p. 16). However, the mentioned work does not discuss how the market and selective intervention in the economy were used to dismantle the peasant mode of production so that capital, especially foreign capital, can take over the production process in Uganda. This paper will attempt to bring out a re-colonial trajectory that is emerging in Uganda.

2.0 Contextualising the Meaning of Poverty Reduction and Social Transformation

As has already been cited, practitioners and scholars create an impression that they are efforts aimed at improving the livelihoods of the peasants. Even critical works on economic reform, like that of Giuliano Martiniello cited above, discuss poverty in isolation from the context of social transformation, and it seems it is believed that poverty measurement is undertaken to determine the improvement in the lives of the peasants. However, the concept of poverty reduction under social transformation points in a different direction – the extent to which the peasants have been made to depend on the market but not necessarily the improvement of their welfare. The concept of rural or social transformation is derived from the philosophy of modernisation that takes development to be synonymous with Westernisation as the following illustrates.

The contemporary understanding of the agrarian question that is self-evident that mature capitalistic economies are, in an economic sense, structurally different from developing capitalist economies. It is in seeking to understand the processes by which rural structures were transformed and capital accumulation unleashed that agrarian question acquires its historical interest – in order for this transformation to occur, obstacles in the countryside to structural transformation, which are at the heart of development in its economic sense, had to be overcome. The key differences in the structures of mature capitalists and developing capitalist economies suggest that there must be changes: in the pattern of production, with a shift from an economy dominated by agriculture to an economy driven by higher-value industrial manufacturing; in produced inputs, with a shift towards capital-intensive production and technologies in both the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors; in employment, with a shift from agricultural to non-agricultural occupations; and in demand, with a formation of a home market capable of sustaining accumulation. An understanding of these historical processes does have contemporary relevance: in a host of developing and transition economies, social and economic obstacles within agriculture continue to inhibit this structural transformation of the economy, potentially constraining rural accumulation. (Akram-Lodhi and Kay p. 6).

According to the logic of development presented above, without putting into consideration the disintegrating effects capitalistic development from without has had on the economies and societies of Third World countries as will be discussed later, for social transformation to take place, capital must take over the production through monetisation of the economy (Ake, 1981). Therefore, *‘in order for peasants to be transformed, they must be in some way divorced from the land on which they work, which in turn forces them fundamental to reconfigure their livelihood strategy. No longer able to produce a part of their consumption needs, they must start to sell their labour and buy the food, clothing and shelter they previously provided, at least in part, themselves* (emphasis mine) (Akram-Lodhi and Kay p. 20). This is not linked to improvement in their welfare in any way.

As a result, without revealing the motive of social transformation mentioned above, peasants are misnamed subsistence farmers because they control their means of subsistence, and have a social support network system, and sometimes are defined as smallholder producers (Hyden, 1980). But peasants are peasants because they are integrated in the international market economy (Paka and Ebienna, 2014). Once the people in a community interact with the market to sell and/or buy goods using a currency connected to the international market, they are no longer subsistence farmers living an autonomous life as we are made to believe. As clearly stated by Akram-Lodhi and Kay (2009 p. 3), ‘peasants do not live in isolation from wider social and economic forces that are outside their control; rather, they are subordinated to those wider social and economic forces that are outside their control because of their need to obtain items they do not themselves produce’.

A peasant economy evolved in Uganda when the households, formerly undertaking production for mainly subsistence needs, were made to produce not only for own consumption but also for external forces – imperial interests through monetisation of the economy, using taxation and sometimes

sheer force ((Mamdani, 1976). Since then, monetisation of the economy continued to deepen, especially at the time of economic reform, to the extent that ‘Much of the crop is commoditised, leaving little for household consumption’ (Murindwa-Rutanga, 2005 p.56). Is this improving the living conditions of peasants?

It is falsely portrayed that a big percentage of Ugandans still live in ‘non-money’ economy. For instance, quoting the results of 2002 census, President Museveni claimed that 68 percent of household were in “non-money” economy, which in his view explains the existence of poverty in the rural areas of Uganda (Museveni, 2014). But was there any household in Uganda in 2002 that did not use money? If it existed, it means that very many Ugandans were and are still going naked, which is not the case. If 68 percent of households were in non-money economy, where did they get cash to buy the clothes they put on? Households producing for own consumption as a primary objective does not mean that they are not in a money economy. According to the logic of social transformation, the mentioned households were in non-money economy because they still produced food for their own consumption and therefore had not been totally removed from their means of subsistence.

Without revealing the intentions of social transformation, they are studies undertaken in Uganda in the name of promoting food security (see instance, Opolot and Kuteesa, 2006; Sabiiti, 2005; Bahirwa, 1999). However, deliberately, a vague definition of food security, which puts emphasis on accessibility to food, is used rather than production for household and national self-sufficiency. But accessibility does not guarantee the affordability and consequently the consumption of the right quality and quantity of food at all the times. Determining food security in terms of accessibility to food available in the market becomes tricky when the peasants get fluctuating incomes at different times of the year. If the studies were genuinely interested in food security for the peasants, the best way to determine food security in rural areas is how much

foodstuff they produce and store for their own consumption first and a surplus for sell to buy other items they do not produce as it used to be practised during the colonial and postcolonial era before the economic reform.

In line with the strategy of social transformation that aims at separating the peasants from their means of subsistence, while determining the prevalence of poverty, ‘household consumption expenditure is usually preferred over income in assessing poverty incidence,’ claiming that ‘it is better accurately reported by the households/individuals’ (Uganda (2013) p. 26), but not how best it captures life improvement. This is intended to determine how the peasants depend on the market but it is better accurately reported as is claimed. It is now clear that from the logic of social transformation and modernisation of agriculture under a modernisation strategy of development, poverty reduction or eradication does not mean improved welfare of the peasants nor guaranteed food security. For that matter, the mission of PMA: “eradicating poverty by ‘transforming subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture’” (Uganda, 2000 p. 27) had a message that could not be easily grasped by individuals and even scholars who are not conversant with the concept of social transformation and modernisation.

Likewise, the concept of modernisation that is related to poverty reduction under the scheme of social transformation also has a concealed meaning. On the surface, the PMA created the impression that the strategy aims at drastically changing how agriculture is carried out by the people involved in it. As a result, with excitement, the people of Uganda expected the plan to aim at empowering peasant farmers to use modern gargets, like ‘the use of tractors, plough discs, harrows, mechanical seed planter, weeders, chemical sprayers, combine harvesters, fertilizers, improved seeds, ground or aerial irrigation’ (Aruo 2002). The plan to modernise agriculture is attractive and if one does not understand its agenda, it would be madness to oppose it. From the way it is presented, it appeals to its victims – the peasants because the they would like to be liberated from hard labour and natural hazards like draught by modern products of science and technology – to use tractors instead of hoes and be saved from draught by irrigation. But to the architectures of PMA, modernisation meant ‘a transformation process’ (Odong, 2002) of dismantling the peasantry and even destroying agriculture. As Tumusiime-Mutebile who was the Chairman, PMA Steering Committee put it clearly:

The reason for giving priority to the modernisation of the agricultural sector is not because we want it to remain the dominant sector of the economy. The reason of putting emphasis on the modernisation of agriculture is precisely because the modernisation of agriculture will propel the process of transformation of the economy away from agriculture to non-agricultural sectors more rapidly than if we put priority on, say, import substitution. (Uganda, 2000 back cover).

Therefore, modernisation does not mean bringing about qualitative changes in agricultural production but creating conditions for the peasants to disappear as indicated by even an employee at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that:

Well, I have never quite understood from the government point of view what is meant with agricultural modernisation. Cause (sic) PMA really is a framework within which government institutions, donors, private sector can work to evolve the agricultural sector. I wouldn't call it modernisation, really because I don't know how modern is modern? Source: (Flygare, 2006 p. 57).

Therefore, according to the philosophy of modernisation, poverty reduction is understood in terms of peasants increasingly buying food from the market. For instance, after Uganda implemented economic reform, it was claimed by the World Bank (1993) that the peasants were growing out of poverty because the 'monetisation of the agricultural sector is (was) gradually on the increase' (World Bank, 1993 p. xvi) when it had been acknowledged that the farmers were being affected by declining and fluctuating terms of trade for both cash and food crops (p.xiv). Even when the peasants increased food crops for the market, the food crops were classified as non-traded (World Bank, 1993 p. 45). Meanwhile, the economic reform was being justified with other donor-sponsored studies following the dogma of the ideology of liberalism in Uganda that was not followed to the letter. For instance, Balihutu and Kanal (2001 p. 2) forcefully argued that the economic reform was based on the 'belief' that 'the private sector would be the most efficient sector to revive and develop the country's economy. The government then would focus on the provision of the most essential public goods and services'. It was claimed that the reform had had positive impacts on the livelihoods of small-holder farmers because there was growth in the

monetised sector as well as diversification into non-farm activities like motorcycle transport and brick-making. For that matter it was claimed that the peasants had moved out of poverty. Why? This is because poverty reduction or eradication according to the spirit of reform was and is not what the ordinary or innocent scholars understand but the process of peasants abandoning self-provisioning farming so that the production can be taken over by foreign capital as the paper will further illustrate later.

As a result, poverty reduction is linked to the monetisation of the economy but necessarily the prevailing conditions of existence. For that matter, to determine poverty reduction in line with the commercialisation of the economy, the World Bank came up in the 1970s and 1980s with ‘a monetary criterion that may be wholly inadequate for judging real levels of living standards (Payer, 1982 p. 55). Afterwards, ‘the \$1-a-day line was first set in 1987 dollars’ (Todaro and Smith, 2011 p. 229). Then later it was claimed that the number of people in poverty in the world ‘has been falling markedly since 1990, most conspicuously due to the progress in China’ (ibid p. 229-230). How did the standardisation of measuring poverty in 1987 cater for the past good days, especially in Uganda in 1960s, when the people produced enough nutritious food for consumption while they earned money from cash crops such as coffee (see Tumusiime-Mutebile, 2010) to live happy and fulfilling lives according to their cultural values?

In Uganda, using a monetary criterion to claim that poverty was reducing, a line was drawn first by World Bank at UGX 6,000 per capita per month (approximately US\$110 per year, based on the mean per capita monthly expenditure of 1989/90 (World Bank, 1993 p. 4), when the annual figure in dollars was almost the same as US\$100 used by the World Bank in the 1970s and 1980s (see Payer, 1982 p. 55). Then later, a number of measures to technically measure poverty reduction in the country were undertaken but surrounded with controversies and contradictions, as revealed by Kakande (2010), an advocate of the monetarist economic reform knowingly or unknowingly.

First, using a demeaning approach, it was claimed that Ugandans lacked professionals to technically measure poverty. For that matter “experts” ‘from the Universities of Oxford and Bath, in UK’ (p. 235), first designed the instruments used to measure poverty reduction in Uganda. But issues concerning development and therefore poverty reduction are not technical matters as they are cultural and political statements (Peet, 2003) and therefore are supposed to be self-defined in accordance with the national and cultural interests. This was not the case. Therefore, as a result of technicality, an absolute poverty line was constructed reflecting the monetary cost of meeting certain basic needs and fixed in real terms. It was claimed that the line was derived from food related needs and only indirectly estimated for non-food requirements. The food related needs were reduced to energy requirements, although this was a simplification, as proteins, vitamins and other nutrients are also required from food. (p. 234).

Possibly the poverty line based on energy food requirements was used to justify that poverty is reducing because they are cheaper to buy (for instance cassava and maize flour are cheaper to buy from the markets and shops in Uganda today (2016) and even in the past compared to beans and groundnuts). In addition, it seems the poor peasants are compelled by circumstances to sell their nutritious foodstuffs produced in the market while they subsist on starchy food items as reported in the press. Logically, it seems it is because now more people are buying and poorly feeding mainly on starchy energy giving foods than in the past, then poverty is seen to be reducing! This is illustrated the worrying rate of child malnutrition in Uganda (Kasirye and Sewanyana, 2011) as the number of children dying of malnutrition is alarmingly on the rise (see *Saturday Vision*, 2011 pp. 10-11).

Second, the base for measuring poverty reduction was arbitrarily set according to the 1993 food basket requirements, claiming to be a reflection of expenditure patterns of the poor then. Consequently, the claimed poverty reduction taking place in the country does not compare and contrast with the past experience before the economic reform was implemented. Possibly for propaganda purposes, the measurement of poverty is conveniently done to paint a false picture that the situation is improving from bad to better when the past is not given a due respect. Is it surprising that the people in Uganda, who are experiencing a declining wellbeing while they see the poor getting poorer, do not agree with the claim that poverty as cited at the beginning?

Third, the measurement of poverty reduction in Uganda is based on the quantification of responses to a questionnaire. This approach of measuring poverty, 'which continues to rely on absurdly lengthy questionnaires that attempt to elicit a huge volume of recall information to compute monthly per capita household expenditure as a proxy for income', has a 'measurement error' (Sender, 2003 p. 413). In addition, respondents may not reveal all the information about them as it is shameful for one to be seen as lacking basic needs since the society we live in tend to associate such a situation with laziness and improvidence (Chambers, 1983). Furthermore, human beings can easily understand the interests of the interviewers and to please them, the interviewees can respond accordingly (Andreski, 1970, Chambers, 1983).

Fourth and lastly, the measurement of poverty is based on household expenditure as a proxy for income instead of direct income without any justification at all. As if this is not bad enough, when poverty is being measured, broad-based growth in consumption expenditure, to include the rich. is considered. Kakande (2010 p.237) revealed that: 'Since consumption growth was higher in urban areas and for the rich segments of the population, total inequality and inequality between urban and rural areas increased'. This further confirms the argument that the modernisation and social transformation of measuring poverty reduction is not concerned with the improvement in the lives of individuals as already pointed out. Does poverty reduce simply

because the people in the country are spending more or earning more? What if the money spent is borrowed to enslave the people so that their property and land can be taken over in the future as is the case in Uganda (see Byekwaso, 2010)?

For modernisation and poverty reduction to make sense, it should be self-defined as already argued and cited. If they were, they would have taken into consideration the aspirations of the concerned people in a society according to their cultural values but not according to the so-called modernisation of the Western culture. As Goulet, (1996 no page) observed that development can make sense only when 'basic decisions, speed and direction come from poor nations and in accord with their traditions – not in blind imitation of practices and policies in Western industrial nations'. For that matter, poverty reduction and modernisation would not be tied to commercialisation of agriculture. Rather poverty eradication would aim at producing enough food for own consumption at the household and national level as a guarantor of survival of the people and national security. Is it a bad idea for the peasants to produce for their own consumption first as a guarantee of food security and then sell the surplus or produce commodities for the market afterwards? Can't the peasant farmers increase the production of marketable commodities for increased monetary incomes without abandoning food production for their own consumption, like they increasingly produced cash crops for export when the peasant mode of production was firmly cultivated in Uganda by the British colonialists?

Within a nationalistic framework, peasants would be encouraged to produce enough food for own consumption as a priority; the peasants would be encouraged to produce enough food not only for immediate consumption but also to be stored for the future. After guaranteeing food security at a household level, then peasants would be encouraged to produce surplus for sell according to the national strategic goals. The surplus produced for sell could be foodstuffs bought by the government to be stored in modern silos for national security; produce for industrial development as well as for exportation; and foodstuffs for selling to people withdrawn from agriculture working in industries. Generally households would be encouraged to produce surplus for sell not simply producing for commercial purposes as is the case today but for sell to become rich as a way of creating a market for national industries.

As a result, poverty reduction would not only mean boosting the incomes of the poor but also wealth accumulation by rich farmers from within in form of more livestock owned as it was in the past, land with crops on it crops as valued by the people, stock stored etc, not money (sometimes acquired by borrowing and the ownership of modern items that depreciate in value within a short time, as the vogue is today. Generally, to genuinely measure the extent to which poverty is prevalent in the country and determine as to whether it is declining or not, the income of the people must be considered as well as well as the growth of the vital sectors of the economy: not the growth in consumption expenditure and the expansion of the monetary size of

the economy as were made to believe by the advocates of economic reform like Whitworth and Williamson (2010) as well as Byaruhanga et al. (2010).

2.1 Social Transformation or Worsening Underdevelopment?

According to social transformation approach, for the agrarian question to be resolved, the peasantry must be replaced with a capitalistic class. However, for the social transformation (if it is necessary considering the problem of recessions and unemployment of the West) to be beneficial to the citizens of Third World countries, conditions for the emergence of national capitalists should exist. Agriculture should be integrated with industry so that the peasants removed from agriculture can be employed in industries in towns and towns. From the history of Western Europe, especially Britain, there was agrarian change and consequently social transformation because of the expanded market necessary for large scale production that grew out of the process of industrial revolution. Before the industrial revolution, Europe like most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Uganda, was also a peasant society with various forms of feudalism (Pollis, 2002 p.15). In the medieval village, like in Uganda, the peasants' land was broken into numerous plots adjacent to communal land over which they had public property rights. With the rising of the price of wool and hence the profitability of establishing farms, the landlords in England from fifteenth century onwards began to divide communal land and reconstitute the peasants plots into farms under one tenancy coupled with the land enclosure system that continued to exist sporadically up to the eighteenth century (Fairlie, undated). With a revolution in agriculture that saw fallow farming being replaced by the periodical growing of lucerne, turnips and fodder crops, which restored soil productivity, landlords phased out and liquidated peasants through short-term leases, evicting tenants at will under the land enclosure system (Mandel, 1962 pp. 117-118). The evicted peasants were employed in factories in towns that emerged as a result of industrialisation that simultaneously took place together with agrarian change. This is not taking place at least for the case of Uganda.

Therefore, a profitable market is necessary for commercial farming and agrarian revolution from within. Under a market economy, demand or marketing of goods by the seller at a profit, is a prime mover and stimulator of business and agricultural production (Bibagambah, 1996). As Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), 2002) remarked:

The type of economy we live in is aptly referred to as the market economy because no matter how many other factors you introduce to commercial

process, the market will always be the final adjudicator. While other factors are critical to economic endeavour, it is the market that provides the motive for all activities. Without an effective market, production no matter how bountiful is, it is more or less than useless. It is wasteful.

So long as the individuals keep on making profits in farming, correspondingly, they also keep on investing in it, increasing the production levels, improving both the means and organisation of production. The profitability encourages the farmers to move from small-scale to large-scale production and from simple tools of production to efficient technology, like the use of tractors and fertilisers. They can also buy irrigation equipments or devise irrigation mechanisms to keep on farming even during the time of draught to avoid their profit-making process being disrupted. In addition, capital from other sectors is also invested in farming business, attracted by the existing profits. Consequently, there is high demand for land and peasants with small portions are tempted by high prices to sell or are forced to sell by being uncompetitive (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2009). Customary land tenure systems and subsistence farming are eroded by the market forces and eventually die a natural death.

To emphasise the importance of the market in agricultural development, it should be understood that the agrarian revolution took place in England and the rest of the developed countries because of the market for agricultural products including food. While surpluses from agriculture (cheap raw materials from both at home and abroad) led to industrialisation, the industrial revolution in turn spurred and currently supports agricultural development. Profitability in food production happened in most developed countries because of the emergence of large working class employed in industries, which provided a steady profitable market to farmers. When local production could not satisfy the market, imports of food was encouraged, especially in Britain by repealing the Corn Laws (Fairlie, undated). And because the economy was generally growing in all sectors that were interlinked, the governments were able to put up good infrastructure to facilitate development (Ake, 1981). Later, as industrial and service sectors advanced, agricultural

production was not as profitable as other sectors, and therefore, the government of the developed countries have found it imperative to subsidise their farmers (Oxfam, 2002).

However, it is doubted as to whether the Western style of capitalistic development and social transformation can be replicated in Third World countries. 'If capital and capital accumulation is increasingly internationalised, does agriculture continue to have a role in the emergence of capital within states, or is (in the current international economic conjuncture) agricultural transformation irrelevant to the emergence of capital within a state as the circuits of capital have become globalized (Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2009 p. 6)? If capital competes for the market to make profits and accumulate wealth and considering the importance of the market in the promotion of increased production, do peasants stand a chance to grow bigger and compete with multinational corporations?

This brings to the concept of underdevelopment, which can be traced from the colonial times to-date. The failure to look at poverty reduction in terms of increased incomes through production for the improvement of the welfare of the people, especially the peasants as has already been elaborated, can be attributed to the underdevelopment process by external forces. The term underdevelopment, which means the process of destroying endogenous development (development that grows from within, is usually distorted by modernisation scholars. According to the modernisation theoretical framework, in some cases underdevelopment is understood as 'a *natural* condition, synonymous with poverty and a low level of productive forces' (in Mamdani (1976 p. 5). Sometimes underdevelopment is used to mean a country not matured or fully grown (see <http://www.ask.com>). In other respects, underdevelopment is seen in terms of a country having 'unutilised or underutilised natural resources which may be used for production to raise per capita income and standard of living' (www.yourarticlelibrary.com). On the other hand, underdevelopment is looked at from the angle of what is obtaining in Third World countries. For instance, to Todaro and Smith, (2011 pp. 59- 70; 157), underdevelopment is characterised by low incomes and productivity; low levels of human capital – health, education, and skills; higher levels of inequality and absolute poverty; high population growth rates; social fractionalization – ethnic and other divisions that bring about conflicts; large rural populations but rapid rural-to-urban migration; adverse geography; low levels of industrialisation and manufactured exports; and underdeveloped markets and poor infrastructure. In addition, they associate underdevelopment with subsistence farming, which they claim that it perpetuates poverty in affected countries or regions (p. 157).

The understanding of underdevelopment according to the modernisation theoretical framework is misleading in several ways. To say that underdevelopment is a natural condition implies that the concerned societies or countries came into existence with inborn sin. Therefore, they are

unfortunate and nothing can be done to change the situation – the affected people should resign to their fate!

On the other hand, to depict the underdeveloped countries as not fully grown or not matured is to perpetuate the myth that ‘developing countries’ are on the way to becoming like West when the strategy has miserably failed and actually some countries are becoming worse off (see de Rivero, 2003). Even the World Bank acknowledges that economic growth under modernisation model of development does not necessarily bring about social improvements in Third countries as the following illustrates. ‘But history offers a number of examples where economic growth was not followed by similar progress in human development. Instead growth was achieved at the cost of greater inequality, unemployment, weakened democracy, loss of cultural identity, or overconsumption of natural resources’ (World Bank undated p. 8).

Moreover, it is absurd to argue that underdeveloped countries have underutilised natural resources that require exploitation for raising per capita income and the standard of living because the resources are actually largely being exploited for the benefit of multinational corporations without raising the standards of living for the majority of the people in Third World countries. The issue of underutilised natural resources is raised knowingly or unknowingly for external forces to be invited to utilise the resources to ‘full capacity’ for the benefit of investors. If the natural resources in the so-called developing countries are underutilised, why are the countries faced with environmental degradation characterised by soil exhaustion resulting from overuse of farmlands; deforestation and swamp reclamation as a result of pressure for land; over-fishing (like in Lake Victoria (National Environment Management Authority, 2014) etc?

As Kanyandago (2002; 1998) correctly argues, Africa, which is underdeveloped, has resources but is not developing. It is impoverished by denying the people to be what they are culturally and consequently being prevented from enjoying their resources. As a result, the resources of the so-called developing countries are gradually being depleted without building the local productive capacity to propel development forwards. Productive capacity is defined qualitatively as ‘the productive power of a given unit while quantitatively it can be measured in terms of increased output of existing units, enhancement of existing units, and the production of the wholly new items’ (Berger 2008 [1992] p. 12).

To look at underdevelopment from the point of view of its characteristics by modernisation scholars already mentioned above is to miss the point by design or omission. The mentioned characteristics of underdevelopment are symptoms (like headache to malaria) rather the cause of

underdevelopment. For example, the existence of massive poverty, low literate levels, low levels of industrialisation and manufactured exports, and poor infrastructure, ethnic divisions, etc are corollaries of a historically distorted development not normally functioning.

In response to the misleading approaches to the understanding of underdevelopment discussed above, there emerged the neo-colonial dependency theory (although there was a counter-revolution against it during the period of macroeconomic stabilisation). The neo-colonial dependency theory, which was formulated by mainly scholars from Third World countries and adopted by some scholars from the West, interpreted underdevelopment in terms of the socio-economic distortions in the Third World countries, caused by external capitalistic forces, which historically and in phases have disrupted, disarticulated and continue to hamper normal development in the affected countries. Accordingly, underdevelopment is a phenomenon traced from the time when Third World countries got into contact with mercantilist Europe under transition to capitalism. Scholars of dependency theory have described and defined underdevelopment in various ways.

Leys (1975 pp. 8-9) talks of development of underdevelopment that started when the countries of present Third World countries began to be progressively integrated in the international but unfair capitalistic economy. In the process, the development of economies of the Third World countries was disarticulated; the economies do not have inbuilt upward dynamism. Mamdani (1976 p. 6) defines underdevelopment as 'a process that subordinates production in the territorial economy to the accumulative needs of metropolitan capital'. For that matter, the economies of the Third World countries were deliberately structured to become export-import oriented in accordance with the imperial interests of securing cheap raw materials and markets then. As a result, the economies lack forward and backward linkages and they are neither independent nor integrated and consequently the surpluses from agriculture are not usually reinvested within the sector and other vital sectors, like industrial development. Instead the surpluses are siphoned off through trade-related activities (see Mamdan (1976 pp. 144-145). It is even now acknowledged by the macroeconomic stabilisation advocates that the dominant private capital within the economy is now more profitably invested in services but not in agriculture and industry (see Muhumuza, 2011). Consequently, as Berger (2008 [1992] p. 12) points out, underdevelopment is a regression of local productive capacity in a qualitatively different structure.

However, because the dependency theorists were associated with socialism, when the Eastern Bloc collapsed and the claimed new world order under globalisation emerged, the theory was stigmatised as being dated and consequently suppressed. The moment gave the modernisation theorists a leeway to mislead the people of the Third World countries by propagating theories, like macroeconomic stabilisation, which worsened underdevelopment. But the collapse of socialism did not take away the issues raised by the neo-colonial dependency theoretical

framework. Unless the conventional scholars of the West who talk about human rights (including the freedom of conscience), are convinced that intellectual dishonesty designed for looting resources and grabbing land while causing untold suffering to the people in underdeveloped countries as well as killing their culture to stem any possible resistance) is the best form of civilisation, the concept of underdevelopment in accordance with the logic of neo-colonial dependency theory still makes a lot of sense even today.

Therefore underdevelopment in this paper refers to the abnormal foreign-imposed capitalistic development currently taking place in the Third World countries whereby endogenous development is progressively being eroded by external forces. Underdevelopment deepens and continues to negatively affect the livelihoods of the masses by gradually killing their means of subsistence to bring about the so-called social transformation that has displaced peasants from rural areas as a way creating room for land grabbing currently taking place in Uganda, Africa, and Third World countries generally.

From historical experience, the transformation of agriculture through commercialisation under a capitalistic strategy of development, does not necessarily lead to the improvement of the wellbeing of farming communities because even if peasants earn more in monetary terms, they spend it on increased requirements. Moreover, they lose the opportunity to plant a variety of food crops for nutritious traditional dishes or they are exposed to food insecurity because the money they earn from their commodities might be used to buy items of vogue, rather than food (Payer, 1982 pp. 2017-223). Killing self-provisioning agriculture, misnamed subsistence, increases vulnerability of the farming communities to food insecurity; it increases the dependency of the majority peasant farmers on the market and therefore external forces (Asiimwe, 2014) who are now in position to determine their fate as will be argued and illustrated later.

3.0 State intervention in the Economy and Environment for Farmers in Uganda

When the erstwhile revolutionary NRM came to power, it had the strategy of building an independent, integrated and self-sustaining economy and therefore was not interested in using the market forces to promote development. Nor was it keen in promoting the production of traditional cash for export, like coffee, tea, cotton etc. Therefore, it attempted barter trade to avoid the shortage of foreign exchange for imports and encouraged farmers to grow non-traditional exports, like maize and beans. As a result, the government encouraged the production of non-traditional cash crops and the peasants produced them in large quantities. But the government lacked enough local revenue to buy the produce forcing it to borrow from the central bank. This is said to have caused inflation (Byaruhanga et al., 2010). Coupled with the collapse of socialism, the government was forced to abandon its strategy of building an independent, integrated and self-sustaining economy and adopted an economic reform sponsored by the donors.

Whereas under the economic reform, it was claimed that state intervention in the market distorts prices (Whitworth and Williamson, 2010), in reality the state actively intervened in the economy using various measures (indirect or direct) to disadvantage the peasants while purporting to be promoting ‘a profitable, competitive, sustainable and dynamic agricultural and agro-industrial sector (Uganda, 2000 p. 26). The liberalisation of the agricultural sector to expose the peasants to the shocks and stresses of the market was one of the measures used to make farming, especially the growing of food crops, unprofitable. This was accompanied by other measures and a series of state interventions in the economy (including deliberate omissions) as a means of dismantling the peasantry to promote the so-called rural/social transformation already discussed.

Under the strategy of liberalisation, price controls were removed, state support given to farmers removed and marketing boards dismantled (World Bank, 1993). This left agricultural development and peasants farmers in the hands of the market, which was being manipulated by the state. As the government claimed to follow the path of free market economics, it undertook macroeconomic stabilisation to squeeze out and limit money in circulation in the name of controlling inflation, which ended up by compressing demand to bring about a ‘downward pressure on real food prices’ Uganda, 2000 p. 6) grown by peasants. The policy of compressing demand within the economy commenced with the currency reform of 1987. The reform struck off two zeroes from the old currency along with 60 percent devaluation, as well as an imposition of a conversion tax of 30 percent (Byaruhanga *et al.*, 2010 p. 53). Under the currency reform, Uganda Shillings (UGX) 1,000,000/= was exchanged for UGX 7,000/=. While the conversion tax physically withdrew 30 per cent of the money from circulation at ago, the devaluation of the Uganda Shilling further withdrew money from circulation gradually. By 1991, Uganda currency had depreciated by over 17-fold (World Bank, 1993). The currency reform and the devaluation that accompanied it caused the terms of trade for farmers, especially those producing food crops and rearing animals, to decline (World Bank, 1993).

An analysis made on price changes and the resultant terms of trade by the author in Kigarama Village in 1993 brought out a sad story of the peasants. While the price of a bar of soap rose from UGX 300/= it cost in 1990 to UGX 800 in 1993, the price of an average bunch of *matooke* declined from UGX 1000/= to UGX 500/= – half of what it used to fetch in 1990. When a peasant could buy three bars of soap in 1990 from one bunch, in 1993 s/he had to part away with almost two bunches of *matooke* to buy one bar of soap! In 1990, an average cow would be sold at UGX 100,000/= while in 1993 it would be sold at only UGX 70,000/=. In 1990, student in a nearby Kamuronko Senior Secondary School paid UGX 20,000/= as fees per term while in 1993, the same parent of the student had to part away with UGX 70,000/= per term, which meant that in 1990, a peasant required one cow for his/her child to complete one year in a senior secondary but in 1993 the money from a cow would cover the fees for only one term (pocket diary).

The sad story of the peasants in Kigarama Village is corroborated by other studies in Uganda, some of which had been carried out before the reform was adopted and seriously implemented by the NRM from 1987 onwards. The studies showed that the market-oriented reform did not improve the lives of peasant farmers. Before the NRM government adopted the economic reform started by the previous regime and later abandoned, an investigation carried out by Chango Macho W'obanda (1985) had revealed that the economic reform did not encourage investments in productive sectors of the economy like agriculture; net income to peasants was declining as the prices of commodities they were buying from the market increased sharply more than the prices they fetched from their produce; and land for farming was losing fertility as the peasants did not have the money to buy fertilisers to renew it.

Studies conducted after the reform had been adopted and implemented by NRM government, further established that the economic reform had failed to promote the adoption of new technologies with the agricultural sector relying on the 'caprice of nature, especially weather', and noted that 'this has been a serious source of vulnerability and food insecurity'. The private sector had failed to 'replace the role of public institutions in input and credit delivery'. 'Rural poverty had not been reduced' while costs of inputs and imports had increased much faster than returns from tradables keeping peasant producers in financial deficit and unfavourable terms of trade'. 'Liberalisation and privatisation under an imperfect market structure did not produce competition... positive effects on farm gate prices had not been passed over to the farmers' (Babigambah, (undated pp. 18-19),^[2]) 'Although commodities were sold on cash terms, the prices were not stable; more often they fluctuated far too low for the farmers to realise any meaningful returns' (Manyire (undated p. 51). The economic reform had generally constrained Uganda's ability to build domestic industrial and agricultural capacities (Kiiza et al., 2006 p. 77).

Although some of the studies above had been sponsored by the donors, the government continued to implement the reform associated with the purportedly market liberalisation while undertaking macroeconomic stabilisation to compress demand accompanied by a series of selective interventions in the economy to accomplish the goals of rural/social transformation already defined. Because of the purportedly market liberalisation, the peasants continued to experience ruinous low and fluctuating prices for their produce (both cash and food crops) as the available information shows.

Periodically, farmers in Uganda, especially the peasants, have been producing large quantities of maize but facing the problem of market whereby they usually get fluctuating and extremely low prices that do not make economic sense. In 2001, the price of maize went as low as UGX 30/= per kilogramme. Later in the year, it slightly rose to UGX 50/=. Even at such low prices, there

were few buyers! The worst hit districts were Masindi, Kapchorwa, Kamwengye, Kasese, Iganga and Mbale (Mulumba, 2001 p. 16).

The experience of John Okello, a maize farmer in Masindi District below illustrates how maize farmers were frustrated in Uganda.

I am a maize farmer based in Kigumba in Masindi district. I have been in this business for two years now. Recently at the beginning of February we got loans from the bank to grow maize. By the time we got loans the price of maize was Shs. 200 per kg. We got these loans under the help of “Idea Project”, a USAID funded project. Before we got the loans, Idea Project helped us how to measure “Cash flows” and the cash flows indicated that in order to get profit you would sell maize at Shs.200 per kg. But right now, maize is Shs.50 per kg. and the cost of production is Shs.100 for farmers using scientific methods of farming. Price being Shs.50 and the cost of production being Shs.100 means that farmers can’t pay their loans. I am appealing to the Government through the Ministry of Agriculture to act sooner than later before things run out of hand. This situation has made a farmer poorer than before. If the government does not come with a solution, it means modernisation of agriculture won’t work. (*New Vision*, 2001, 29 September p.10).

Again in 2010, there were bumper harvests of maize. Although the price of maize had gone high to about UGX 600/= considering the changes that had taken place over a time, again as before, the maize prices went down to as low as UGX 150 per kilo (not even a tenth of a dollar then) in some parts of the country. But the farmer’s overhead costs had not decreased; on the contrary they were on the rise (Ssali, 2010 p. 23). Like in 2001, farmers earned less than production costs (Kato, 2010 p. 27). This made farming a loss-making business.

To the strategist of social transformation intended to separate peasants from their means of subsistence, the loss-making business of growing maize was blamed on the peasants for not growing high value crops for cash (not for own consumption) as well adding value to their produce (Muhakanizi, 2004; Uganda 2010).

But under the reform not only food crop farmers have incurred losses as a result of price fluctuations. Cash crop farmers who may also grow food crops are affected as well. This implies the destruction of the peasantry class in line with the logic of social transformation already discussed.

While manipulating the market using macroeconomic stabilisation to engender downwards pressure on food prices as already cited, without allowing market forces to determine what is to be produced as was claimed by the ideologues of neo-liberalism, the government campaigned for and actually intervened in the economy to promote the production of agricultural export commodities. When the economic reform was adopted by the NRM government, rather than the market, the government encouraged the farmers to revive the growing of the traditional cash crops in addition to the introduction of new ones.

At first, there was the revival of coffee growing that had almost been almost been abandoned in the past because of the low state fixed price its farmers were getting. Initially, the liberalisation of coffee marketing appeared to be bearing fruits. With the removal of price controls, taking advantage of the favourable international commodity price of coffee reigning then, peasants reaped big by growing it. Actually, the success of the policy of liberalisation in promoting growth and reducing poverty in Uganda (poverty reduction understood in the ordinary sense) is usually associated with the period of coffee boom (see Whitworth and Williamson, 2010).

However, within a short time, the price of coffee nose-dived. By 2002, the price of coffee had declined by 70 percent of 1997 level (Oxfam, 2002). As a result, in Mpigi District, the price the farmers were getting was so low then to the extent that they stopped picking its ripe beans from gardens because it was not worth the effort and therefore could not afford school fees for their children (Oxfamb 2002 p.11). The decline in prices seriously affected household who decreased coffee production. As if this was intended to achieve the objectives of social transformation of dismantling the peasantry, the government did not intervene in the market to prevent the price of coffee from falling to the record low level in 2002, compared when the government imposed a Coffee Stabilisation Tax in 1994 following a sharp rise of price in the international market (see Cawley and Zake (2010 p. 105).

However, the declining coffee prices did not only affect negatively the household incomes but also national income as Oxfam observed.

In 1994/195, when coffee prices were high, the country's export revenues from this crop amounted to some \$433m. In 2001/01, Uganda exported roughly the same volume, but it earned the country just \$100. To put this in context, the revenue gap was equivalent to more than three times the amount that Uganda received in HIPIC debt relief in 2001. (Oxfam, 2002 p. 152)

From this observation, it did not make sense to increase the production of coffee under the declining prices and by implication, the economic reform was not bothered with balance of trade deficit problem the country is faced with (Tumusiime-Mutebile, 2015) possibly to make Uganda get entangled in debt as it is currently. Cash crops continue to experience price fluctuations and yet their production continues to be encouraged (see Muhumuza, 2011).

The growing of other traditional cash crops has also been affected by declining prices. For instance, the international price of cotton decreased by 45 percent between 2003/4 and 2004/5, seriously affecting the incomes of farmers in Northern and Eastern Uganda where it is mainly grown. Again in 2010, even organic cotton could not get market in Northern Uganda (Kasita, 2010 p. 28). Regarding tea, which has not experienced price volatility on the international market, at least compared to coffee, its out-growers are not paid according to the international market price. While under the liberalisation of agricultural marketing price controls were removed, this did not benefit tea out-growers in the country. As established in 2012, 'On average, prices paid to tea leave producers were 27.73 percent below the reference price. The observed indicators suggest that while tea factories are able to receive the full reference price, these incentives are not shared along equally along the value chain' (Kiwanuka, and Ahmed, 2012 p. 3). As a result, according to some informants, tea growing has brought misery to the people, especially in western Uganda. The low price of tea out-growers get in the local market has been serious to the extent that it was an issue raised during the presidential campaigns in late 2015 in Kabarole District. According to informants from Kabale District where the growing of tea has recently been introduced, peasants grow it because there are limited opportunities available in the area for earning an income to survive on. This is in line with the logic of agricultural modernisation through commercialisation to make peasants depend on the market so that they can be compelled to provide labour to the owners of capital who sell the tea grown on the international market.

The misery of tea out-growers in western Uganda is shared by sugar-cane out-growers in eastern Uganda, especially Busoga region. According to what was witnessed by the author in 2001, a big number of households in the above-mentioned region were maize growers but were discouraged by the fall in its price then. They resorted to the growing of sugarcane as out-growers for sugar factories in the area, which appears to be a more paying activity than maize growing. However, they have been exposed to food insecurity. According to a Special Report of *Daily Monitor* in 2013, it was established that 'more land is (was) being allocated to

sugarcane growing, leaving tiny holdings that cannot be used for sustainable food production (Mufumba, 2013 p. 13). According to an article published in *New Vision* of April 2015, sugarcane has caused food scarcity in Busoga region. Poor peasants rent out a large portion of their land to rich sugarcane out-growers, remaining with virtually no land to cultivate food for own consumption. It was reported that the poor peasants were compelled by the necessity of cash to put the remaining land under sugar cultivation. As a result, it was found out that there is food scarcity in the region; most of the households survive by buying food from the market, not produced in the area but purchased from as far as Mbale (Mufumba, 2015).

This is not to mention the dependence of out-growers on factory owners for the market of the sugarcane grown as well as other inputs. A study carried out on sugarcane growing in Rwanda highlighted how the out-growers increasing became dependent on Madhvani Group, which owns Kakira Sugar Factory in the above-mentioned Busoga region. The sugar factory company determines 'non-negotiable prices, decides when the cane is ripe, and prevents out-growers to be present when the harvest is being weighed (Weldman and Lankorst, 2011 p. 8 in Giuliano Martiniello, 2013 p. 13). As a result, many outgrowers have been entangled in debt. It would be surprising if this did not apply to the sugarcane outgrowers in Busoga region.

Naively, the local leaders in Busoga, without understanding the purpose of modernisation and therefore social transformation, attempted to put in place a law compelling peasants to reserve land for growing as guarantor of food security for homesteads (Mufumba, 2013). This would mean the state acting against the objectives of attaining modernisation – killing the production of food for own consumption so that the peasants can eventually disappear. The law was never put in place. The sorry state of affairs engendered by modernisation policies is to be extended to northern Uganda initially under the Amuru Sugar Project, a joint venture between the Madhvani Group and the Government of Uganda but being resisted by the people in the area (Giuliano Martiniello, 2013 p. 11).

Another agricultural commodity encouraged and praised for generating revenue to the government is tobacco growing. However, tobacco has not only kept the peasants growing it in poverty but also has had devastating effects on the environment. Peasants cut down trees to provide fuel for curing tobacco leaves as well as for the construction of curing barns (Nabusayi, 2007. Sometimes the tobacco companies do not pay farmers until the companies are sued (*New Vision*, 2015 p. 8).

When the price of traditional cash crops, especially of coffee, affected the farmers growing them, without considering the losses incurred Muhakanizi (2004 p. 20), a bureaucrat from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED), encouraged the farmers to shift to what he termed as high value crops. This was in line with the post-colonial strategy of export diversification (Ake, 1981) but this time round promoted while discouraging the growing of food crops for own consumption. A number of high value non-traditional cash crops have been

promoted but like other cash crops have exposed peasants to food insecurity. One of the high value crops that attracted the interest of farmers was vanilla because at one time its price was so good. Between 2002 and 2003, the price of vanilla was very attractive selling at UGX 150,000/= a kilo and as a result, a number of people rushed into grow it. However, within a short period the high price it was fetching then nosedived, forcing farmers to abandon the growing of the crop. By 2009, the price of vanilla had dropped to UGX 3000/= a kilo. Farmers abandoned the growing of the crop even in Mukono District where it had long been cultivated (Muzaale, 2009 p. 27). From what was physically witnessed, some farmers uprooted vanilla crops when the price went down before earning anything from the investment made therefore making farming not only a risk business but also a loss-making one despite the claim that the economic reform was undertaken to make farming a sustainable profit business.

While the peasants have been frustrated by the growing of both food and cash crops, they have also been advised to add value to their produce. Within the modernisation strategy, generally, the government of Uganda led by President Museveni has for a long time campaigned for adding value to locally-produced items, especially agricultural primary products for export. To an innocent observer, President Museveni is a nationalist who is campaigning for value addition to locally produced agricultural products so that his people can earn from them. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Value addition implies standardisation of the items produced. As Asiimwe, 2011 p. 21) argues: ‘The standardisation of production based on rules and regulation of the market and capitalistic interests demand that peasants give up their economic autonomy (the negative side and become dependent on the market and market related institutions as the pattering for their inputs and outputs’. Curiously, President Museveni has promoted value addition on bananas produced in the country under a project under the Presidential Initiative on Banana Industrial Development (PIBID). However, banana, unlike maize farmers, have not been having the problem of the market apart from the inconveniencing transport costs that bring about a big difference between farm-gate and market price in towns and the city Adding value to bananas by making banana flour, as is being experimented, will transform the popular local staple crop now eaten by many ethnic groups in Uganda into an export commodity – a move away from local needs (Asiimwe, 2011).

With the manipulation of the market while waging war on what is termed as subsistence farming, the growing of non-food crops, including non-traditional cash crops, to earn money is slowly taking root in Uganda. For instance, peasants in Kabarole now grow onions, ginger, garlic for sell in the market instead of traditional crops like millet and potatoes (interview). This applies to Kabale and Mpigi districts (Observation by visiting the districts). It seems this is the trend in the whole of Uganda. According to the information gathered from individuals the author has interacted with from the various parts of the country, a big number of peasants now depend on the market for their food requirements, especially maize flour commonly known as posho. The people in rural areas are now net food buyers (Akello, 2011). This is corroborated by other proxy indicators. In the past, when the people from urban areas would go to the rural areas for

ceremonies such as weddings, burials, and end of year festivities, they would return to towns loaded with foodstuffs. This time, it is the reverse. Town dwellers these days carry the foodstuffs such as rice and posho to rural areas when going for such ceremonies. According to the spirit of capitalistic modernisation, indeed rural transformation is taking place.

3.1 Technological Adoption

While the government has been using the commercialisation of agriculture while manipulating the market to kill agriculture, especially the growing of food for own consumption, it is also technology to dismantle the peasantry. As Mamdani (1976 p. 13) remarked: 'Neither technology nor technocracy are neutral. Both serve those who are in power. Ideology informs technology, while technology is one way of implementing ideology'. Under the capitalistic ideology of modernisation, contrary to the popular expectation of the people in Uganda, technological acquisition under PMA was not about the use of modern gadgets but mainly concerned with peasants buying and adopting new seed varieties as well as animal breeds – not the use of modern machines and production techniques. It was pointed out that: 'Research must emphasise development or importation, adaption and adoption of improved high yielding, disease and pest resistant plant and stocking material' (Uganda, 2000 p. 51). At first, within the liberal framework of World Bank and IMF, the improved seeds were to be demand-driven (Asiimwe, 2011). However, the theory and practice has changed with time and the state now plays a big role in proving the seeds as will be illustrated shortly.

The issue of promoting the adoption new seed varieties as well as animal breeds is in line with modernisation strategy of taking away the control of the means of subsistence from the peasants. If the improved seeds were meant to increase productivity, considering the loss-making business farming has been turned into as has already been discussed, does the adoption of improved seeds make sense? If the peasant farmers have been making huge losses with limited expenditure on inputs, what is the essence of increased production using high yielding seeds? Within the strategy of modernisation and social transformation, it can be inferred that the business of improved seeds has a hidden agenda of private companies making money from peasants while still in existence but also of eventually eliminating them. The inference is given more credence by the interest the Government of Uganda has been having in contracting seed and agro-genetic propagation to provide improved and other and other planting materials on commercial basis on long term framework (Uganda, 2011). As Charles Benbrook, a research professor at Washington State University in the US observed that: 'If you put control over plant and genetic resources into the hands of private sector... and anybody thinks that plant breeding is still going to be used to solve society's problems and to advance food security, I have a bridge to sell them' (in Parker and Ryan, 2014 p. 20).

As a result, by 2004, farmers had already been dependent on multinational corporations for improved seeds as Mulumba (2004 p.16) established that seed companies had captured the maize growers in Masindi district. Consequently, 'The trend indicates that either the farmers' traditional systems of keeping seeds are breaking down or farmers appreciate improved seeds more' because 'seed companies...encourage perpetual dependence' (Tennywa, 2008 p. 3). According to Dr Titus Alicai, a plant researcher in Kawanda Agricultural Institute, 'In the first season of planting, hybrids will give very high yields under good management, but this could reduce if such seeds are planted the next season. For this reason hybrid seeds have to be obtained every season if the farmer is to get the same high yields' (in *New Vision*, 2012 p. 18). Therefore, under PMA, Ugandan farmers have been made to depend on commercial seed companies, unlike in the past when they used to save their own seeds for replanting.

To make matters worse, although the so-called improved hybrid seeds are said to be high yielding, Oxfam (2002 pp. 222-3) pointed out that the high productivity attributed to them is controversial. It can be achieved under ideal conditions usually available under experimental situations. Under the conditions of poor soils the poor peasants have access to, due to exhaustion out of repeated tilling; the high productivity hyped about may not be possible unless fertilisers are used as extra input. Moreover, these seeds are adapted to pesticides manufactured by the multinational corporations, whose market is promoted by the popularisation of the hybrid seeds. The issue of added costs to the peasant farmers is not only to make farming even more a loss-making business but also to create a market for private company seeds that are owned by or associated with foreign companies. The whole scheme is to place the production of food process in the hands of the business empire of multinational corporations (Asiimwe, 2011. This is the spirit of social transformation.

As if this is not bad enough, the story of improved seeds in Uganda has been full of controversies. For instance, before the introduction of clonal coffee, the disease of coffee wilt had never affected Ugandan coffee farmers on the scale that was witnessed in the recent past. Likewise, before the introduction of the so-called improved banana suckers for planting, the country had never been ravaged by banana wilt as it happened, especially in western Uganda. Why did the new crop diseases emerge when the so-called improved seeds given to farmers are supposed to more disease resistant than the old ones? Banana crop, which produces high yields with minimal efforts, has been staple food in Uganda as well as being a symbol of wealth for a long time. Before the introduction of the current genetically propagated planting materials, the people of Uganda had on their own propagated about sixty species of bananas. In addition, a bananas garden, if well maintained, could last for sixty years if not more (Reader, 1997 p. 293).

After the activities of Western research and plant genetic manipulations, this important staple food and symbol of wealth in Uganda was ravaged by banana wilt. According to the observations of farmers, the deadly disease sprang from where the genetically manipulated so-called improved

suckers were planted. For instance, according to *Mzee* Martin Barijunaki of Kigarama, a farmer but also retired teacher, in his banana garden, the banana wilt disease sprang from where an improved sucker breed was once planted (Byekwaso, 2012 p.21).

Other crops have been affected diseases after the introduction of the so-called improved seeds. Cassava, another crop that can readily be propagated from short stems and whose mature tubers can be stored underground in the soils for a period of up to two years (Reader, 1997 p. 405) is now frequently attacked by diseases as is usually reported in the press. In addition, some of its propagated varieties given to farmers for planting, like 2961 type, do not yield any tubers at all (Uganda Debt Network, 2011 p. 18).

While cassava, which can be left in the gardens for a long time as a food reserve is frequently attacked by diseases after the introduction of so-called improved varieties, the current genetic researchers have propagated a type of sweet potatoes in Uganda, whose longevity underground in the soils is also affected. In a discussion held with farmers in Kigarama village (August 2011), they pointed out that although the new seedlings of sweet potatoes (*emikamba ye-ebiribwa*) currently being given to farmers under Naads programme mature within three months, unless their tubers are harvested at that time, they rot immediately. As a result, the traditional practice of storing sweet potatoes in the gardens for a long time as guarantee against food scarcity has been undermined. Is this a coincidence with cassava being frequently affected by diseases as observed above? (Byekwaso, 2012). It is not a surprise that after the introduction of improved seeds, the incidence of crop disease has increased because genetic engineering reinforces uniformity making the whole agricultural sector susceptible to diseases (Hockridge, 2011 in Asimwe p. 25).

In Uganda, it has been common for plants to yield fruits with seeds, which naturally germinate in the soils. As a result, many people, especially children usually feed on wild fruits found in the bushes. However, it seems this luxury of surviving cheaply on gifts of nature will soon be history. With the newly propagated so-called improved fruit seeds, the plants yield fruits with seeds that cannot germinate, as a farmer from Masindi revealed to the author. Whereas the normal improved seeds have undermined the food security of peasants as been illustrated and discussed above, the GM seeds resisted but secretly distributed to farmers will worsen the situation even the more as will be discussed later.

3.2 Disadvantaging Agriculture by Omission

Whereas the government undertook deliberate measures to disadvantage the peasants, there were other measures by omission. In a country where ‘surface water bodies and seasonally flooded areas account for 20% of the land area’ (National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), 2014 p. 121), drought has been allowed to cause disaster in Uganda, seriously affecting families

from time to time. In 1998 and 1999, drought occurred and affected 700, 000 people as well as killing 115. In 2002, it affected 655, 000 people killing 79 while in 2005 and 2008 it affected 600,000 750,000 respectively (Uganda, 2010 p. x). According to Tumusiime-Mutebile (2013 p. 10), Uganda has suffered many food price shocks as a result of drought since 2006, blaming farmers for depending on weather and lack of good storage system. However, the continued reliance on weather and lack of good storage system is largely as a result of the environment created by economic reform undertaken in Uganda that has made farming a poor business. As has already been elaborated, the economic reform made farming a loss-making business because the government cannot intervene in the market to stabilise the price the farmers get for their produce at an attractive high level. As a result, farmers fail to accumulate profits to invest in irrigation equipments.

Whereas price fluctuations already elaborated were ruining the farming businesses in Uganda, farmers in developed countries were not only getting subsidies to make their farming business profitable but were also compensated for loss emanating from natural hazards. For instance, the USA and EU that accounted for around about half of all wheat exports in the world in 2002 at prices respectively 46 percent and 34 percent below the cost price. While the USA, accounted for more than one-half of maize exports in the world ‘at prices one-fifth below the costs of production’ (Oxfam, 2002 p. 15), the farmers in Uganda sold theirs at a loss as has already been illustrated. Unlike Ugandan farmers who starve, sometimes to death when rains fail, their counterparts in the USA are ‘compensated for losses resulting from weather damage’ (Oxfam, 2002 p. 114). In Uganda, for example, over 2,000 households in Bukwo lost crops to drought amounting to UGX 14billion (*New Vision*, 2009 p. 34) without the government bothering to cater for their loss.

Moreover, macroeconomic stabilisation that squeezes out and limits money in circulation using monetary and fiscal instruments, including the increment of interest rates, has disadvantaged agriculture even further. When inflation rose up in late 2013 as a result of food shortages, the governor Bank of Uganda raised interest rates (Tumusiime-Mutebile, 2013). Under normal circumstances, when inflation occurs as a result of food scarcity, a rational economic policy would be to reduce the cost of borrowing, especially for investment in agricultural sector so that output of food items can increase in the long-run. Since the food scarcity routinely occurs as a result of drought, a prudent economic policy would not only reduce the cost of borrowing for investment in agricultural sector but also to subsidise irrigation equipments as well as constructing public storage facilities so that farmers cannot depend on vagaries of weather anymore. Instead the governor opted to starve the patient by raising the interest rates – to kill agriculture as means of bringing about social transformation according the logic of capitalistic modernisation.

3.3 Social Transformation Taking Place in Uganda

As the Government of Uganda has been fighting subsistence farming through commercialisation of agriculture and undertaking other measures to disadvantage peasants, the country is regularly affected by famine and acute food shortages. In 1997, most parts of Uganda, especially the north and northeast of the country, were affected seriously by food insecurity (Bazara, 2001). In 2002, there was a decline in the production of cereals, especially maize and beans (Byekwaso, 2002) while a study conducted in 2006 revealed that half of Uganda's population did not have access to sufficient food (Opolot and Kuteesa, 2006 p. 23). In 2008, there were serious food shortages causing rising food prices that were of concern to the urban areas (Byekwaso, 2008). In 2009, 60 percent of Ugandans were unable to feed their families because famine hit the country and 51 out of about 80 districts then were faced by food shortages (*New vision*, July 2009). As observed by *Sunday Monitor* (2009 p. 3), 'after the so-called 'anti-poverty programmes, past and present, aimed at moving the country from its largely peasant subsistence economy to an industrialised one, most families are going without adequate food, water, medicines, cooking fuel and cash – in a word, we have become a nation of deprivation'.

The situation has been changing from good to worse. When NRM government came to power, the country was almost self-sufficient in food production. By 2007, the country had become a net food importer (UNDP, 2007 p.76). According to the most recent report released by Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO together with agriculture ministry, quoted by the press, 70 percent of the Ugandan population are moderately, severely and chronically food insecure. 'Severe and chronic food insecurity is described as a situation where a person may go without food for as many as three days, while moderate food insecurity is one where a person goes without food for a day' (*New Vision*, 2016 p. 4). This implies that 70 percent of the Ugandan population goes without food for at least one day. And without enough food, the number of children facing the risk of being malnourished in Uganda is very high. In rural areas where the majority of the people live doing farming as the source of their livelihood, 40 percent of the children under the age of five years are stunted. Within the logic of social transformation, western Uganda, which is said to be experiencing high levels of poverty reduction levels, is most vulnerable: 50 percent of the children are stunted (Sewanyana and Kasirye, 2011; Shively and Jing Hao, 2012). In addition to the problem of malnutrition, child abandonment is on the rise in the area, especially in Mbarara. In 2013, police was receiving approximately five cases of dumped children every month, picked from 'latrines, garbage pits along the roads, and Mbarara Hospital' Mukombozi and Kashaki, 2013 p. 13) in Mbarara municipality alone. In the same year, *Daily Monitor* newspaper noted that in the whole of Uganda, the problem of child abandonment had become unbearable to the extent that foreign NGOs had to intervene in order to prevent and decrease the occurrence, as if was stoppable when it is expected to happen under the process of social transformation. If Uganda is in the footsteps of becoming like the West under the strategy of modernisation, child abandonment took place during the period of land enclosure in Britain (see Fairlie, undated).

3.4 Rural-to-Urban Migration and Land Grabbing in Uganda

The strategy of making peasants disappear is working as they increasingly find it difficult to feed themselves and their children in rural areas because they have been hindered from growing food for own consumption. Consequently there has been mass migration from rural areas to urban areas, especially to Kampala City. The *Weekly Message* succinctly put it in its headline, ‘poverty is chasing many people out of villages’ (Weekly Message, 2006 pp.1-2). ‘Many young people are quitting agriculture for petty jobs in urban centres like riding boda boda (motor cycle taxis)’ (Nuwagaba in Lirri, 2009 p. As a result ‘Kampala could either become a mega city or a slum in the next 10 years due to high population growth with low economic activities and poor infrastructure’ (World Bank, 2015). Peasants have been displaced from land to pave way for large scale farmers, especially foreign investors.

The process of rural-to-urban migration has been accelerated by peasants being evicted from their land (*bibanja*) by investors (local and foreign) to bring about modernisation – the desired outcome of fighting poverty. Peasants, after having been weakened by the market manipulation that has subjected them to ruinous prices for a long time as well as other disadvantaging measures already discussed, they have become an easy prey to land grabbers – the investors. This has been more so in Buganda region where there tenants on *mailo-lands* as a result of land tenure system inherited from colonialism. While the government pretended to protect the rights of tenants on land by enacting the Land Act of 1998 as amended in 2008, in reality it exposed them to large scale-land buyers who are usually foreign investors. Under the Land Act, the tenants were to be issued with certificates of occupancy as a legal recognition. This would make it easy for the investor to buy off the tenants after buying a big chunk of land from the title owner. When the law was amended, the tenant could sell his or her piece of land to anybody else except if the title owner did show interest in or could not afford it. Therefore, this made it easy for the rich foreigner investors to get rid of encumbrances from the land they buy without embarrassing complaints – a civilised way of land grabbing.

For example, a one Jonathan Wright bought 1,423 acres of at Buzranjovu in Mukono District, not far away from Kampala, from Mugwanya Kabusu in 2005. By then, the land had 200 lawful occupants and the investor reserved UGX 300,000,000/= to compensate (buy off) the occupants. By December 2012, with the exception of 55, 217 families had been compensated (bought off). The remaining ones were said to be harmoniously living with the investor (Uganda Legal Information Institute (ULII), 2013). Although the occupants were compensated, some of them disputed how they were bought off and therefore they reported their dissatisfaction to the minister responsible but the court blocked her from helping them. As to whether the dissatisfied bought off tenants were right to complain or not, the needy situation they were in created by the economic reform and other measures undertaken by the government to disadvantage the peasants, they could not resist the money given to them. Like out-growers in Busoga region who have been forced by circumstances to use their land for sugarcane growing instead of food crops as already illustrated, occupants on the bought land in Mukono had to sell their land rights to get money to survive on in the short run while sacrificing their future. This is an example, among many, how peasants have been compelled by circumstances to sell their plots and migrate to

towns, especially the city – accelerating rural-to-migration already talked about to pave way for land grabbing.

Consequently, after the land-displacing economic reform had been implemented in Third World countries generally and Uganda in particular for an ample time, a phenomenon of land grabbing has emerged – an indication that it could have been planned in advance. ‘Powerful transnational and national economic actors from corporations to national governments and private equity funds have searched for “empty” land... This is occurring globally, but there is a clear North-South dynamic that echoes the land grabs that underwrote both colonialism and imperialism (Borras et al., 2011 p.2009). In Uganda, land grabbing has been documented by Giuliano Martiniello (2013) and cannot be repeated here. However, to mention in passing, there are a multitude forms of land grabbing that conducted by

mainly foreign investors but including local capitalists. ‘The multitude of forms of land grabbing in Uganda include foreign states and (Trans) National Corporations acquisitions for food and bio-fuel productions, land enclosures driven by REED carbon capture schemes and forest creation, demarcations and securing of conservation areas and game reserves for tourist purposes, domestic elite and state-driven acquisitions often to the benefit of high rank government and military officials or to the advantage of locally (nationally) influent capitalists mostly in the form of commercial agriculture and cattle ranching schemes. This trend is driven by and consolidated by an ideology that portrays Africa as a continent endowed with abundant and unutilised land’ (Giuliano Marniello, 2013 p. 3). However, this not to imply that land grabbing has been taking place through sheer force and compulsion. There are various mechanisms through which land grabbing occurs, ranging from straightforward private-private purchases and private-public leases and acquisition of large parcels for conservation arrangement (Borras Jr, 2011).

4.0 Concluding Remarks

Despite the suffering the peasants have been subjected to, they have not yet disappeared and there are many people in Uganda still surviving by growing at least some food for their own consumption, described as being in non-monetary economy (Census, 2014) even if they buy goods from the market. The peasants are not disappearing fast enough and therefore to finish them off, other measures have been designed. While in the past, it was argued that not only subsistence farming is responsible for poverty but also the tradition and the mentality of producing for own consumption (Museveni, 2014), now it is said that current food insecurity in the country is mainly caused by pests and crop diseases (in *New Vision*, 2016) despite the claim that the improved seeds supplied to peasants are pest and disease resistant. Strategically, to finish off the practice of growing food for own survival by peasants, the government has already mooted a plan to spray crops using drones (associated with spying missions) as a way of helping farmers to increase and enhance food security. In story by the government newspaper, *New Vision* (2016 p. 3), it was revealed that the drones were not only to be used for fighting crop

diseases but also to 'provide more accurate, up-to-date information on crops being grown in different places' than 'what is in the books'. From this revelation, it is apparent that the drones will be (if not already) on a spying mission to figure out the number of peasants still in existence, even it is claimed the exercise will be undertaken to help 'smallholders' 'gain access to get relevant extension services'. How can smallholders (peasants who are said to be a constraint to development and therefore should be made disappear under social transformation) be availed beneficial extension services?

To survive capture by seed companies, the peasants have also been resisting the adoption of the so-called improved seeds. In 2012, it was found that 'the rate of adoption by farmers of improved seeds remains low even among farmers with access to extension services' (Journal of Agrarian Change, 2012 pp. 22 & 7). It seems because the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), an organisation that was responsible for giving the seeds to farmers was not very successful in making farmers adopt the so-called improved seeds, it has been replaced by the army (Rwakakamba and Lukwago, 2014) probably to force peasants to accept the seeds if they (peasants) resist. While originally, the adoption of improved seeds was supposed to be demand-driven through a market arrangement, now the government plays big role in supplying the seeds to peasant farmers. During the presidential campaigns, President Museveni pledged to increase the budget of seeds tremendously (citation to be added).

Not only the government is supplying the normal improved seeds to peasants using the army but has also secretly introduced the hitherto strongly resisted GMOs in the country. In 2014, Members of Parliament, scientists and civil society opposed the GMOs (see *New Vision*, 2014 p.7) but surprisingly, within a short time in the same year after the debate, Members of Parliament not only secretly allowed the introduction the GMO's but were also used to distribute GM maize seeds for planting in their constituencies. According to a source in the Uganda National Assembly, who talked to the author on the condition of anonymity in 2015, beginning with the 2014 planting season, the Members of Parliament (both from the ruling and opposition parties) are given GM maize seeds with a tag not for sale that they distribute to peasant farmers for planting in their respective constituencies. One of the Members of Parliament, who also talked to author on the condition of anonymity lest he would be accused of leaking secret information, confirmed the revelation by pointing out that the GM maize seeds are supplied through parliamentarians to be grown in the maize growing areas. When Ken Lukyamuzi, a vocal opposition MP and an environmentalist who was initially opposed to the introduction of the GMOs in Uganda was confronted on the issue on a radio talk-show debate in 2015, he could not deny. However, he said the blame on the secret introduction of GMOs should not be pinned on him as an individual but the whole parliament.

Since 2002, there has been a strong resistance against the schemes of the giant Monsanto American Seed Company to secretly introduce genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in Uganda. Before 2002, Monsanto signed a multi-million shilling deal with a local seed company

known as Farm Inputs Care Centre (FICA) to produce 'high-quality' seeds for the East African region. Because Monsanto is well known for genetically modifying crops such as maize, canola, soya and others in the guise of feeding the world, the deal was suspected to be having a hidden agenda and was opposed by Opiyo Oloya, a *New Vision* columnist and a Ugandan living in Canada in 2002. He was supported by Ugandans considering the response he got from the readers (see for instance Apedel, 2002 p. 22), and because of the support he had, he was invited for the debate on the issue by parliament in 2014 (see *New Vision*, 2014 p. 7).

But Monsanto continued with its machinations. In 2002, again it approached a local company to grow hybrid maize under a contract for export. The deal was also suspected of having a hidden agenda of secretly introducing GMOs in Uganda because the hybrid corn would be supplied by Monsanto companies acquired in 1998 for the express purpose of expanding its biotechnology business to Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa (Opiyo Oloya, 2002). The plans to secretly introduce GMO seeds continued unhindered because it seems President Museveni was aware of what was going on. This can be discerned from the president's secret dealing with US officials to start the growing of genetically modified cotton for export under African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA) (Mulumba, 2002); President Museveni was a fervent supporter of AGOA. Years later, it emerged that Uganda was embracing the introduction of genetically modified crops without a law to regulate them and had gone a step ahead to allow the laboratory and field testing for GMO crops such as GM bananas in Kawanda, BT cotton in Serere, GM maize in Kasese and cassava, rice and sweet potatoes at Namulonge (Mugisha, 2012, p. 13).

Having allowed the experimental testing for GMO crops, the government came up with The National Biotechnology and Biosafety Bill in November, 2012 to facilitate the development and application of GMO technology in Uganda. When the bill was taken to parliament for debate, it was not passed because it did not provide enough safeguards to Ugandans. It was shelved for sometime until it emerged out that the MPs of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party had agreed in principle to pass it. While the civil society organisations and public generally were up in arms against the move, it is when it was revealed that the people of Uganda had been betrayed by their government and their representatives in parliament even from the opposition to accept the secret introduction of GMOS in the country.

It is disturbing to know that the state of Uganda has embraced the introduction of genetically modified seeds without thoroughly scrutinising their economic, health and environmental dangers. Economically, they pose the potential danger of enslaving end-users, 'namely, the poor farmers that are eventually forced by multinational giants in America and Europe to relinquish all control over indigenous seeds that are genetically modified and then reintroduced as new crops.... Without being dramatic about it, the aggressive business model of marketing GM seeds around the world was pioneered by Monsanto. This is the same company that sued a Canadian farmer named Percy Schmeiser in August 1998 because the farmer's crop became cross-

pollinated by Monsanto's genetically modified canola' (Opiyo Oloya, 2010 p.14) for royalty fees.

The introduction of GMOs in Uganda also pose the danger of the people in the country losing total sovereignty because they will not be in position to control their means of survival. As Mugisha (2012 p.13) argued, the secret introduction of GMOs will 'quicken the distortion of Uganda's rich biodiversity and cause farmers to be dependent on inputs for their livelihoods. Traditional farmers' practices of preserving and multiplying indigenous seeds will also suffer extinction, forcing farmers to buy fresh supply of seeds for every planting season. Farmers will have to sign licensing agreements with stipulations that ban reuse, resell, saving, supplying or transfer of seeds to any person because seeds will be patented. In this way, multinational GM companies will have absolute monopoly over production and distribution seeds thereby undermining and compromising Uganda's food sovereignty'.

The GMOs also pose a health threat. The potential hazard of GMO technology was discovered in August 1998 by 'Dr Aparad Pusztai, from the Rowett Institute in Scotland who found that rats fed with GE "potatoes showed serious health damage". Since then, there have been other studies that have galvanised debate in the science community about the safety of GMO products – to this point, absolutely no scientist can say unequivocally that GMO foods are safe for humans and the environment' (Opiyo Oloya, 2002 p.10). If the GMO foods are not safe for human consumption, why are the genetically modified maize seeds secretly given to peasant farmers for planting in Uganda? The justification for introducing of GMOs is that: 'Somebody who is hungry does not have a choice'. GM, organic, or whatever – you have to feed the people' (Rice in Asiimwe, 2011 p. 27). Really? Is the state bothered by the people who sleep hungry in Uganda? By introducing GM, will the government state start providing free food to those who do not have? It could be argued that the introduction of GM is to increase food production. In the past, Uganda was self-sufficient in food production and potentially was a food basket for the whole of east African region without GM seeds. By implication, even if there has been an increase in population, the country could easily increase food production to meet the needs of increased population without introducing GM seeds.

Therefore, it is now clear that GM seeds were not genuinely introduced even when they were resisted. It appears the secret introduction of GMOs in Uganda on large scale made possible by MPs is the last effort to get rid of peasants. They are being poisoned indirectly so that in future they can die like mosquitoes sprayed with insecticides! Is any wonder that after the introduction of the so-called improved seeds and GMOs that are accompanied with the baggage of chemicals in order to grow well, the number of patients suffering from and dying of cancer has greatly increased in Uganda, affecting mainly people in or from rural areas as is reported in the press. Is surprising that new incurable diseases, like Ebola that has killed people in Africa on large-scale

and within a short time, have emerged at the time when peasants are accused of hindering modernisation and consequently development? Considering how the issue of health is advertised in the press, especially the electronic media, by Western-funded NGOs, for consideration as a priority by our leaders, the phenomenon of epidemics emerging and killing people on large scale obviously as expected is planned for in advance. If the people are cared for in hospitals, with assistance from the 'donors' the sick will die when the Ugandan community is grateful to those who are responsible for the elimination of their loved ones – the philanthropic but silent killers from the West.

It should be noted seriously that genocide has ever been perpetrated by the West using various methods: 'The near decimation of Native Americans through a combination of slaughter, disease, and dislocation was, was after all, the first recorded genocide in modern history' (Mamdani, 2004 p.6). It is now becoming clear that in the name of modernisation, genocide has been plotted to create a room for transitional corporations to get 'empty' land claimed to exist in Africa – an ideology used for land grabbing (Giuliano Marniello, 2013).

The practice of capitalists from the so-called developed countries clearing off the earth the people seen not to be modern is neither strange nor new. The following quotation speaks it all.

The idea that "imperialism had served civilization by clearing inferior races off the earth" found widespread expression in the nineteenth-century European thought, from natural sciences and philosophy to anthropology and politics. When Lord Salisbury, the British prime minister, claimed in his famous Albert Hall speech on May 4, 1898, that "one can roughly divide the nations of the world into the living and dying, Hitler was but nine years old, and the European air was "soaked in the conviction that imperialism is a biological necessary process by which, according to the laws of nature, leads to the inevitable destruction of lower races". (Mamdani, 2004 p. 6).

The idea of reducing world population to serve the interests of Western civilisation became an issue to be addressed in the 80s when undisputable scientific evidence emerged to prove that a big hole in the ozone layer had developed as a result of greenhouse gases causing global warming. Consequently, fear gripped the White middle class because there was a vivid possibility that it could perish under the looming environmental disaster and therefore advocated measures for population control and halting industrialisation in the Third World countries (Elliott, 2001 p. 23. As a result, a movement to promote sustainable development emerged and became official with the publication of Brundtland Report in 1987 which, curiously appeared to

be concerned with poverty in the Third World countries, and yet according to the context of modernisation, fighting poverty means dismantling the peasantry as discussed in this paper. At the same time, the sustainable development movement endorsed the ideology of liberalism, which was one of the measures used to displace peasants from agriculture in Uganda as a foundation for land grabbing as has already been discussed. It appears, like in the nineteenth-century Europe, even today in 2016, the idea of imperialism serving Western civilization has been popularised in the US to the extent that a Republican contender for the White House, Donald Trump, who is promising to recolonise Africa, is winning big in the primaries for the presidential nomination.

Therefore, according to the history of Western civilisation, the dismantling of the peasantry in Uganda, Africa in Third World countries generally for the foreign-dominated capital to take over the production process is not strange. In Africa, it is the process that began with

colonialism after the end of slave trade. When it was realised that Africans could produce the required materials at home rather than in foreign lands as slaves, Africa was colonised; colonialism was modified slavery in Africa. Since Africans at home with their families living in villages were satisfied with the production of goods for their own consumption, especially food crops, termed as subsistence economy, they could not willingly produce the required raw materials for external forces unless they were compelled to do so by force and manipulation.

The first step was to implant a colonial state in Uganda, like all other colonised countries of the world. This was followed by creating chiefs and landlords who were used to ensure that the raw materials were produced by peasants on their own land but also would provide labour to the government and plantation owners. The use of force, using chiefs, was one of the means of making capitalism penetrate the society but could not make the peasants become dependent on the international capitalistic system. Therefore it became absolutely necessary to seriously embark on the process of monetising the economy through the introduction of taxes requiring money that could not be got unless the peasants produced cash crops for sell or worked for money as labourers (story see Mamdani, 1976). From the stories of old people, especially from the north, east and south-west, it seems the policy of taxation that was extended to the rest of Uganda, using initially Baganda chiefs, played a big role in compelling peasants to become migrant workers who laboured in plantations and mines.

Although the British originally wanted to make Uganda a settler plantation economy, later it was decided that it should become a peasant economy producing cheap raw materials for export while importing expensive manufactured good – unequal trade. To promote and maintain the growing of raw materials for export, then monetary incentives were used to ensure that the cash

crops produced by peasant farmers were bought at stable prices through the establishment of marketing boards to prevent price fluctuations. (Bibangabah, 1996; Mamdani, 1976). Although the peasants were producing cheap raw materials for export and consuming relatively expensive imported goods, a habit of growing crops for money was cultivated hence an established market economy. However, it was a peasantry economy where the majority of the people like elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa still controlled their means of subsistence by producing food for own consumption described by Hyden (1980) as an economy of affection. Although it was a market economy, the production did take place entirely for exchange so that so the production process could be taken over by capital.

While during colonialism the peasants retained land to grow cheap cash crops for export and food crops for own consumption as a strategy to promote prop up the established export-import economy, now the land is being grabbed from them. Whether the out-growers of cash crops, like sugarcane and tea, retain land, they are defacto employees of the companies that buy the crops - .the peasants have been made to depend on companies as has been illustrated by the case of sugarcane out-growers in Busoga region. This is underdevelopment that continues to change face. Underdevelopment deepens and continues to negatively affect the livelihoods of the masses by gradually killing their means of subsistence leading to poverty. Apparently, the process of killing food for own consumption for land grabbing to take place,

While Uganda appears to be independent, ‘The personal appeal by the president for support of investors indicates more clearly that the state’s choice of action directly supports the rise of the colonial ‘Empire’, which will gradually see to it the fall of the peasantry’ (Asiimwe, 2011 p. 26). This is a war to phase out the peasants who have unconsciously sensed that they are really fighting a war. This is reflected in the songs they sing in church; they mention that they are at war and that Jesus as their commander. When people are faced with crisis and uncertainty, there is a tendency for them to seek divine intervention by joining various religious organisations in large numbers (Kulumba, 2005). This is case today in Uganda, and possibly other countries of the Third World. The churches, especially the born-again ones have mushroomed; they are like shops spread over the country. Unfortunately, from the trend of events, it seems the peasants are losing the war and the indigenous people of Uganda and other Third World countries could be on their way towards near disappearance, like the Aborigines in Australia and the indigenous population of North America – they belong to the dying nations (societies) Lord Salisbury referred to already cited.

From the perspective of dominant forces in the West, the successful war on peasants has removed the dangers of revolutionary governments coming up in Third World countries through guerrilla wars; the war on peasants was launched by McNamara, who was the Secretary of Defence when the US was routed by peasants in Vietnam (Tanya Kerssen and Holt-Gimerez).

Whereas the West could be more secure than in the past, by phasing out their fellow human beings for a few rich people to own the world, is this modern civilisation or modern barbarism? Instead of using knowledge of science as well as management for humanity to live better and happy lives, it is used to enslave and eventually eliminate the people of Third World countries while almost in similar manner stressing the citizens of developed countries by upholding an economic system that brings about unemployment as well as enslaving the not well-to-do to debt. Should words like justice, ethics, freedom, etc be still be used? Do human rights taught and preached by the West really make sense when the majority of the people in the world are subjected to stress, mental torture, and human-caused disasters? Whereas it is claimed that self-interest is the greatest motivator of human endeavour, are the capitalists who make people suffer (sadists) really human beings or beasts (like wolves preying upon lambs)? Consciously, they know that they are doing something morally wrong; the unacceptable in a normal society. That is why they hide behind popular concepts, like poverty reduction, when they are bringing misery to the majority (peasants) in Uganda as has been revealed by this paper.

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