

UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE

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**THE ROLE OF RADIO TALK SHOWS IN THE TRANSITION TO
MULTI-PARTY POLITICS AND DEMOCRACY IN UGANDA
A Case Study**

Master's Thesis

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

International School of Social Science

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ABSTRACT

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NABUNYA, CHRISTINE: The Role of Radio Talk Shows in the Transition to Multi-Party
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This study aims firstly at reviewing the transition to multi-party politics in Uganda after 20 years prior to the first election in February 2006 and at assessing how this system of governance has worked. Secondly, it seeks to explore how the media has evolved in response to this transition, particularly the radio talk shows using one of the popular radio stations in Uganda CBS and its Mambo Bado talk show programme as a case.

The research employs the agenda-setting theory. The core of this theory is who sets the agenda, in this case the media agenda, public agenda and the politician's agenda in regard to radio talk-show programmes and how they affect each other. The core of this theory is that the media is successful in telling people not what to think but what to think about. This theory attempts to explain how the various topical issues make it on the agenda of radio talk show programmes.

The study analyses the interviews of the Members of Parliament as well as Mambo Bado talk show programmes. There is sufficient evidence that the media sets the public and politicians' agendas by virtue of the fact that it is them who choose what issues to be discussed on the radio talk shows. According to the analysis of the interviews and the Mambo Bado talk show programmes, radio talk shows were at the center of the transition. Most of what the public knew was through the radio talk shows, they take what they hear on radio to be 'gospel truth' and keep making reference to it even after an issue is no longer being discussed on a radio talk show. This transition to multi-party politics has also shaken up the media with many radio stations settling for self censorship as opposed to being closed down by the government for being critical.

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Preface

I have been a radio journalist and parliamentary reporter over five years during which time I wrote and read news pieces, produced programmes like Parliament in Review and presented them on the air. I also had the privilege of hosting Mama FM's first political talk show in 2001 for one year. Parallel to this professional work I pursued studies for a Bachelor in Mass Communication at Makerere University where I graduated in 2003. After that I was working with Uganda Radio Network, a news agency serving over 50 radio stations, and there I did a wide range of reporting. Thus I have hands-on experience when it comes to hosting a radio talk show.

Coming to Tampere for the Master's Programme in Political Communication in the beginning of 2007, my admission could not have come at a better time. It gave me an opportunity to reflect on the last five years of my career. Doing this project was a very tedious task. I had to sacrifice a lot to carry it out, but I learned a lot because it was something I had to do for myself.

I thank Professor Kaarle Nordenstreng, of the University of Tampere, for assisting me through out the entire process of writing. I also thank Dr. George Lugalambi, Head of the Mass Communication Department, Makerere University, for accepting to spare some time off his busy schedule and take on the role of being my second reader. Lastly, a big thank you to all my colleagues in the Master's Programme – your comments and suggestions during our seminars were very valuable!

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I dedicate this thesis to my son Clyde.

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Christine Nabunya

1. INTRODUCTION

In Africa most countries were governed under a Multi-Party Political (MPP) system at the time of their independence which for the most part took place in the 1960's. However, this period of democracy did not last long; the leaders at the time changed the constitutions giving way to one-party rule. It is only in recent years that there has been a shift back to MPP, making the subject of democratization a very important part of the development agenda.

African countries favored the one-party system for different reasons which, among others, included but were not limited to a lack of willingness to hand over power, a lack of funds to ensure the smooth implementation of MPP, as well as a lack of knowledge on how to run a MPP system. Although many leaders did not care to offer a justification for adopting such a system, Tanzania's Julius Nyerere did give it a philosophical justification and strongly championed it for a long time. Central reasons advanced by Nyerere were the following: political parties represent classes, and since there were no classes in Africa, political parties would end up representing ethnic and clan interests; since post-colonial societies in Africa were faced with such huge challenges that they needed to harness all the resources they could and mobilize all their forces to fight evils such as ignorance, disease and poverty (Kituo Cha Katiba 2002).

However, at the beginning of the 1990's, more countries on the continent had started embracing MPP. The transitions to MPP democracy came at different times leaving behind different experiences for different countries. For example, by bringing to an end the authoritarian regimes of Matthieu Kerekou in Benin and Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia, the 1991 MP elections opened the floodgates for political reform throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Over the following decade, competitive elections were held in most states, placing pluralist competition firmly on the political agenda. (Tordoff and Young, 2005: 403).

Even in the countries where the transitions took place, they were incomplete. By the end of the 1990s, it was clear that the evolution of MPP leading to reasonable democracy was incomplete in almost every country on the continent. African parliaments were still overwhelmingly controlled by ruling parties with only a handful of members from the opposition parties. The result was that governments had an easy passage of almost any piece of legislation they wanted to introduce since the opposition was too weak to defeat it (Kasoma 2000: 91).

Uganda too, was governed under a one-party system commonly known as the 'Movement Political System' for 20 years from 1986 to 2006. During that time, political parties were allowed to exist in name, but normal activities associated with them, such as campaigning, fundraising, holding political rallies, and endorsing candidates were banned. Elections were held on a theoretically non-partisan basis. Proponents of this system argued that democracy was still intact, but that it functioned without political party representation (McMahon 2004: 298-299).

Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni is one of the contemporary African leaders who openly stated the problems associated with MPP:

He believed that Uganda (a country greatly haunted by its past: dictatorship, failed Multi-Party Politics and protracted guerrilla rebellion) was not ready for a Western-style multi-party system. The move to such politics, he notes, leads to animosities and conflict based on ethnicity. (Doornbos 2000:109).

Attempts to open up the political space were futile. Ugandans decided against political parties in the 2000 referendum on political systems. However, in a different turn of events five years later another referendum held in April 2005 resulted in this ban being overturned and the February 23rd 2006 presidential elections ushered in the first Multi-Party government.

The road to MPP was sudden, many Ugandans doubted President Yoweri Museveni's commitment to it and there was also speculation as to his motives. The playing field was not leveled among the various political parties; an act which was seen to weaken

the democratic process. However, people's political opinion was strengthened by the media in particular radio. Radio stations such as the Central Broadcasting Service (CBS), also commonly known as Radio Buganda, gave the public unlimited airtime to share views on the country's transition to MPP and democracy.

The role the media played is not surprising given that the media in Uganda has grown tremendously ever since it was liberalized in 1993. According to Kagole Kivumbi, Secretary to the Broadcasting Council, there are currently 205 radio stations operating in the country (Maseruka 2009). Little wonder, that in a country of nearly 32 million people, radio remains the cheapest form of communication as well as the most effective medium for reaching Ugandans. Most local radio stations are either commercial, community, or religious based.

Radio programmes especially the talk shows, have played a very important role in engaging the public in constructive debate on various issues such as politics, health, and economics among others. There are two types of radio talk shows; the daily shows broadcast in the studios and the weekly shows which are broadcast from outside the studios. The latter are typically what we call outside broadcasting. They basically refer to round table talk shows which take place every Saturday on the various radio stations. They are normally called *Ebimeeza* in plural, referring to many round table talk shows or *Ekimeeza* in singular, referring to one round table talk show. *Ekimeeza* involves broadcasting from a public place, such as a bar or restaurant, where ordinary people can gather and participate in discussions. One of the most popular *Ekimeeza* in Uganda is CBS' Mambo Bado which runs every Saturday from 2 to 4 pm. Mambo Bado has given the public an opportunity to share views with their Members of Parliament (MPs) on various political issues. One can say that it is through the *Ebimeeza* that the public is provided information about the most important things going on in the country.

One can indeed argue that what finally made a difference during this transition was the presence of the media, especially radio. It took up the subject, talked about the various issues involved, what it meant for the ordinary person as well as inviting experts

ranging from politicians to academicians to discuss and share views, thereby providing information to the public. Although radio has long been part of the African economic, political, and social spectrum since the colonial period, when it was used by the former imperialist powers (Fardon and Furniss, 2003), few studies have been done on the role of radio in politics in the African context.

A number of studies have, however, been done on the democratization process in Africa. For instance, Bratton and van de Walle (1997) looked at the democratic experiments in Africa focusing on regime transitions in comparative perspective and the varying degrees of success of the formerly dominant political parties in African one-party states following 'democratic transition', while Ndegwa (1998) looked at the incomplete transitions such as the constitutional and electoral context in Kenya.

In an important review of the political party effectiveness in Africa since 1980, McMahon (2004: 299) points out that given the level of spoken or unspoken opposition to multi-party systems by many leaders, it is important to examine closely the arguments against political parties in Africa. He notes that while recognizing that some of these critiques may have some elements of justification, their overall rationale should be queried. He argues that leaders who take this skeptical attitude towards political parties are seeking to have their own proverbial cake and eat it too. In McMahon's view, basing on the fact that most political parties often align themselves along regional or ethnic divides; they will not necessarily advocate for policies designed to reflect a national wide perspective. They instead represent their own narrow interests without a commitment to a broader sense of nationalism and collective well-being of everyone in the nation. As they compete against each other for leadership positions, physical conflict is often the result. Nationalism has often been utilized as a cloak to conceal deep societal cleavages, placing the survival of the state and its interests over that of the group and the individual (ibid: 300).

In the book "Election Observation and Democratization in Africa" dealing with case studies, Doornbos (2000: 109) recommended that the Ugandan no-party system

introduced by the National Resistance Movement in 1986 was quite novel for Africa or anywhere for that matter. However, one can question whether Uganda's Movement political system was indeed a role model at the time. The Movement system itself had many critiques and as things transpired, President Yoweri Museveni succumbed like his other African counterparts and embraced multi-party democracy as per the elections of February 23, 2006.

From that background, this study seeks

- firstly, to review the transition to multiparty politics in Uganda after 20 years prior to the first multiparty elections in February, 2006 and to assess how the MPP has worked;
- secondly, to explore how the media has evolved in response to the transition to MPP, thus forming a basis for further research in the area of the role of radio talk shows in politics in Africa using Uganda as a case.

The review of the transition is important because it will put the entire study into perspective. On the other hand, the assessment of how the MPP has worked will be based on the interviews of the Members of Parliament. The study will pay a lot of attention to questions like why MPP is continuing to fail in Africa and whether there are any alternatives. It will also examine Uganda's Movement system to see whether it is indeed novel for Africa or anywhere else as well as the extent to which the strength of Radio Talk shows can be explained by the diverse political views and knowledge on political matters.

This study employs the agenda-setting theory. Since the beginning of the 1970s, agenda-setting research has demonstrated the centrality of media coverage to the focus of public opinion, the agenda of issues considered important by the public (Ämmälä 2008). The agenda-setting theory says that the media (mainly news media) are not always successful at telling us what to think, but they are quite successful at telling us what to think about (McCombs and Shaw 1972). This theory is good at explaining why people with similar media exposure place importance on the same issues. Although different people may

feel differently about the issue at hand, most people feel the same issues are important.

The empirical data that will be utilized includes six Mambo Bado radio talk show programmes and 15 interviews with Members of Parliament. I will also look at newspaper articles pertaining to the performance and future of the media for the past one year 2008 published mainly by the *Daily Monitor*, a privately owned newspaper. The selection of this newspaper over the government-owned *New Vision* was based on the fact that *New Vision* did not carry some of the articles and where it did, the details were scanty.

This thesis comprises of eight chapters. After the introduction, chapter two examines the concept of MPP in various countries and continents. Chapter three looks at the political system in Uganda and how it differs from other parts of the world with a few similarities on the African continent. Chapter four looks at the Media landscape in Uganda: management, financing and radio talk show programmes. Chapter five continues by explaining the choice of scientific approach that is the Agenda Setting Theory. Chapter six describes the methodology and data; while chapter seven presents the research findings and analysis. Lastly, chapter eight comprises the conclusions and discussion of the study.

2. MULTI-PARTY POLITICS

This chapter explores the concept of multi-party politics. I begin by giving some definitions of the concept to try and situate it in the contemporary world. I then go ahead to look at how multi-party politics is understood and practiced in the various continents; the United States of America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. The fundamental argument in this chapter is that MPP in Africa is just in 'words' but not in 'practice'.

2.1 The Concept of Multi-Party Politics

The concept of MPP is synonymous with that of political parties in the sense that you cannot talk about one and ignore the other. Thus, it is important to look at each of them; multiparty politics, a political party and a political party system separately so as to understand how they relate to each other.

A multi-party system provides an outlet through which people can participate in their governments and address the issues at hand. Parties provide a structured organized frame in which to voice political views (McMahon 2004: 296). The above are not standard definitions of a multi-party system or political party but they certainly bring out the gist of multi-party politics in them.

The Encarta encyclopedia on the other hand, defined political parties as organizations that mobilize voters on behalf of a common set of interests, concerns and goals. According to this encyclopedia, in many nations, parties play a crucial role in the democratic process, they formulate political and policy agendas, select candidates, conduct election campaigns and monitor the network of their elected representatives. Additionally, it also says that political parties link citizens and the government, providing a means by which people can have a voice in their government.

A political party system consists of all the parties in a particular nation and the laws and customs that govern their behavior. There are three types of party systems (1) multiparty systems, (2) two-party systems, and (3) one-party systems. However, multiparty systems are the most common type of party systems (Encarta encyclopedia).

The stability of a party system is thought to be related to the number of parties in it. As is widely argued, though not universally agreed, two-party systems are thought to be more stable than multiparty systems (Manning 2005: 723).

Ware (1987: 33, as cited in McMahon, 2004) notes that

In the context of a one-party state, democratic centralism provides no check on anti-democratic tendencies in the party. Those who oppose decisions which they believe undermine the party's democratic character are effectively denied both 'exit' (because no other parties are permitted) and 'voice' (at least after the relevant decisions have been made).

He further argues that a one party system deprives the polity of a means to check bad decisions. Party members cannot fundamentally oppose the decisions of the party because there is no other forum to express their concerns (ibid.).

Political parties in a pluralist system, by contrast, can provide a framework through which they can express one's views. Through a practice of utilizing this framework comes a tolerance of diverse expressions (McMahon ibid).

Critics note, however, that multiparty systems have sometimes contributed to fragmentation and instability as in the Weimar Republic in Germany (1919-1933), the fourth republic in France (1946-1958), and Italy after World War Two (Encarta encyclopedia).

On the other hand, advocates of the multiparty systems point out that they permit more points of view to be represented in government and often provide stable, enduring systems of government, as in most of contemporary Western Europe (where every system, including Great Britain has at least three and usually five or six significant parties) says Encarta encyclopedia.

2.2 Multi-Party Politics in the USA, Europe and Asia

2.2.1 Multi-Party Politics in the United States

The United States of America (USA) is governed on a two party system where the control of government supremacy shifts between two dominant parties; the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. The Encarta encyclopedia elaborates that two-party systems most frequently develop when electoral victory requires only a simple plurality vote, that is, the winner gets the most votes, but not necessarily a majority of votes. It adds that in such a system, it makes sense for smaller parties to combine into larger ones or to drop out altogether, but this is not the case for the USA.

Crumpacker (2005) in his article “Democracy and the Multiparty Political System” in which he looked at the USA and Cuban experiences explains that in the case of the USA, the two party system arises from their constitution, laws and other historical factors. He adds that the media barrier, ballot access laws, the Electoral College, gerrymandering, nomination by primaries, and many other factors specific to US mandate a situation where there can be only two parties which can have a realistic chance of electing national candidates.

He however points out that these “majors” (Republicans and Democrats) who have low levels of internal unity and lack adherence to an ideology or set of goals, are concerned primarily with winning elections and controlling the patronage of government. He elaborates that the candidates have their own programs, raise their own money, use their own campaign workers, and develop their own issues and policies. Little time or attention is given to party platforms, and the decreasing percentage of voters who are party members have no reason to vote for party rather than candidate.

Crumpacker (2005) too emphasizes the monetization of politics especially in the USA. He says that their national and state candidates are elected on the basis of their financial backing (which provides them media access), incumbency, celebrity, perceived

personal characteristics and issues unrelated to party values. He concludes that the national and state candidates as well as the mass media are funded primarily by the same increasingly centralized business enterprises. They must think and talk within the ever narrowing “mainstream” to gain media attention and become serious candidates.

He argues that the liberal multiparty system, which poses as democracy but in fact is the system of oligarchy and empire, is sometimes referred to as the “end of history” for political development. Crumpacker insists this is clearly true for the USA national version, where structural political progress has become impossible in his view adding that the culture of individualism has separated them from each other, binding them together not by their values but by enmeshing them in a net of commercial relations.

Encarta states that the advocates of two-party systems believe they limit the dangers of excessive fragmentation and government stalemate. However, in the United States, which separates the powers and functions of government between executive, legislative and judicial branches, it is possible for one party to control the legislature and the other to control the executive branch. Encarta reveals that this frequently has led to political gridlock between the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. Encarta also argues that opponents of the two-party system also believe that in time the two parties increasingly tend to resemble each other and leave too many points of view out of the political process and that those factors may alienate voters and lead to low turnout in elections.

2.2.2 Multi-Party Politics in Europe

Daniel Bochsler (2005), a PhD student currently preparing his thesis on electoral systems and party systems in the new European democracies wrote an article about the electoral changes that occurred in Eastern Europe in the 15 years of multiparty politics. According to Bochsler, most Central-East European national electoral laws don't allow a large variety of political parties to be represented in parliament. More precisely, almost all the electoral systems provide some kind of electoral thresholds. In many countries, a legal threshold was introduced on the national level. Such thresholds exclude parties that don't

reach the required national vote share from the distribution of parliamentary seats. Other countries apply (or applied) forms of plurality or majority vote in single-member districts, where only the candidate with the most votes (respectively the largest party) may win parliament representation (2005: 59)

Such electoral system thresholds help to reduce the entropy in the party systems: As small parties fail to pass them, the number of parties in parliament is much lower than of those that competed in the elections. The entropy is reduced through the electoral system and “wasted votes” are generated. But over time in a dynamic process the wasted votes (cast for small parties) decrease: Rational voters avoid voting for them and party elites compete only with supposedly successful party lists. Bochslers citing one scholar Anckar wrote: “When voters are aware of how the electoral systems operate, they tend to avoid voting for smaller parties, as a vote for a small party can be seen as equivalent to a wasted vote” (ibid.).

2.2.3 Multi-Party Politics in Asia

The continent of Asia is split between the three different types of party systems according to Encarta encyclopedia. The encyclopedia defines a single-party system as one in which one party nominates all candidates for office and there is no competition for elected offices. It further states that the only choices left to voters are (1) to decide whether or not to vote and (2) to vote “yes” or “no” for the designated candidate. It elaborates that single-party systems have characterized Communist Party governments and other authoritarian regimes although they have become much less common since Communism collapsed in Eastern Europe and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) between 1989 and 1991. Surviving Communists, most notably China, North Korea and Cuba do continue to enforce the rule of a single party. This suggests that Asia as a continent is torn between the three types of party systems (Encarta encyclopedia).

2.3 Multi-Party Politics in Africa

Africa is the second largest continent in the world after Asia in terms of the area and population according to About.com: Geography website as of August 14 2007. The African continent comprises 53 countries.

The continent's political history is similar; majority of the countries gained independence after being colonized by the West. It is nonetheless true that colonialism disrupted existing institutions reducing vertical accountability. Indirect rule in British colonies, for instance, made chiefs subservient to the British, adding a new layer of autocratic rule. For a century or more the main purpose of the colonial state in Africa was to extract wealth, which was obtained through domination and imperialism. It was, as Berman reminds us, 'an authoritarian bureaucratic apparatus of control and not intended to be a school of democracy'. The colonial powers did not envisage independence for generations, nor did they intend to give local people a say in how they were governed, since Africans were not considered capable of rational and intelligent deliberation (Brown and Kaiser 2007:1132-1133).

The end of World War II saw most of the Europeans and British letting go of their colonies and granting representative governments just before the respective independences. Brown and Kaiser note that the independence leaders aimed more to seize the state than to reform it or to follow Western political models. These new leaders initially received substantial popular support from the masses in recognition of their anti-colonial struggles and they used it to articulate a political vision far more authoritarian than initially presented. In only a few countries, such as Gambia and Botswana, did multiparty democracy survive for more than a handful of years (ibid.).

Most of the African countries developed one-party regimes soon after independence as a result of the momentum of the decolonization process. For example, most West African francophone countries were de facto one-party states when they achieved independence, though they soon enshrined these monopolies into law; and though most

Anglophone countries also had supermajorities in the legislatures, their one party status often emerged through the banning of the remaining minority parties (Ishiyama and Quinn 2006: 3).

Until the early 1990's democratization scholars and experts in African politics expected authoritarianism, one-party states and military rule to continue to dominate the African political landscape, as they had for decades. They were convinced that the continent lacked the structural pre-requisites for democracy that are usually associated with democracy elsewhere: Africa was not characterized by advanced capitalism, had low literacy rates and had no civic culture to buttress democracy. Moreover, the agents that had been found to introduce democracy in other regions-the middle or working classes-were weak and often co-opted under authoritarian rule. The consensus was that 'democratization was not supposed to happen in Africa' (Brown and Kaiser 2007:1142).

With the 'second wind of liberation' in Africa, or as the 'third wave' hit sub-Saharan Africa, more and more countries experienced political liberalization and began holding elections (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; Huntington, 1991). With these elections beginning in Benin and Zambia, over 21 countries changed constitutions and political practices to allow greater participation within their countries. During the whole decade of the 1990's, 42 of 48 countries held elections, though not all could be deemed 'free and fair'. Nonetheless, even countries that had less than free and fair elections had to open their political systems to competing political parties. In 1989, opposition political parties were proscribed altogether in 32 states. Between 1990 and 1993, 27 countries adopted multiparty systems. By 1994, single-party rule had been at least formally abolished throughout almost the entire region; 38 out of 47 countries had held multi-party elections (Bratton & van de Walle 1997: 7). Uganda, Swaziland and Sudan organized non-party elections. By 1998, Libya remained the only country in the region which openly and 'resolutely held out against the continental (and global) trend' (Ishiyama and Quinn 2006: 4, Young 1999: 15).

Twenty-six countries in sub-Saharan Africa had organized at least three consecutive

Multi-Party elections for parliament up to the end of 2004. These include Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, The Gambia, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, the Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe (Bogaards 2008: 114-115). Bogaards (2008) adds that Botswana and Mauritius are the only two long standing African democracies. On the other hand, he named Senegal and Zimbabwe as the two countries with a tradition of un free Multi-Party elections.

Brown and Kaiser (2007: 1143) concluded that the track record for Multi-Party democracies in Africa has been far from outstanding. Out of 40 new multiparty elections held in sub-Saharan Africa between 1989 and 1997, only 15 were found to be significantly free and fair, and in only 12 cases did a change of leadership occur. Transitions to democracy thus remain incomplete in countries such as Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Togo and Zimbabwe. In a few cases the democratization process was at least temporarily reversed by military coups-for instance, in Burundi, Central African Republic, Congo (Brazzaville), Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, Nigeria and Sao Tome and Principe.

Even if a full transition to democracy does take place, the endurance of democracy is an even more difficult challenge. For a number of historical and practical reasons political identification in Africa tends to be organized along ethno-regional lines and political parties often compete to be able to bring benefits to their client network. The ethnicization of politics, often reinforced by politicians themselves, promotes competition for access to resources, rather than the institutionalized compromise that theoretically characterizes a democracy (ibid.).

Gibson (2002: 202) explains that the timing, content and consequences of recent political change in Africa clearly vary by country (as do countries' previous experience with democratic institutions). Benin could be placed at one end of the transition scale; popular protest led to a national conference in 1990 that effectively ended Mathieu Kerekou's 17-year rule. At the other end of the scale could sit the authoritarian regimes of Mauritania,

Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, and Swaziland. Between the two poles lie the harder-to-categorize cases of pseudo-, semi-, and ambiguous democracies such as that of Kenya, where Daniel arap Moi continued to thwart domestic and international Pressure with an effective mix of electoral legerdemain and outright corruption (Tordoff and Young 2005: 403-404) citing other scholars: Joseph, Diamond, Barkan and Ng'ethe, Kanyiga.

Botswana, one of the good show cases has enjoyed decades of uninterrupted MPP (but rule by a dominant, single party) and sustained economic growth. The land-locked country developed a political system that mixes Western-style liberal democracy with traditional top-down structures. The sparsely populated, land-locked country has experienced several decades of stable, competitive multiparty politics based on a republican parliamentary model of governance. Unlike most other countries on the continent, Botswana is endowed with valuable mineral deposits that have been well managed by a succession of democratically elected political leaders. These leaders have maintained and derived legitimacy from a political system that delicately balances modern statecraft born in the West with traditional authoritarian structures that predate the advent of colonialism (Brown & Kaiser 2007: 1132-1134).

According to Brown and Kaiser (2007), Burundi offers an example of a democratic transition process beset by a decade of ethnic and regional violence. After a set of well-run elections in 1993 that resulted in rule of the ethnic Hutu majority for the first time since independence, some members of the ethnic Tutsi-dominated army assassinated the new president. This sparked waves of retributinal 'ethnic' violence that have recently subsided, but that have not completely ended, despite the peaceful, indirect election of a Hutu president who attempted to reach out across the ethnic and regional divides.

While there was some prospect of holding fair elections in Zambia under Mwanawasa, there is none in Zimbabwe under the Mugabe regime. However, with this regime out of the way, the recuperative powers of Zimbabwe are probably greater than those of Zambia, despite the machinery of intimidation that has been progressively installed since the 2000 referendum. The experience of Zambia and Zimbabwe certainly underlines

the significance of elections in *sustaining* democratic transitions – they have altered the balance of competing political forces and have thus effected change in the dynamics of regimes; they have enforced accountability; and they have also tested the political capabilities of rival claimants to power ((Tordoff and Young: 422).

Cameroon and Rwanda illustrate the hazards which confrontational opposition stances, in conjunction with late third wave pressure, pose for regimes in the region. The transition process in the two countries was marked by a sharp escalation in the conflicts between regimes and their opponents. Moreover, the regimes all faced particularly strong pressure, both external and internal, to pursue a Multi-Party transition in spite of the obvious risks which this entailed (Kirschke 2000: 391).

Makuwira (2006: 193) highlighted the under-theorization of fundamental tenets of freedom-centered development in the context of the so-called MPP that are equated with democracy. He gives reference to Malawi where, despite being cocooned in a dictatorial regime for three decades (1964-1993) and now in a new democratic dispensation (1994-present), most people continue to live in fear. He is therefore of the view that freedom and democracy cannot function independently of each other and that they can function only in an environment that is buttressed by structures that are accountable, transparent, and adhere to the rule of law. More importantly, development and freedom acquire meaning when ordinary people are protected and empowered to take control of their destiny at the grassroots. That is certainly not the case in Africa.

In Eritrea, while the draft legislation permitting the creation of political parties has been under consideration, representatives of the ruling movement have claimed that ordinary people have asked the government why there must be a multiplicity of political parties. This approach implies that people are content with the status quo (McMahon 2004: 304).

Tanzania is considered to be the most politically stable of the three East African countries (Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania). It was the second after Kenya to change from a one-party system to a new multi-party political system. Msekwa (2004) in his write-up

'Essays on the Transition to Multi-Partism in Tanzania', reveals that the Tanzanian political system was formally changed from the single-party set-up which had been in existence since 1965, to a new MPP system on 1st July, 1992 after the country's Constitution had been amended to that effect. At the time of the 2nd reprint of his write-up in 2004, Msekwa says that the Constitution and other relevant laws had been amended accordingly. However, despite the existence of all the necessary legislations to guide the workings of a MP system, Msekwa expresses misgivings about the behavior of political parties when it comes to political tolerance. He writes that,

...there is still an urgent need to ensure that the behavior of political parties, whether they are in power or in opposition, is transparently conducive to the sustenance of a multi-party democratic system. This is extremely important because the culture of political tolerance and respect for dissenting or opposition views is sadly still lacking. Therefore, one specific agenda of all the political parties, without exception, must be to facilitate the rapid development of this noble culture of political tolerance. (p. 21-22)

Like Tanzania, many of the African countries which have embraced MPP still face those same challenges.

As Ssenkumba (2007) notes in his article "The Crisis of Opposition Politics in Uganda", the central issue in the transition from monolithic to plural systems is whether or not there is scope for emerging political organizations to provide a serious and meaningful challenge to the ruling party. This is because democracy will only thrive if the opposition becomes viable by enjoying the capacity to compete effectively with the incumbent party. An effective opposition is an important measure of the extent to which a system based on political pluralism will become a vehicle for the realization of democracy (ibid.). The supporters of libertarian democracy, such as John Stuart Mill, too argue that essential to the conduct of balanced politics is the existence of prospects for voicing opposing points of view.

Many of the countries above embraced MPP not because that is what the leaders wanted but because of pressure from the donor community. For instance, Kenya permitted a MP system in 1991, pressured by the donor community and domestic actors, but

resisted further democratization. Despite widespread unpopularity, the ruling party remained in power for more than another decade by manipulating (at times violently) the transition process. For almost 30 years, from 1963 to 1991, Kenya was a prototypical one-party state. Although it achieved independence from the UK under a multiparty parliamentary constitution, the party of the independence leader Jomo Kenyatta, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), soon absorbed the opposition. Kenyatta relied on a 'kitchen cabinet' of trusted advisors, drawn mainly from his own Kikuyu ethnic group and repeatedly amended the constitution to centralize power. Kenyatta's successor Daniel arap Moi, assumed power after a bitter internal struggle and replaced influential Kikuyu with members of the Kalenjin (the ethnic group to which he belongs) and some allied ethnic groups. He also further concentrated power in the hands of the presidency. Since the return to a multiparty system Kenya has held three elections (in 1992, 1997 and 2002). In the 1992 and 1997 elections, donors had sufficient evidence of an uneven playing field and of poll irregularities to contest the legitimacy of the outcomes. However, they chose not to, mainly out of concern for stability. In between elections, they virtually ignored issues of democratization (Brown and Kaiser: 1132-1138).

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, also under pressure at home and abroad to democratize, said on February 26, 2005 that he would ask his country's parliament to change the constitution and permit multiparty popular elections. Mubarak's decision was rooted in his "full conviction of the need to consolidate efforts for more freedom and democracy" (Williams 2005). According to the Washington Post Foreign Service, Mubarak's speech followed a decision by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to cancel a visit to Egypt, a move attributed to the lack of reform initiatives there. The United States provides Egypt with about \$2 billion in annual foreign aid. Bush singled out Egypt along with Saudi Arabia as ripe for reform. In his State of the Union address, Bush said that "Egypt, which showed the way toward peace in the Middle East, can now show the way toward democracy in the Middle East" (ibid.).

Indeed, whereas nearly all political scientists agree that the political topography of Africa began to change in the 1990s, far fewer assert that a wave of democracy has crashed

into- or even lapped at- the continent's shores. Even early optimists became less effusive about democracy's prospects (at least in the short run) as they witnessed what seemed to be politics as usual after historic founding elections (Villalon 1998, Lemarchand 1992). In 1991, Joseph wrote of the democratic "miracle" that appeared to be taking place in Africa; eight years later he claims that African politicians have constructed "virtual democracies" that do just enough to keep financial aid flowing (Joseph 1991, 1999). In the eyes of many, the democratic impulse of the early 1990's quickly lost its sheen. Bratton and Posner (1999) point out that although elections in "surviving Multi-Party systems" are held with "acceptable punctuality," their quality is declining as incumbents devise strategies of questionable legality to retain their positions (Gibson 2002: 202-203).

Clapham & Wiseman (1995) believe that the continent will at best house "minimalist democracies." Young (1999) is of the view that the democratizing reforms that have occurred in Africa have fallen far short of any reasonable criteria for consolidation. Ake (1996) sees continuity rather than change as elites are merely recycled by so-called transitions (see also Chabal & Daloz 1999, Ottaway 1999). Ihonvbere (2000: 213) foretells "intolerance, violence, instability, uncertainty, and stalemate" for Africa in the near future.

Even in advanced democracies, such as the United Kingdom and the United States, political parties did not fully develop until after the industrial revolution. At this time, a significant middle class was created which resulted in the promotion of such key components of democracy as a civil society and a class of people who could exercise accountability over, and place demands upon, government. This, in turn, led to the articulation and aggregation of interests that required a more pluralist environment, and these trends helped to promote democracy. This produced the middle class structure largely analogous to that which occurred in Western democratic nations, and it led to popular movements toward democracy. Political parties were able to operate successfully given this level of social and economic development (McMahon 2004: 302-303). However, this has not been the case for Africa because the transitions have been haphazard. McMahon suggests that in fact, many believe it will be quite some time

before Africa will experience the characteristics necessary to build successful democratic institutions.

The other related problem of failed transitions on the African continent is the expected democratization timeline. As already mentioned, in this current era of democratization and globalization, both overt and more subtle forms of pressure, particularly from the West, push African countries toward developing democratic institutions quickly. However, critics argue that while the West had the luxury of decades and even centuries to develop these institutions, including political parties, Africa is expected to pass through this process almost literally overnight (*ibid.*). In such circumstances, the failed transitions are simply inevitable.

As Dicklitch (2002) explains, MPP have often been equated with democracy, as an end, rather than a means. She argues that a mere plurality of parties will not ensure democratic governance or democratic society. Multiple parties may, however, help to ensure that more interests are heard and represented within the political arena. For democracy to be more than simply ephemeral there has to be certain institutional guarantees established to ensure that no matter what leader or group is in power, the rights of individuals and groups will be respected and guaranteed.

Earlier arguments by African scholars (Anyang'Nyong'o 1992; Shivji 1990; Cobbah 1987) suggested that mere adoption of MP democracy, without further democratic deepening, simply leads to politicization of ethnicity and further elite entrenchment, encouraging a confrontational and divisive system. This is true for Africa.

It is evidently clear from the above that the inadequate packaging and delivery of MP democracy has become progressively more unsaleable in the African context. The level of indifference is influential enough to question the objectives behind it. I agree with Dicklitch (2002) that the focus should not simply be on what type of political system exists (Multi-Party or not), but rather the foundation upon which it is laid.

3. POLITICAL SYSTEM IN UGANDA

Uganda, a former British colony is situated in East Africa with a population of approximately 27 million people. Uganda's immediate neighbours are Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Sudan. Uganda was the last to open up political space in the East African region. The chapter begins by giving Uganda's political history beginning with the British colonial rule before going to the independence regime. It will then look at MPP from 1962 to 1986, discusses the Movement political system and ends with the re-introduction of the current MPP system.

3.1 The Political History of Uganda

3.1.1 Uganda before the British Colonial Rule

Not much has been written about the history of Uganda before the British colonization. The little that has been documented since discloses a pattern of cultural clashes between different ethnic groups in the region which contribute to the current problem. In 2005, I also came across this site <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/ugtoc.html> from the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress. This organization was created in order to provide research information to US citizens about foreign countries' histories and current affairs. The website has a dependable backing and is highly visited. I checked out this site again on August 23, 2008 but despite the fact that, the site as a whole had been last updated on August 14, 2008, all the Ugandan sites had not been updated since December of 1990. A number of different authors contributed to the site and created detailed reports on various topics such as: Ugandan history, government and politics among others.

According to the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress, Kabaka Mutesa 1 reigned from 1856 to 1884. Prior to the British colonization in 1890, the present Uganda was merely a collection of different cultural and religious groups. The Baganda, who lived in the southern part were the largest group in this area. In 1890 the British signed a treaty with Buganda establishing colonial rule.

3.1.2 British Colonial Rule in Uganda 1890-1962

One online abstract for Gardner's book *Governing Uganda, British Colonial Rule and its Legacy* explains that an extended piece on the British colonial state mostly focused on the 1940s, arguably the most neglected decade in the study of Uganda's colonial history. According to Gardner, the argument at the centre of this book is that the Second World War exposed the central and abiding boundaries of British power; and laid bare the basic truth that the colonial state was inadequate and lacking in the necessary knowledge and imagination to adjust to the demands of the new global context. Gardner's thesis is that there is a line of continuity from the colonial state as exposed by the Second World War, to the notorious fragility of the Ugandan state after independence, to the present Museveni regime. He draws further parallels between the similarities of the Ugandan regime of the 1950s and the Museveni government, proposing that a better understanding of this period may shed light on the crux of the problems of present-day government in Uganda.

Ugandans began to rebel against British colonial power in the late 1940's. They wanted a more representative government, and less British control. The London Conference of 1960 was the climax, the British decided to allow elections in 1961, which was also an assurance of Ugandan independence later. Two prominent parties; the Uganda People's Congress (UPC), and the Kabaka Yekka (KY) competed for leadership positions.

British colonial policy in Uganda did little to create a unified, peaceful, rights-protective nation state. Instead, the British policy of divide and rule through indirect rule colonial administration pitted the favoured southern –based Baganda against the other ethnic groups, especially in the north. Colonialism also helped to foster political instability and an autocratic political system (Dicklitch 2002: 207).

Britain granted internal self-government to Uganda in 1961, with the first elections held on March 1st 1961. Benedicto Kiwanuka of the Democratic Party became the first Chief Minister. Uganda maintained its Commonwealth membership. A second round of elections in April 1962 elected members to a new National Assembly. Milton Obote,

leader of the majority coalition in the National Assembly, became prime minister and led Uganda to formal independence on October 9th 1962 (U.S Department of State 2009).

3.1.3 Independence Regime

Uganda finally attained its Independence on 9th October, 1962. The country has had eight presidents since then; with Milton Obote holding two different terms. The first President of Uganda was Fredrick Muteesa 11 who ruled from 1962-1966 followed by President Milton Obote (1) who ruled from 1966 to 1971, President Idi Amin Dada (dead) ruled from 1971-1979, President Yusufu Lule (dead) 1979-1980, President Godfrey Binaisa 1980-1980, President Paulo Muwanga from 1980-1980, President Milton Obote (11) 1980-1985, President Tito Okello Lutwa 1985-1986 and then the sitting President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni from 1986 to date.

At the time of independence, Uganda was not merely a country of great diversity; but rather, one that was polarized along ethnic, racial, religious and economic lines. This was reflected in the nature of political parties and alliances that were formed, in recruitment to the civil service and the military, in the control of the economy as well as in disparate access to social services (Chibita 2006: 90).

When it comes to the constitution, Kituo Cha Katiba (2002) states that Uganda's attainment of independence in 1962 was not independent in every sense of the word. It explains that like in many other British colonies, the independence constitution was conferred on Uganda by an act of the British parliament. As such, that constitution could not be considered as deriving its legality from the Ugandan people. Jim Paul, as quoted by the report, appropriately described the process of constitutional promulgation throughout Anglophone Africa:

Independence constitutions were like negotiated treaties. They were often more the product of ad hoc bargaining in London than the reflection of popular demands and manifestations of indigenous political culture. They were also often extraordinarily complex. But by accepting a constitutional document worked out in London on the eve of independence, a regime in Africa could hasten the attainment of national sovereignty and the entrenchment of its own power. Once independent, the regime could change the constitution to suit local needs, and not surprisingly, to tighten its own control over the political system [J. C. N.

Paul 1974: “Some Observations on Constitutionalism, Judicial Review and the Rule of Law in Africa,” in *Ohio State Law Journal*, vol.35.]

Despite the above, the independence constitution gave Uganda a ceremonial Head of State and a federal arrangement between the kingdom of Buganda and the Republic of Uganda according to the Constitutional Development report.

Kituo Cha Katiba (2002) in their report on constitutional development in Uganda notes that those imposed constitutional documents were expected to survive to eternity. However, as was the case in almost all Africa, they did not survive for long; and even when they did survive, they had undergone so many changes that at times it became difficult to relate them to the original texts. Uganda was no exception. Within a period of four years, in 1966, the independence constitution was overthrown by the very personalities that were supposed to protect it. Milton Obote suspended the 1962 constitution on February 24, 1966 and the suspension of constitutions became a hallmark in Ugandan politics from that point on. Many reasons have been advanced as to why Obote, the Prime Minister at the time, had to attack the existing constitutional order, but it is obvious that that is the genesis of the constitutional crisis which is still ongoing (ibid.).

As seen from above, the independence of most African states, including Uganda has since been seen as a mockery, but still October 9, 1962 meant that Uganda would have its own legal tender, a flag, a team at the Olympic Games, as well as its own country phone and fax code: 256.

The Constitution is the supreme law of Uganda. Uganda’s online encyclopedia; the UgandaWiki reveals that the present constitution was adopted on 8 October 1995 adding that it is Uganda’s fourth constitution since the country's independence from Britain in 1962. The first Constitution adopted in 1962 was replaced 4 years later in 1966. The 1966 Constitution, passed in a tense political environment and without debate, was replaced in 1967. Before it was succeeded by the 1995 Constitution, the 1967 Constitution suffered various periods of suspension, either in full or in part. It was hoped that the 1995

Constitution would stand the test of time according to Kituo Cha Katiba (2002). However, it did not, and this left many issues such as the demand for federalism, the kind of political system to be followed, the question of land, among others unresolved. It was no surprise therefore that the government appointed a Commission to review the Constitution within six years after its promulgation (ibid).

3.2 Multi-Party Politics 1962 -1986

Until 1952 when Ignatius Musaazi and his colleagues formed the Uganda National Congress (UNC) political parties in Uganda did not exist. However, the ‘imminence of independence’ in the 1950’s led to the proliferation of political parties. The most important were the Democratic Party (DP), Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC) and the Kabaka Yekka (KY). The rise of political parties in the 1950’s did not automatically lead to the practice of Multi-Party democracy for a number of reasons; political parties were more interested in issues that had nothing to do with democracy. For example, the main concern of DP was to end what the Roman Catholics saw as decades of Protestant hegemony and to contain the spread of communism in Uganda, not to promote a culture of multipartyism (Mugaju 2000: 15-16).

It was these parties that led the independence struggle, though in that quest for independence they did not seem to be much concerned with Uganda’s freedom or interested in creating a foundation for a Multi-Party democracy. Instead, their major concern was “who was to inherit the mantle of power from the departing colonialists and what security there would be for each of the diverse ethnic groups in the new state” [Grace Ibingira (1980): *African Upheavals Since Independence*, New York: Western Press, Kituo Cha Katiba 2002].

During the Colonial era, the British applied a system of indirect rule, which recognized the kingdoms in Uganda. Agreements were signed with the existing monarchs, resulting in the Buganda Agreement, the Toro Agreement, The Ankole Agreement and the Bunyoro Agreement. On Independence, the country got a Multi-Party Westminster

system of government (ibid.).

Mugaju (2000: 20) explains that the already fragile and superficial politics of multipartyism in Uganda was unceremoniously discarded soon after independence. Between 1962 and 1964 the conduct of several parliamentary by-elections and district council elections showed no regard for Multi-Party democracy. By 1964, the abuse of the electoral process and the breach of all the rules of the game of multipartyism had become common place in the body politic of Uganda.

The final nail in the coffin of multipartyism in post colonial Uganda was the politics of ‘crossing the floor’ which were driven by ‘the careerism and opportunism’ and the irresistible power of state patronage. Between 1962 and 1966 most of the DP and KY members of the National Assembly defected to UPC (Mugaju 2000: 21).

On January 8, 1964, Prime Minister Obote while addressing a rally in Lira announced plans to ban political parties. This was the start of what might be called dictatorship by the ruling party following independence. (Kalyegira 2007).

By the time Milton Obote was overthrown by Idi Amin in 1971, he had already decided to turn Uganda into a *de jure* one-party state. Although Amin denounced Obote for imposing a one-party dictatorship and promised to restore Multi-Party Politics, he soon turned the country into a military dictatorship. He banned all political parties and declared himself a life president. He suspended significant sections of the 1967 constitution, and in a way the Constitution ceased to be the supreme law of Uganda (Kituo Cha Katiba 2002). Parliament lost its law-making powers to the head of state [Legal Notice No.1 of 1971], thus making the President not only the ‘supreme law’ but also the sole law-maker [Oloka-Onyango 1993].

As such, after 1964 Uganda became a *de facto* one-party state. Multipartyism was replaced by ‘big-boss-politics’ and militarism. The politicians began to attach more importance to military support rather than public opinion. Opposition politicians were cowed into silence or detained (Mugaju 2000: 21).

The first general election since 1962 was held on December 10, 1980. It was one of the most controversial events in Ugandan history, in the wake of which was born several guerrilla groups opposed to a second presidential term for Milton Obote and a destructive civil war in Buganda that impoverished the area. (Kalyegira 2007). As it were, another military coup on July 27, 1985 overthrew President Obote.

When political parties were allowed to operate, both in the 1960's and 1980's, they were simply breeding grounds for religious, ethnic and regional cleavages (Mugaju and Oloka-Onyango 2000: 1).

3.3 The Movement Political System 1986-2006

In January 1986, Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) finally took power in Uganda and formerly established what it claimed was a new type of democracy, which soon came to be known as 'movement' or 'no-party' democracy. During a five - year civil war aimed at ousting President Milton Obote, Museveni had restored community-level political participation in the areas under NRM control. With the end of the war, the holding of local elections was extended to the whole country and regularized, soon becoming the platform for an indirectly elected national legislature. Then, direct elections for a Constituent Assembly took place in 1994 and, under the new constitution, presidential and parliamentary elections followed in 1996 and 2001 (Carbone 2003: 485).

The foundation of Uganda's 'no-party democracy' is the principle of what is called 'individual merit politics'. The latter was articulated by the NRM leadership as a reaction to a post-independence history of sectarian and ethnically based political parties, the alleged cause of sequential patterns of ethnic exclusion, political violence and chronic instability (ibid).

On the grounds that parties inherently tend to exacerbate communal competition, the 'individual- merit' reform of 1986 aimed at transforming politics – and notably elections- into a game played by individuals only, rather than by political organizations. Thus, parties were banned (or, in fact, marginalized) and all Ugandans were

declared members of an overarching (if loosely structured) Movement (ibid.).

During its first years in office, it presented itself as a movement committed to following a 'scientific' model of political and economic development loosely derived from the classes in political economy and socialism taught in the 1970s at the University of Dar es Salaam, where many of its leaders were educated. The NRM came to power with a self-conceived superiority of thought which it sought to superimpose upon the largely incompetent and decadent civil service bureaucracy and other state structures which it inherited (Ssenkumba 2007).

Soon after seizing power, the NRM suspended the existing political parties in the country on the argument that they were founded upon religious and ethnic lines of division, divisions which they exploited to the point of poisoning Uganda's political climate and bringing the nation-state to the brink. They were accused of not having ideological positions or platforms, and therefore could not help but continue to appeal to divisive parochial loyalties which brought out the worst in Ugandans. The NRM also accused the parties of being dominated by self-serving urban elites with little or no anchorage among the rural majority. But in spite of the decision to formally suspend them, the parties did not wither away as NRM radicals initially hoped. Uganda has, therefore, in reality operated more or less like a three-party system with the NRM increasingly taking on most of the characteristics of the two other parties, namely the Democratic Party (DP) and the Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC). The DP and the UPC, before the rise of the NRM, were the two dominant conventional parties in post-independence Uganda. In suspending them rather than banning them outright, the NRM was able to claim that Uganda was neither a one-party state nor a no-party state (ibid.).

President Yoweri Museveni long argued that the ruling NRM, rather than being a political party, transcended partisan politics. By doing away with the intimidation that is allegedly inherent to contemporary partisan politics in Africa, this system was actually thus more democratic. Relatedly, he claimed that he was responding to popular sentiment, which was against political parties. President Museveni argued that the people wanted Uganda to be united and possess a strong national identity, and that this was

what the NRM represented. According to this reasoning, the people understood that aligning themselves with a political party was not in their own best interest, as it would only serve to further divide the country even more. While Uganda's court system complicated matters by ruling in favor in principle of the existence of political parties, Museveni and his leadership colleagues never showed any sign of abandoning this overall perspective (McMahon 2004: 303).

Carbone (2003: 487) argues that Uganda's political system was best conceptualized as something closer to a hegemonic party-state system. That is, it is neither a fully fledged one-party state (or a situation of political monopoly) nor a three-party system (a pluralist political context), but a situation of political supremacy exercised by a single organization, with smaller opposition groups not able, so far, to put up any significant challenge.

During the debate on the 1995 Constitution nine years later, the advocates of political pluralism strongly urged for the return to a MPP. Kituo Cha Katiba (2002) explain in their report that it was agreed then that a referendum would be held in the year 2000 to decide on whether the country should return to multipartyism, continue with a 'no-party system' or adopt any other form of a democratic system. In the referendum held in the year 2000, those who wanted a 'no-party system' won, the issue of opening up the political space was only postponed and it remained an issue of debate.

3.4 Re-introduction of the Current Multi-Party Political System

The Ugandan debate between multipartyism and a no-party system raged on with a higher momentum after the 2000 referendum. Kituo Cha Katiba (2002) highlighted in their report that the debate on political systems was distorted and that despite the expenditure of shillings 13.5 billion on the 2000 Referendum, the political question remained unresolved and agitation for the expansion of political space continued to flare.

The proponents of the MPP in Uganda argued that the Movement system was detrimental to democracy and the protection of fundamental civil and political rights. Thus,

the restriction of political parties under Article 269 of the Constitution had implications for the fundamental human rights to freedom of assembly, association, and expression. On the other hand, the proponents of the Movement System argued that it had the constitutional right and mandate of the people of Uganda as determined by the 2000 Referendum on Political Systems. This controversy dominated the Presidential campaign in 2001, leading to the establishment of a Constitution Review Commission (Kituo Cha Katiba 2002).

Parliament in 2002 enacted into law the Political Parties and Organizations Act. Mugisha and Fackler (2004) in their article on the media in Uganda entitled 'Uganda Press, Media, TV, Radio, Newspapers stated that they hoped that the passage of this legislation would help remove uncertainty about which political direction Uganda will take. Parties at the time were not yet allowed to field candidates and hold rallies, but under the new law they could hold their delegates conferences to elect their leaders, and they could also hold seminars at the national level but not the districts. The parties were clearly not happy with the law as it did not open up the political space to the level they wanted, but there existed some limited room in which to work for political organization and change (ibid.).

In 2003, the Ugandan Constitutional Court overturned the ban on party activities, but maintained registration requirements that opposition parties claimed interfere with their right to organize. These changes thus took place within a context of institutional constraints (McMahon 2004: 300).

The Movement government which was in power for 20 years prior to the first MPP elections in 2006 never really had a decent exit strategy as President Museveni himself is quoted as saying:

I'm not ready to hand over power to people or groups of people who have no ability to manage a nation ...Why should I sentence Ugandans to suicide by handing over power to people we fought and defeated? It's dangerous despite the fact that the constitution allows them to run against me.... At times the constitution may not be the best tool to direct us politically for it allows wrong and doubtful people to contest for power. (Addressing a rally in Western Uganda. *East African*, 12 February 2001)

However, as McMahon (2004: 308) clearly stated, Uganda, like any other African country, has many qualified people to run it if the society and the state allow it to happen.

The road to MPP was sudden; no wonder many Ugandans doubted President Yoweri Museveni's commitment to it and there was also speculation as to his motives. In an American background report, it is written that,

In March 2003, President Yoweri Museveni had proposed extending presidential term limits, allowing him to run for a third five-year term in office. Museveni, who came to power in a 1986 coup, had retained power in the country's first presidential election in 1996 and was re-elected in 2001. His proposal for a third term drew criticism from many sectors of Ugandan society; including some of Museveni's own ministers. The president also suggested that a 17-year ban on multiparty politics could be lifted, subject to a referendum. Press reports and political commentators speculated that the president could be trying to secure a compromise by allowing multiparty politics in return for a third term (Committee to Protect Journalists –CPJ- 2003).

In a different turn of events five years later another referendum held in April 2005 resulted in this ban being overturned and the February 23rd 2006 presidential elections ushered in the first MPP government.

The transition to MPP was marred with problems from the very beginning of the registration process of the political parties. The National Resistance Movement (NRM) was the first party to register. The party filed its application on June 27, 2003 and was registered four months later. Other applications for registration typically took longer. The Registrar General's office claimed that they had substantial financial constraints that prevented them from carrying out the verification of signatures in time. It is not clear whether the financial constraints of the Registrar General's office were politically constructed or genuine reflections of the economic constraints of Uganda as a developing polity. Was the incumbent deliberately starving the Registrar General's office of cash to suffocate opposition parties? Alternatively, was Uganda simply incapable of financing institutions (such as the Registrar's office and political parties) that are meant to play an important role in transition politics? (Kiiza and Svåsand : 2005).

The opposition continued to feel that the NRM government was continuing to keep them in a vacuum despite the fact that the political space had been opened up. Thus the debates for and against MPP raged on with many wondering how committed the government was to its decision.

Unfortunately, there was more smoke over this issue than light. Thus far, the virtues and vices of no-party democracy versus multi-party politics have not been conducted in a rational, calm moderate, democratic and civilized manner. On the contrary, the debate has been conducted in an atmosphere of mutual contempt, suspicion, name calling and misinformation. The result was confusion and bewilderment for the Ugandan populace. (Mugaju and Oloka-Onyango 2000: 2).

I agree with Chibita (2006: 102) that one of the manifestations of the contradictions in Museveni's democratic reforms has been his engineering of the amendment of the constitution to lift presidential term limits enshrined in the 1995 constitution. They were eventually lifted by a vote in Parliament on July 13, 2005. This was accompanied by other amendments, the gist of which amount to weakening the legislature and the judiciary while giving more powers to the presidency. In addition, the NRM re-invented itself as a party (rather than a 'movement') and publicly embraced MPP, a few months before the 2006 MPP elections.

Indeed, the genuineness and the willingness of the government of the day to see to it that the current MPP system works is questionable. Three years after the first MPP elections were held in 20 years, things don't seem to be getting any better as evidenced by the government's rejection of the Constitutional Court ruling to allow public demonstrations or form processions in any public place without seeking written permission from the Inspector General of Police. According to Afedraru, Ssenkabirwa and Kasozi (2008) all journalists of the Daily Monitor, the Constitutional Court ruled that such a law has no place in a functioning democracy and that the power given to the Inspector General of Police is prohibitive rather than regulatory. The judges argued that it is open ended because it has no duration and as such, the rights available to those who wish to assemble and therefore protest would be violated read the lead judgment by Justice Constance Byamugisha.

In 2005, Mr. Kivumbi Muwanga, the head of Popular Resistance Against Life Presidency, a political pressure group, filed a petition against the Attorney General in which he challenged Section 32 of the Police Act, which says:

If it comes to the knowledge of the Inspector General that it is intended to convene any assembly or form any procession on any public road, street or at any place of public resort and the Inspector General has reasonable grounds for believing that the assembly or procession is likely to cause a breach of peace, the Inspector General may, by notice in writing to the person responsible for convening the assembly or forming the procession, prohibit the convening of such assembly.

The above paints a good picture of the kind of MPP being enjoyed in Uganda today.

3.5 General Remarks

As Professor Joe Oloka Onyango, a senior lecturer at the Makerere University Faculty of Law and a respected political commentator in the country and abroad stated in an interview with Daily Monitor's political editor Charles Mwanguhya, MPP in Uganda is just on paper. He says:

Generally speaking, MPP is yet to take root beyond the personality-driven framework within which it is still mired. Secondly, the state continues to operate as a political party (as distinct from a government, which is the hangover of the movement system (06.2.2008).

Overall, as Oloka Onyango again stated in the same interview, there are two things worth celebrating after the first full year of a MPP environment in Uganda; the mere existence of political parties is a positive development in comparison to the monolithicity of the movement and the degree of internal dissent within all the (major) parties is reflective of some degree of debate over the direction(s) that parties are taking.

It is also true that few contemporary political and socioeconomic transitions on the African continent have been as dramatic or as contradictory as Uganda's. Since the time of independence in 1962, the democratization project seems to have eluded Ugandans again and again. Each passing phase of our political life seems to take us both two steps forward and one step back and thus we are a country in constant transition. During the

period from independence to date Uganda has experienced not only civil strife, but also virtually every form of governance imaginable to the modern human kind –MPP democracy, one-party dictatorship, military fascism, the recent NRM government which was characterized as a ‘no-party’ system and now we have gone full circle to the MPP system of governance (Asiimwe 2006: 2).

While political parties may have been in active politics for about 15 years of Uganda’s 47 years of independence, the longest period of limbo of activities of political parties has been from 1986 to 2004. Secondly, political parties have had to operate in situations of evidently entrenched authoritarian leadership and, over the past decades, a gradual erosion of ideological underpinnings (Onoria 2005: 2).

Goal posts in regard to the system Ugandans wanted to be governed have been shifting since 2000. A survey released by the Afrobarometer and the International Republican Institute in July 2005, six months to go to the polls in February 2006 points out that Ugandans were divided on the major questions of political transition. While Ugandans overall were evenly split about the political direction for the country, urban dwellers and men tended to favour MPP and presidential term limits (Afrobarometer 2005: 1).

According to the same Afrobarometer survey of July 2005, 51% supported the shift to a MPP system and 45% expressed the desire to remain in the Movement system. This is an apparent change of heart, even in rural areas. In an Afrobarometer survey carried out in June 2000, only 36% of Ugandans agreed with the statement that, “We should have many political parties that compete in free elections.” By September 2002, 46% of Ugandans agreed that, “Many political parties are needed to make sure that Ugandans have real choices in who governs them.” In the survey of (April 2005), 56% favoured being able to choose among parties. The availability of choice under Multi-Party competition moved from being a minority to a majority perception. Concomitantly, only a minority felt that parties cause “division and confusion,” down from 62% in 2000 to 42% in 2005 (ibid.).

It is also worth noting that when Ugandans in July 2005, voted in a second referendum to determine whether to return to MPP governance or to retain the Movement

system, President Yoweri Museveni was the ‘chief campaigner’ for a system he had abhorred for nearly three decades and indeed many wondered whether this was out of a paradigm shift or other pressures all together. The reasons he gave for urging Ugandans to vote the MPP system were: (i) To get rid of opponents within the Movement system (baleke bagende), and (ii) to allow the Movement to cleanse itself and move on with those who were truly loyal to the Movement and (iii) Donor pressure to open up (Asiimwe 2006: 4). The above reasons for opening up political space certainly need a lot to be desired. As Oloka writes,

What becomes very clear is that none of the reasons given for transition to a MPP system related to the belief that it was a better political system, even with all its imperfections. The President did not even have the courtesy to acknowledge the internal (non-Movement) which pushed for a return of political parties virtually from 1986. The lack of acknowledgment, and the president’s utter contempt for political opposition makes it clear that President Museveni has not made the conversion to genuine Multi-Party competition (Asiimwe 2006: 4).

The calls for MPP have been made since the Movement was presented as a political system but significant calls that have lead to the present transition from Movement to MPP can be traced to 2001, just a year after the 2000 referendum (Kasacca 2005: 2).

Kasacca (2005: 11) adds that while the debate on change started as early as 2001, formalization of the transition process can be seen with the handing in of the Constitutional Review Commission report, in 2003. He however notes that the change of position on political parties by the leadership of the movement was not followed with action to change the people’s perception towards political parties.

According to Kasacca (2005: 5), the first issue that can be observed in Uganda’s political transition to MPP is that the whole process was mixed up with the succession process. The first calls were for opening up political space, transforming the Movement into a political party, and start the debate on the succession of President Museveni. This debate took secondary position when President Museveni said the issue was not a third term but whether term limits were important. Therefore for all that time the country was engaged in debating the more contentious issue of term limits ignoring the issue of political parties

and preparing the population for change.

34 political parties had registered to participate in the February 2006 elections by November 2005 (FOWODE 2005: 11).

Kasacca (2005: 6) explains that the transition to MPP was done within the general constitution amendment process adding that this mixed up the issues. He argues that the change in political system did not require a constitution amendment because both the Movement and the MPP system of governance are recognized in the constitution. He adds that this change would be effected by procedures laid down clearly in the constitution, either by resolution of parliament supported by two thirds of all district councils or through a referendum. He explains that the only amendments of the Constitution, in line with the transition, would simply operationalise the change to a MPP system. An example of such an amendment is the proposed constitutional amendment to recognize the leader of opposition in parliament.

As it were, managing the transition within the general Constitutional amendment process led to having more contentious issues, like the removal of term limits overshadowing the transition to MPP. As a result, no attention was being adequately paid to the issue of making political parties deliver democracy in Uganda. It was assumed that political parties would deliver democracy, and that people will understand the change. More still, the transition road map first presented in July 2004 was never adhered to and so many activities were done within a very short period. This also affected the quality of the 2006 MPP elections (ibid).

On its part, Foundation of Human rights Initiative in its report on the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections 2006 surmises that “The return to multipartyism was received with a lot of excitement but not much preparation or understanding. Most people were registered as members of one political party or the other without a clear understanding of what party membership entailed. The vast majority of Ugandans went to the polls and voted not out of party loyalty, but they voted for individuals, which is explained by the fact that most Ugandans still only understand the principle of individual

merit” (Asiimwe 2006: 4-5).

Indeed many Ugandans question whether we have ever truly experienced a MPP form of governance or whether what we have had (and may be in danger of reproducing) is many parties without democratic pluralism (Asiimwe 2006: 3).

Such was the environment in which the debate to open up political space took place. The government virtually gave up on civic education, a role that the media took on vigorously. In such circumstances, it is sad to note that the courts were also used to combat critical voices in the media. *Monitor* Political Editor and K FM talk show host Andrew Mwenda, faces 13 charges of sedition and “promoting sectarianism”, a charge that could put him in jail for 5 years. The multi-pronged strategy to increase government control over the media was particularly alarming at a time when the country was entering an election campaign period, when unbiased press coverage was crucial to the democratic process. For instance, while the main national newspapers in Uganda continued to report on the Besigye case and related matters as before, including the government-owned *The Vision*, the pressure was reported to have a chilling effect on public and private radio-stations, some of whom no longer commented on the main political case in the country. If this becomes the trend it will be most detrimental to public debate, given the superior public reach of radio as compared to the print media (Gloppen, Kasimbazi and Kibandama 2006: 6).

As Wikipedia writes, President Museveni of the NRM got 4,109,449 million votes and won with a percentage of 59.26, FDC’s Besigye came second with 2,592,954 votes and a percentage of 37.39, DP’s John Ssebaana Kizito polled 109,583 hundred votes with a percentage of 1.58. Independent candidate Abed Bwanika was fourth with 65,874 votes the equivalent of 0.95 percent while UPC’s Miria Obote came last with 57,071 votes and a percentage of 0.82. In total 6,934,931 million Ugandans voted out of a population of 31,195,754 million an estimate as of July 2006 (Wikipedia).

4. MEDIA LANDSCAPE IN UGANDA

This chapter details the media landscape in Uganda. It gives a history of both the print and broadcast media, discusses the evolution of the media over the years and thereafter details the organization structure of the broadcast media where I discuss the ownership, operations and management of both the commercial and community media and the aspect of financing of the broadcast media. An overview of radio talk shows is discussed before focusing on my case study; the Mambo Bado talk show. I conclude this chapter with an insight of the operations of the media under the multi-party political system.

4.1 History of the Media in Uganda

Uganda media comprise both print and electronic media and it is a mixture of news and entertainment. There are a number of newspapers along with radio and television channels. Due to a rarity of published literature on the history of the media in Uganda, this chapter heavily relies on the work of Monica Chibita (2006). It addresses the print media and gives a more detailed account of the broadcast media.

According to Chibita (2006: 105), the early press addressed class issues to do with land privileges and the role of the Europeans and Asians in the local economy. In the 1930's, newspapers like *Gambuuze*, *Uganda Voice*, *Matalisi* contributed heavily to the political consciousness and action of the 1940's and 1950's in Uganda that culminated in the formation of the first national party (the Uganda National Congress [UNC]) and finally Uganda's independence on 9th October, 1962 (ibid.).

One Uganda country report compiled by Hilda Mupfurutsa also tried to trace the history of the media in Uganda. It says that the situation of the media worsened during Idi Amin's reign of terror, which lasted from 1971 to 1979. It explains that during this time, *The Uganda Argus*, later renamed *The Voice of Uganda* but was popularly known as '*The voice of Amin*' was the government newspaper. It unquestioningly printed Amin and the government's personal views and misinformation and that it was not surprising to see over a dozen pictures of Amin in a single edition during this time and that the paper

was mainly used as a propaganda instrument for Amin's oppressive regime. Other newspapers that existed did not dare speak against the ruling regime and had to go with the “official” version for fear of intimidation and death says the report.

The report continues to say that after Amin, and during the short-lived administrations of Yusufu Lule, Godfrey Binaisa and Paulo Muwanga that followed until December 1980, the Ugandan Press was described as “the freest and most prolific in Africa”. During this period there were 30 to 40 journals and newspapers reflecting every political and ideological hue wrote the report but however, this honeymoon was not to last for long.

Following the December 1980 elections which brought Milton Obote and The Uganda People's Congress (UPC) to power, the situation deteriorated and by the end of 1984 the number of newspapers that could be defined as representing views different from those of the government had been reduced to a handful, all appearing in stenciled editions noted the report. The newspapers at the time were *The Star*, the only English daily; its Luganda edition, *Ngabo*; The Democratic Party Paper, *Munnansi*; the long established Roman Catholic paper, *Munno* and the independent journals, *Weekly Topic*, *Equator*, and *The Ugandan Pilot* (ibid.).

Gariyo (1993: 29-32) adds that the print media after independence became increasingly dominated by the state under the guise of national consolidation. In the process, the private media were systematically weakened (Chibita 2006: 109).

Print is basically the oldest part of Uganda news and media. There are two ‘historic’ daily newspapers; *The New Vision* and the *Daily Monitor*. According to Chibita (2006: 111), the total circulation of both papers currently stands at 65,000, the highest it has ever been. She adds that there are other publications but most of them have a limited circulation and most of the publications are urban-based.

The broadcast media also has its roots in the colonial period. In a bid to stem the upsurge of anti-colonial nationalism in the country, the British government set up the first radio service (the Uganda Broadcasting Service [UBS]) in 1953. The UBS was set up with the

express objective of serving as the state broadcaster. This would help to effectively compete with the nationalists (Chibita 2006: 108).

Chibita (2006: 112) explains that while the print media was mostly driven by civil society, broadcasting in Uganda was initiated by the state and remained funded, controlled and monopolized by the state until 1993 when the NRM government embraced liberalization policies.

The liberalization of the media industry broke the monopoly of government ownership over the press in Uganda marking the beginning of the growth of the media with several newspapers, radio stations and television outlets emerging (Lirri 2006: 32).

Mupfurutsa's country report also highlighted the media's struggles with the "bad laws" which have been in existence as far back as 1991.

In 1992 there was increasing talk within government circles of a new press law because of the proliferation of libel in newspapers like *The Uganda Confidential*. A 54-page bill made public at the Association of Ugandan Journalists' conference in November 1991 was dubbed a "sword of Damocles" by journalists, who saw it as 'superficial and ill-conceived'. The proposed law would force newspaper owners, publishers and printers to swear allegiance to the government when registering titles, give the authority to confiscate equipment and increase prison sentences for selling banned or unregistered publications. Newspapers were to have their permits renewed annually by a Media Council appointed by the government. The head of state could arbitrarily ban any publication he felt was not of the public interest. Journalists condemned the adoption of the Mass Media and Press Bill and the setting up of a media council (Uganda Country report).

As seen from above, the colonial times set the pace at which the current media operates.

4.2 Evolution of the Media

There is no doubt that the media in Uganda has undergone a fundamental transformation over the years from the era of its colonization to the present day. The BBC Uganda Country profile too notes that Uganda is a pioneer in the liberalization of the media in Africa as evidenced by the private radios and TVs that have mushroomed since the government loosened its control in 1993.

A number of press laws affect the media industry: the Ugandan Constitution of 1995, the Press and Journalists Statute (1995), the Electronic Media Statute (1996), the Uganda Communications Act (1997), the Referendum and Other Provisions Act (1999), and the Penal Code Act. However, there is concern that some of the above laws don't empower the media that much because they contradict each other.

The Electronic Media Statute of 1996 guides the Broadcast Media, amends and consolidates previous statutes relating to broadcasting. The right to broadcast is guaranteed by the statute. The Statute also created a regulatory authority for electronic media, the Broadcasting Council. This body is responsible for the licensing and operations of radio and television; publishing a code of ethics for broadcasters in consultation with the Media Council; and standardizing, planning and managing the frequency spectrum in the public interest so as to ensure its optimal utilization and the widest possible variety of programming, including incentive payments where appropriate to ensure provision of broadcasting to rural remote areas (Mugisha and Fackler 2004).

Despite the vagueness of the press laws and process, the relation between state and press continued to improve. That improvement may conceivably be seen more as a comment on the abhorrent conditions under which the press functioned during Amin's rule rather than a statement of current liberal practice and press freedom. The fact that executions no longer occur is a huge improvement indeed. Journalists today can appeal their case and cause based on legislation. The liberalized atmosphere in which licenses to operate are relatively easy to get also improved the relations between the state and the press (ibid.).

However, as the media in Uganda is growing, the government oppression against the media is growing too. For instance four journalists from Daily Monitor are still being accused of criminally defaming the Inspector General of Government, Justice Faith Mwendha, through articles: "IGG in Salary Scandal" published on August 19, 2007 and "'God's warrior' Faith Mwendha stumbles" (Bareebe 2009).

Of recent, three other Daily Monitor journalists, Managing Editor Daniel Kalinaki and senior reporters Angelo Izama and Grace Matsiko have been grilled by the Police

over information contained in an article, which ran in the Sunday Monitor of December 28, 2008, under the title, “Reclusive Kony: UPDF’s tactics under spotlight”. The government claims the information was prejudicial to Uganda’s security (ibid.).

Unlike Kenya, Uganda opposition leaders face big challenges in accessing public media channels and those owned by the ruling party (NRM) owners supporters. In one incident, Dr Kiiza Besigye, the leader of the main opposition party (FDC), was barred from appearing on a talk show hosted by the Kitgum-based Kitti FM, when the radio’s generator was switched off, reportedly on the orders of the area Resident District Commissioner (RDC) (ibid.).

Another popular talk show programme, ‘Tonight with Tegulle’ on UBC was also suspended for allegedly hosting Dr Besigye. The high level of state interference in the activities of the media clearly show that the press in Uganda is faced with tough challenges of withering the controlling elements of a government that is afraid of an independent and critical media (ibid.).

Media experts too have noted that the growth of the media has not necessarily led to the championing of free speech to allow journalists to question the excesses of the executive arm of government and truly play their role as the watchdog of society. According to John Baptist Wasswa, a media consultant and Mass Communication lecturer at Makerere University, “The media in Uganda is expanding in terms of diversity but what is getting stunted, is the serious journalism based on the traditional values of watchdogism and holding leaders and society accountable for what they do” Wasswa adds that the daily press no longer, routinely, sets the agenda for change, breaks stories, expose or make serious political investigations (Bareebe 2009).

More still, in December 2007, two Ugandan media practitioners; Haruna Kanaabi and Peter Kibazo were contracted by Fredrich Ebert Stiftung to carry out a countrywide survey of FM stations. They concluded that the proliferation of FM radios in the country was a case of “Quantity without Quality” (Butagira 2009). This celebrated growth of

the media is still yet to show its worth.

According to Tayeebwa (2003 6-7), the monopoly of the mass media, particularly radio, changed dramatically in August 1993 when the first radio station, Radio Sanyu 88.2 FM went on air to compete with the then only Radio Uganda. Two months later in October 1993, another private radio station, Capital radio 91.3 FM was testing its equipment on air (Kemigisha, 1998). By the time of conducting his study at the end of 2002, up to 64 registered radio stations were competing on Uganda's airwaves. In addition to radio, six television stations are operational, three daily newspapers and eleven weekly newspapers (Steadman Research Services, 2002] *ibid.*).

On her part, Chibita (2006) says that as of July 2005 there were 87 registered parent radio stations and 37 repeater stations. There were also 10 television stations in operation. The most recent figures from Kagole Kivumbi, Secretary to the Broadcasting Council reveal that there are 205 radio stations operating in the country (Maseruka 2009).

Timothy Kalyegira (2007) also notes that by 2007, Uganda with 114 stations had the highest per capital concentration of radio stations in Africa after Mali.

Radio is the most important medium of communication in Uganda. The findings of the Norwegian report on the Media Sector in Uganda which came out in May 2007 states that nearly 90% of the population has access to radio according to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics. The same estimates show that 48 per cent of Ugandans had access to radio in 2005, 6 per cent to television while the print media and television remain preserve of mainly the urban middle class and elite. It also reveals that about half of all Ugandan households (49,2 %) reported that "word of mouth" was their main source of information, followed by radio (47,8 %), according to results of the 2002 census. Less than 1 % of households reported that print media were their main source of information (*ibid.*).

Given that prior to 1993 the state broadcaster was the only broadcaster in Uganda and had the mandate of reaching as many Ugandans as possible in their languages, the advent of privately –owned FM stations from 1993 onwards has created unprecedented potential

for Ugandans to express themselves on different issues and have their voices heard through radio. This is particularly significant in the light of the fact that over 30% of Ugandans are still illiterate and cannot afford a newspaper (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2005:ix). This is complicated by the fact that most newspapers are only available in English, which further narrows the number of Ugandans who can benefit from this as an avenue for information and debate. Uganda is a predominantly agrarian economy and most of its population poor and rural-based, with no possibility of accessing electricity. The liberalization of the media sector, therefore, has given more Ugandans (at least potentially) an opportunity to participate in and through radio (Chibita 2006: 116).

Liberalizing the airwaves opened up political space for more discussion in the public and thus gave a larger percentage of constituents, the ability to easily and quickly transmit their opinions on public policy to their representatives notes the analysis of the state of the media in Uganda, its challenges and way forward prepared by the Broadcasting Council. The analysis also reveals that by empowering ordinary citizens to participate more directly in their political system, the electronic media in Uganda has increased the role of the citizen in the policy making process at the expense of the political “middlemen” who historically have provided the forum through which ordinary citizens could make their interests on specific issues known through interest aggregation and representation (Broadcasting Council).

The liberalization and privatization of the media sector in Uganda has also unleashed a new set of ownership dynamics in the media sector that reflect a distinctly urban and commercial priority. Sixty-five radio stations are currently based in the capital city, and together operate in a maximum of five of the over 30 languages and dialects of the people of Uganda. This excludes the state radio which operates in 24 languages. State television operates mainly in English with one bulletin each in Luganda (the majority language) and Kiswahili, the regional lingua franca (Chibita 2006).

The Ugandan media is still faced with the problem of which language to broadcast. There are over 56 indigenous languages. Kiveru and Ngabirano (2005 22) observe that the issue of languages is perhaps the biggest problem to the Ugandan media industry mostly

because Uganda does not have any common language (Chibita 2006: 71).

Liberalizing the media sector has enabled stations to be set up in people's home areas, broadcasting in their own languages for longer uninterrupted periods. Where having two hours on *Radio Uganda* was considered generous, some of the private stations visited now broadcast nearly 100% of their time (up to 24 hours a day) in one local language. While all of *Radio Uganda's* programming originates from the headquarters and is often translated from English, the private stations are based in the people's home areas and air most of their programmes live. Stations like Radio West (Western Uganda), Radio Wa (Northern Uganda) and CBS (Central Region) thus pose a challenge for UBC whose operations are highly centralized (Chibita 2006: 122).

Thus far, accessibility is the most celebrated aspect of radio. Maps of World explains that today Uganda radio has been able to reach even the remote places in Uganda where the people before had no concept about the radio. Radio has also successfully managed to eliminate the issue of class divide. It has been able to come out from the limits of its reach to contact all the classes of society.

The major radio stations in Uganda include Sanyu FM, Central Broadcasting Service (CBS) operated by Buganda Kingdom, K FM, Radio One, Radio Two, Radio Simba, Touch FM, Radio Maria, Uganda Broadcasting Corporation and Capital FM. As the "Africa Media Development Initiative report – State for the media/Uganda country report" wrote, the media are still largely urban-focused, but the radio sector is the most geographically spread. On the other hand, the Media Sustainability Index (MSI) Africa report (2007) notes that the state media continue to fill in gaps left by commercial broadcasters by covering developmental, educational issues, and other programs that commercial media neglect.

4.3 Organization, Structure and Operation of the Media

Chibita (2006: 127) writes that the official custodians of information on the ownership of the broadcast media in Uganda are the Office of the Registrar General and the Broadcasting Council. The former is charged with the registration of all

commercial enterprises while the latter is charged with regulating the broadcast media and licensing them. Both keep records of all broadcast stations regarding details such as date of registration, location, ownership and directorship. It should be noted, however, that the information available on different stations' files differs, with some stations having only the basic facts about when they were registered and by whom and others having detailed financial returns for each year since they were licensed.

4.3.1 Ownership

Media ownership in Uganda's private broadcast media is going to be looked at in regard to political influence, cultural power and state ownership and lastly poverty and media ownership.

The ownership landscape in Uganda's broadcast media is far from diverse. Records at Uganda's Registrar of Companies and the Broadcasting Council reveal that more than half of all the radio stations operating in Uganda today are controlled by active, rich and powerful individual politicians in the National Resistance Movement or their sympathizers. Hardly any station is known to be controlled by an opposition political organization although such political influence may be discernible in a few radio stations, such as those controlled by the Catholic Church which is known to be allied to the opposition- Democratic Party. Others are owned by religious organizations and non-governmental organizations. Political clout here works hand in hand with financial muscle to compromise diversity as the individuals who own the most successful radio and television stations in Uganda (mostly based in Kampala) are all wealthy business men and women in good standing with the government. These individuals also have interests in other areas ranging from farming, to school supplies to the automobile industry (Chibita 2006: 170).

The state controls the largest number of frequencies. Even so-called community stations are in reality not owned by communities but by powerful sponsors like Sida and UNESCO. Perhaps because of the costs of setting up and running a radio or television

station compared to the average Uganda's income, the people who own the media tend to belong to the same (middle-class) socio-economic group. Although Ugandans still predominantly own the broadcast media, some foreign investors have come into the broadcast sector. Examples of these include Reginald Mengi, a media mogul based in Tanzania who owns two radio stations, a television station and two newspapers, and the Nation Media Group who own a radio station and a television station in Uganda. The Aga Khan family who own the Nation Media Group have media outlets in Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa as well (127-128: *ibid.*).

The historical advantage of the Central region is reflected in the uneven distribution of the media adds Chibita (2006). She explains that there are 44 radio stations located in the Central (Buganda) Region, where the capital city, Kampala, is situated. Ten of the 14 television stations currently on air are also located in Kampala. This is at least twice as many radio and television stations as any of the other regions. Most private radio and television stations, though licensed as local stations have taken advantage of the lax regulatory environment to spread out as far as is economically viable. As a result, stations like the *Central Broadcasting Service (CBS)*, *Capital Radio*, *Radio West* and *Wavah Broadcasting Services (WBS)* each now cover approximately more than half of the country's area. Some religious stations that were initially established as community stations with limited reach also continue to set up boosters to expand their coverage. Hence *TOP Radio* owned by an evangelical pastor and *Radio Maria* owned by the Catholic Church each cover more than half of the country's area (*ibid.*).

The location of radio stations is largely dictated by commercial factors. Thus the largest concentration of radio and television stations are located in Kampala and in the major towns of Lira, Kampala, Mbale and Mbarara in the Northern, Central, Eastern and Western regions. The poorest districts are more likely to have community stations than commercial stations. Not only are most radio stations in any of the regions found in the commercially lucrative urban centres, but they also broadcast in only one or two of the many languages in their areas. However, in areas that are characterized by great ethnic heterogeneity, like Eastern Uganda, some of the stations broadcast in up to seven

languages (ibid.).

Records further reveal that in every region of the country there is at least one station (and usually more) where the key owners or share holders/ directors belong to the ruling NRM. It is not unusual for key politicians to own media stations, especially in their constituencies. These politicians have used their stations to mobilize their electorate, especially during the period immediately preceding elections. This is significant as radio is crucial in an agrarian setting such as Uganda's where important information for the community is typically conveyed through radio announcements. The Vice-President, for instance, acquired a radio station in his constituency in 2005. This in spite of the official position of the Broadcasting Council that politicians of any persuasion are not allowed to own stations as this threatens political diversity. The Vice President used his radio station to campaign vigorously for re-election in the elections that took place in February 2006. The ministers in charge of defence, health and information as well as several members of parliament also each owned a station by election time in February 2006. A group of politicians headed by a member of parliament and all belonging to the NRM in 2004 brought enough political pressure to bear upon the regulator to be able to secure a broadcasting license even though officially there was a ban on the issuance of new licenses pending the completion of a spectrum planning exercise (Chibita 2006: 129).

Chibita (2006) adds that although her study could not establish the presence of any station owned by an opposition politician, sections of the opposition exercise indirect influence especially through some of the radio stations controlled by friendly religious denominations.

When it comes to cultural power, Chibita (2006) notes that the old monarchies of Buganda, Tooro, Bunyoro and Busoga that are seen by many Ugandans as the citadels of cultural values and loyalties each own a radio station. The shareholders typically include a mixture of wealthy business people and individuals who are highly placed in the Kingdom government and who belong to the respective ethnic group. *CBS*, with over 20 shareholders by August 2005 had one non- Muganda shareholder. *CBS* has been central

to promoting the political and cultural interests of the Buganda Kingdom which epitomizes the interests of the powerful Baganda ethnic group and has run into trouble with government, often being threatened with closure. The directors of *CBS* represent the different clans of Buganda.

According to Chibita (2006: 129-130), her investigation suggests that on the whole, the poor do not own media channels in Uganda. She elaborates that the current law does not lay down any clear criteria that qualify a medium to be called a community medium. However, there are stations that by standard definitions of a community media (not-for-profit, serving a specific community of interest or geographical community, set up by and for the people come close). These include *Kagadi-Kibaale FM* in Western Uganda, *Maama FM* in the Central region, *Radio Apac* in Northern Uganda, and five other stations located in the East and South Western part of Uganda. It is important to note though that all of these stations depend on some kind of foreign funding for their survival. According to Lutaaya (2005), although many of the ‘community’ stations employ volunteers and maintain fairly low overhead costs, they still are having difficulties in raising their license fees and paying their basic expenses. Hence *Maama FM* has been supported by a Norwegian NGO, *Kagadi-Kibaale FM* by Sida and *Radio Apac* and several of the other ‘community’ radio stations by UNESCO.

4.3.2 Operation of the Private Media

Commercial media

The privately owned stations in Uganda operate in a relative regulatory vacuum as far as language is concerned. The Electronic Media Act (Uganda 2000a) makes no mention of language, which leaves the privately owned stations the flexibility to choose what languages to broadcast in and in what proportions regardless of their location. Consequently, most of the commercial radio stations broadcast in one or two languages that are deemed commercially viable in their target area. These languages need not be the indigenous languages of the people in the station’s geographical area of operation. *Capital Radio*, for instance, has booster stations in the Eastern and Western region, but

they broadcast almost exclusively in English. Similarly *Radio Simba* relays programming to Mbale in Eastern Uganda in Luganda, even though Luganda is not the mother tongue of the majority of Mbale residents. However, leaving nothing to chance, *Capital Radio* acquired a sister station, *Beat FM* which broadcasts almost exclusively in Luganda, the language of commercial transaction in large sections of the country. Simba on its part also acquired a new station, *Hot 100 FM* which broadcasts almost predominantly in English. Surveys have regularly ranked Capital FM and Simba FM as two of the three most popular stations in the country (Chibita 2006: 130).

Chibita continues that however, for the most part, market logic dictates that commercial stations use the language of the people of the area that they broadcast to. Even though most parts of Uganda have speakers of more than one language, most commercial radio stations have zeroed in on the major or most agreed upon language in their area of broadcast. She emphasizes that all the eleven radio stations in the different regions of Uganda that she visited have selected one major local language that appeals to the majority in that region, and they broadcast over 80% of their time in that language. Hence Simba and CBS in the Central region broadcast predominantly in Luganda, Radio Wa and Radio Apac in Northern Uganda broadcast mostly in Lwo, and Radio West in Western Uganda broadcasts in the 3Rs (Runyankole, Rukiga, Rutooro). The Eastern region is, however, different because of its linguistic composition and also its interaction with people from Western Kenya. As such, the private radio stations there tend to experiment with more languages, with no apparent formula. For most stations, the selected language/s of broadcast are those deemed to be the most ‘commercially viable’ (ibid.)

It is important to note that both public and private media operate as profit-generating businesses and are generally run in an efficient manner.

The Community media

Financial constraints define the operation of the community media in Uganda. Although registered as non-for-profit, most community stations have defied Broadcasting Council

rules and taken to advertising just to survive. In many ways, therefore, community radio stations in Uganda have been compelled by financial hardship to operate very much like commercial stations. To remain viable for advertisers, a number of community radio stations have experimented with several languages to cast a wider net. This experimentation has also been brought about by these stations' inability to retain staff who speak a given language and therefore the need to work with whatever talent is available. Lutaaya (2005), a manager at *Maama FM* who has also worked with *Kagadi-Kibaale FM*, explained that community media in Uganda find it difficult to fulfill their mandate as media by and for their given communities as they are often answerable to donors as well as advertisers and sponsors. Lutaaya attributes this to lack of political clarity on the role of community media in the broadcast industry.

4.3.3 Organization Structure

The structure of most of the radio stations is the same. The owners usually serve as the Managing Directors or Directors, next to them is Station Manager then the Head of Production and News Editor who share the same status followed by the presenters.

Programming in Uganda's private media is dominated by entertainment. Radio stations generally shun pre-recorded programming in favour of spontaneous live programming because the latter costs much less. This has been documented by a number of recent empirical studies (see for instance, Anderson and Kibenge 2005; Uganda Broadcasting Council 2004, Chibita 2006: 132).

According to Chibita (2006), while the media owners interviewed said they cultivate this synergy because entertainment is what the people want, the producers said the reasons for the prevalence of entertainment programming in Uganda's media are also related to the need of broadcast media owners to remain politically safe, since broadcast licenses are renewable by government annually. In addition, producers argued that the appeal of a globalised youth culture is irresistible to media owners as it assures them of a section of the market.

4.3.4 Financing

Radio stations finance themselves hence depending heavily on advertising. (Chibita 2006: 135) wrote that because of the need to survive economically, most so-called independent producers have no illusions about editorial independence. Kakooza (2005), an independent producer captures the irony on ‘independent’ production in a commercialized environment: ‘If you are a commercial producer you cannot be independent. ...Most productions are commissioned and paid for. There are therefore very few pieces without interference.’ Luyimbazi (2005) emphasizes this point: ‘No! Not at all! Never! Not as long as the economic factors are determined by the client.’ Luyimbazi adds that there are other limitations like public morality issues and fearing to be seen to de-campaign government programmes.

Privately-owned stations also derive their revenue from announcements. The advertising market is small and dominated by a few economic giants, such as MTN, Makerere University, UTL and Celtel. Radio broadcasters like CBS, Capital Radio, Radio Simba, K FM, Dembe FM and Radio One have customers who sponsor some of their programmes. Well-known companies that sponsor programmes on those radios include MTN, Celtel, Nile Breweries and Coca-Cola to mention but a few. These radios generally realize higher revenue than others (African Media Development Initiative 2006: 16).

Media managers however still have misgivings on the issue of regulation. According to Chibita (2006: 189), one argument frequently raised by the media managers and owners interviewed is that government has no right to regulate a sector it does not fund. Their concern is subject to debate.

4.4 Radio Talk Show Programmes

Given the NRM government’s emphasis on popular participation, it makes a big difference that people should have the opportunity to participate in debate through the broadcast media in their own languages or in languages more familiar to them than

English. Media owners in Uganda recognize this and the majority have taken advantage of it by ensuring the presence of at least one of the local languages on the programming schedules of stations they own (Chibita 2006: 155).

The privately owned stations have also made recorded open-air debates and call-in-shows a regular part of their menu. This pro-active approach has enabled the different stations to create niches for themselves. These programmes have become popular as they host politicians including the Head of State, cabinet ministers and specialists from different fields. One could argue, basing on this, that the potential for ordinary people in Uganda to participate in their governance through public debate exists and that Ugandans have the latitude to make choices with regards to participation in the media (156: *ibid.*).

Mwesige (2004: 153) argues that political talk shows in Uganda are of some democratic significance to the extent that in the absence of full-fledged political freedoms, this is the only avenue for public debate that Ugandans have (*ibid.*).

However, Mwesige notes that at a deeper level, the radio talk shows may not be as democratic a medium as one may at first presume. He argues that the new commercial FM stations in Uganda are dominated by the elite, and particularly career politicians, in terms of ownership and participation. Mwesige (2004: 105) also says some politicians (both from the government and opposition side) routinely sponsor 'mercenaries' to call into as many talk shows as possible to scuttle the agenda of the opposite side. A number of these are also sponsored to attend and participate in open-air debates (transmitted over radio) on the understanding that they would toe the 'correct' ideological line (Chibita 2006: 156).

Chibita adds that not only does this call into question the genuineness of such public discourse and what real effect it could have on policies affecting the way people are governed; it also demonstrates some of the inadequacies of the market as regulator.

She continues that another study also conducted in Uganda, (Uganda Broadcasting

Council 2004: 26) found that most of the airtime for political talk shows and other interactive political programming is paid for and for the most part goes to the most vigilant, most accessible, highest bidder.

On the whole, almost every radio station has a daily call-in-political talk-show and an open-air debate once every week on Saturday, especially the radio stations in Kampala, the capital city.

As Mwesige (2004) argues, it is in countries such as Uganda, where mediating institutions such as political parties are not fully functional and where civil society remains weak that the direct voice of the ordinary people who are most affected by the decisions of those in power becomes critical. This is where opportunities for participation in democratic discourse in the indigenous languages could make a contribution (Chibita 2006: 102).

Peter Kibazo, 34, has been hosting talk shows for the past eight years and is currently the host of *Olutindo (The Bridge)* that runs from Monday to Friday on Radio Simba and *Issues at Hand* On WBS Television. On Saturday morning, he hosts *Face the Press*, which features journalists and activists on Radio Simba. Kibazo says there is a love-hate relationship between talk show hosts and the state adding that the government seeks to control the host especially of the most popular talk shows (EastAfricaPress.com 2008).

Charles Mwanguhya, who is also the political editor of the *Daily Monitor* and a talk-show host of the *Hot Seat* on K FM says the President has determined the tone of the talk shows.

You heard him the other day saying that those who abuse him on radio are stupid. What do you think will be their response? Museveni describes past presidents as swine and opposition leaders as overspill millet; he should expect answers in the same vein (ibid).

However, Mwanguhya concedes that some issues on radio are not properly researched and that some speakers, especially those who call in, can sometimes be excessively emotional but also points out that the moderators have always intervened or even

restrained insulting contributors (ibid.).

According to EastAfricaPress.com, although there are no direct threats after elections, the state usually employs the business card or compromises hosts. Some talk show hosts and journalists are regular at a Kampala petrol station where they fuel at no charge at least once a week.

4.5 Mambo Bado Talk Show

As the public call-in shows became more popular, Radio One FM 90, in November 2000, started a unique form of radio broadcasting that was to significantly change Uganda's participatory mass media landscape. The show was called *Ekimeeza* (Luganda language for round-table discussion) and was hosted in a public place at the outskirts of Kampala city called Club Obligato. The producer of *Ekimeeza*, Anne Lydia Sekandi, said in an online interview that the show was started to provide a voice to opposition politicians in the wake of the March 2001 presidential elections. She said that what started as a simple forum for discussing social-political issues soon became a platform for opposition politicians to vent their anger and frustration at the ruling NRM government headed by President Museveni. Government officials too jumped on board and Kampala literally came on fire (Tayeebwa 2003: 7).

Seeing the success of Radio One's *Ekimeeza*, throughout 2001, Radio Simba 97.3 FM took the cue, albeit belatedly in June 2002, and started yet another outside participatory broadcasting programme called *Simbawo Akati* (Luganda language loosely translated as 'A Moment Please'). Like in the case of Radio One, the show was hosted in a public place at New Life Bar in Nakulabye, a heavily populated Kampala suburb (ibid.)

One month later, a third radio station, CBS FM 88.8 was on air in July 2002 with its own interactive outside program known as *Mambo Bado* (Kiswahili language loosely translated as ('The Struggle Continues'] ibid.).

Mambo Bado broadcast on CBS also commonly known as 'Radio Buganda' runs

every Saturday for two hours from 4 to 6 p and is hosted by Mityana South Member of Parliament (MP) Ssozzi Kaddu Mukasa. Kaddu has been hosting this show since its inception. The discussions feature ordinary members of the public, MPs, ministers, civil servants, politicians of different shades, e.t.c.

CBS, one of the famous local radio stations broadcasts on a number of frequencies with a wide coverage country wide and enjoys a mass audience. It is alleged by EastAfricaPress.com that that is one of the reasons why government has been sensitive about its broadcasts, particularly those in Luganda, a language spoken and understood by a large percentage of the country's voting population.

The Buganda Kingdom under its traditional leader, King Ronlad Muwenda Mutebi, owns about 51 percent shares in the station, the biggest in the country. Individual Baganda shareholders are holding the remaining 49 percent. The radio station, the biggest in the country, commands an audience of over four million, mainly Baganda, found in the country's central region (EastAfricaPress.com).

CBS radio operates channel 88.8, which goes along with its up-sister station on channel 89.9, which also has an up-country station on 87.7. The government is targeting channels 89.2/87.7 because they host numerous talk shows that are blamed for contributing in eroding Museveni's popularity in the central region. This CBS channel hosts a Monday to Friday Kkiriza oba Gaana, a 7pm to 9pm talk show that features journalists on Wednesdays and MPs on Thursdays. It also hosts Mambo Bado (Kimeeza) talk show every Saturday from mid-day to 5pm. It also runs on Saturday morning an English talk show, Cross Fire, from 10pm to mid-day. The week is crowned with another talk show on Sunday, which lasts for two hours up to mid-night, called Twejukanye (Let us remind ourselves), a phone in talk show (ibid.).

The Mambo Bado Programme of Saturday 11th October 2008 is the latest one to raise concern with the Broadcasting Council:

We acknowledge receipt of the recordings which were duly forwarded to the Council by CBS. We find that these recordings raise similar queries that have

been the subject of our previous meetings and point to the fact that CBS needs to adhere to the minimum broadcasting standards and to the way forward agreed to. The Electronic Media Act section 7 read together with section 8 thereof requires that the right to broadcast be exercised in accordance with the minimum broadcasting standards which are contained in the First schedule to the Act. This indeed has been the subject of our continued dialogue (The Daily Monitor 2008).

4.6 Media under the Multi-Party Political System

The media in general is now operating under the tight scrutiny of government but CBS among the radio stations and the daily Monitor among the newspapers are the most targeted. According to EastAfricaPress.com, CBS has received its last warning from government. It either has to tone down or face closure. The warning is contained in an October 22nd 2008 letter signed by the Secretary of the newly inaugurated Broadcasting Council, Kagole Kivumbi.

It is the talk shows that are causing President Yoweri Museveni sleepless nights. In fact, last July the lone voice on Twejukanye, Betty Nambooze, was detained for a week and driven across the country from one Police cell to another. She was charged with sedition and released. This youthful outspoken opposition Democratic Party (DP) publicist is the chairperson of the Buganda Central Civic Education Committee (CCEC), which Kabaka appointed to sensitise his subjects against a proposed land amendment law. Museveni wants the law badly but the Buganda Kingdom is opposed to it (ibid.).

For instance, EastAfricaPress.com explains that in the case of the land amendment law, CBS is perceived to have taken sides in the debate, something that has incensed Museveni. Nambooze was arrested together with two Buganda Kingdom ministers of information, Charles Peter Mayiga and Medard Lubega. The two ministers also have radio programmes on CBS radio. The government has for long been trying to deal with CBS without much success. There was a proposal in cabinet to close it down while another proposal suggested that only 89.2, the talk show channel, should be shut. Monitor's K FM radio was shut for a week when Museveni complained that journalist Andrew Mwenda had insulted him. But more convincing reasons, it seems, must be found before a Buganda radio's license can be withdrawn (ibid.).

Nganda (2008) reveals that a big change happened on Saturday July 26th 2008 after the hostages had been released. The 'Mambo Bado' (*Kimeeza*) talk show was held inside CBS studios and not outside as is the practice. But the arrests were this time discussed. Such is the situation at CBS, which Museveni is bent on closing. He alleges that he knew for a fact that an order to close this radio had been issued and soldiers/Police deployed in Bakuli, Nateete and around Bulange to counter any possible riots. These soldiers were recalled after the decision was rescinded. He adds that he doesn't know when it will be reinstated, considering that the President was in Jinja the week before threatening to close "stupid" radios (ibid.).

CBS has now been denied a license. The annual license for CBS' 89.2/87.7 expired in June 2008. The Broadcasting Council has refused to renew it for the first time, citing technical reasons. Under the Press and Journalist Statute of 1995, radio presenters and producers are supposed to be registered with the Media Council. They are supposed to be graduates of media related studies or have postal qualification in the media. Only one CBS presenter is qualified in media studies. The other two for the explosive talk shows are graduates in other fields (EastAfricaPress.com).

So on August 20th, 2008, the Broadcasting Council wrote to CBS demanding information about producers and presenters of the radio's various talk shows. But, apart from the issue of qualifications of the presenters and producers, the Broadcasting Council is demanding that CBS installs a "pre-listening device that would enable them to at least control what is broadcast," according to the October 22nd 2008 letter to CBS radio manager (ibid).

The Council further demands "adequate technical facilities" that will enable presenters of the popular Mambo Bado talk show hosted outside the studio control the crowd. Officially this is the reason CBS's license has not been renewed. And the Council has issued what seems like the last warning; "We do make it clear, and specific, that from the date of this communication to you on this subject, should CBS fail on its obligations in accordance with the law, we shall, without further notice, (in accordance with section 10(a) and 25 (2) of the Act in execution of our functions) have no other alternative other than restraining 89.2 FM from further contravention of the Electronic Media Act,"

wrote the Broadcasting Council Secretary, Kagole Kivumbi (ibid).

EastAfricaPress.com continues to say that this is not an ordinary letter because it is copied to the Minister for Internal Affairs and Inspector General of Police. In an interview, Kagole Kivumbi denied there were plans to close down the radio but government sources insist CBS will retain only one channel (88.8), which has no talk shows. In fact, the President is angry that regulatory bodies are not protecting him from what he calls "lies and insults". Although technical reasons are cited, the refusal to renew CBS's license is primarily about what Museveni calls lies and insults.

The Broadcasting Council gave CBS fresh guidelines in form of a reminder as per their meetings on August 24th and September 7th, 2007, where the station agreed to abide by some strange conditions, which include the following;

- Guide personalities invited on the talk shows
- Instruct and take charge of presenters /producers to ensure they strictly adhere to script during discussions. Scrutinize topics in respect of their sensitivity
- Invite guests with divergent views to ensure balance
- Guests to sign agreement that they would take responsibility for what they say before going on air
- Not to invite same guests on same programme repeatedly

The hide and seek over CBS license has taken its toll and the station has, among other things, started censoring comments and vetting guests. Those deemed critical of the government are no longer allowed on CBS. Presenters and producers sympathetic to the opposition are allegedly having problems with the station management and could quit. CBS is completely a changed station. The radio now prefers discussing sports and leisure as opposed to explosive governance and democracy issues that made it very popular (EastAfricaPress.com).

Like K FM earlier, Capital Radio recently asked Andrew Mwenda to stay away from the 'Capital Gang' talk show. William Pike had been asked to choose between his business and Mwenda. He chose his business (Nganda 2008).

Nganda (2008), however warns CBS that if it caves in, it must know that other demands

will follow. Museveni will wake up one day and demand that a particular song offends him and therefore it should be removed. He adds, “The other day he demanded that studios of CBS be taken out of Bulange”. He emphasizes that if they accept that one, they might have to accept more ending with a plea that CBS must know why it is being targeted. He offers one reason, that it has paralysed the oppressor by making disgruntled Baganda aware of each other's disgruntlement and of their collective strength. Nganda says this is what Museveni calls “okukyayisa NRM in Buganda” - making NRM unpopular in Buganda.

Earlier on this year, a special cabinet sub-committee was set up to review all progressive media laws, with a recommendation that more stringent controls be written into a planned policy framework. Butagira (2008) writes that the above engenders mischief. According to him, the cabinet onslaught on the freedom of the media is not just an isolated crackdown on independent journalists, but rather the first thrust by the ruling NRM government to intimidate critics ahead of the 2011 general elections.

Livingstone Ssewanyana, the executive director of the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), argued that the government wants to further whittle down the space for independent thought and action as expressed in the free media. By harassing media practitioners the way Daily Monitor photojournalist Joseph Kiggundu was manhandled by security operatives while covering the equally violent April 26 arrest of three bi-monthly Independent magazine journalists, the state, observers say, is asserting that it will not tolerate criticism (Butagira 2008).

Joining Ssewanyana, the national coordinator of Human Rights Network – Uganda, Mohammed Ndifuna, issued a statement noting: “The attacks (on the media) constitute grave and worrisome state interference with the media in Uganda and a breach of the fundamental and basic rights and freedoms which are universal, interdependent and inalienable” (ibid.).

Information minister on the other hand Kirunda Kivejinja told the nation that there is a need for government to “appreciate in greater depth the inner intricacies of the

media and its function in our society” since the Fourth Estate plays “cross-cutting” roles (Butagira 2008).

However, not many agree with government. Dr George Lugalambi, the head of Mass Communication Department at Makerere University, said the government was behaving irrationally: “Ugandans should be trusted to be rational enough and able to judge what they hear on radio, watch on television or read in the newspapers and make choices on what is good and wrong”. The essence of democracy, which embodies free media practice and free thinking according to Lugalambi is that ideas be traded without restriction on a public platform – whether the views are against or in favour of those in authority. Lugalambi said there already exist enough laws - the ones on sedition and criminal defamation being excessively repressive and outdated-for the government to use when practicing journalists err (ibid.).

Museveni’s fight against media has been on-going. While addressing the nation at the opening of the third session of the 8th Parliament on 5th June 2008, he drew battle lines with monarchs, the media and the political opposition reported Charles Mwanguhya Mpagi, Mercy Nalugo and Yasiin Mugerwa all journalists with the Daily Monitor.

According to these journalists, Museveni, who has been involved in battles with the traditional kingdom of Buganda over a proposed new land law, said he will not allow “traditional chiefs” who failed to protect the sovereignty of Africa from colonial invasion to stand in the way of development. They added that the President conspicuously avoided use of the respectful titles of King, Kabaka or Omukama.

I supported the restoration of these traditional chiefs but they must know that they had failed to protect the sovereignty of African societies. While I support the traditional institutions, I cannot accept that they stand in the way of development. It will not happen; it will not happen (Mwanguhya et al 2008).

His attack on the media and particularly Daily Monitor was possibly the strongest of his about three-hour speech. “[A] newspaper has no right to damage our future. You publish one false story, immediately it is on the Internet and all over the world, you have no

right” (ibid.).

He emphasised as he waved a photocopy of an article Daily Monitor published in April 2005 in which the government wanted to give the Dairy Corporation to a Thai investor for a nominal fee of one dollar. The journalists continued that the attack on Daily Monitor newspaper was part of the President’s prepared address. Waving the article, Mr Museveni snapped, “How could I sell Dairy Corporation for one dollar? Am I an imbecile?” He claimed that as a result of the story in Daily Monitor the first investor, a Thai Company Malee Sampran was scared off the project; “What right do such saboteurs have to sabotage our investment? What right do you have to damage our future?” (ibid.).

Daily Monitor investigation at the time according to these journalists found that the investor, Malee Sampran Inc had no money to make the investment, a discovery that helped the government to look elsewhere for the current investors, Sameer Agriculture and Livestock (Mwanguhya et al 2008).

Journalists on 2 May 2008 petitioned Parliament calling for a comprehensive media law reform in the country, a day before the rest of the world celebrated World Press Freedom day. The journalists in a petition they handed over to the Speaker, Edward Ssekandi called on Parliament to highlight the plight of the media (Nalugo 2008).

Uganda Parliamentary Press Association President, Emmanuel Gyezaho who presented the petition said much as the NRM government has granted freedom of expression, “it has allowed negative traits of the past regimes to continue to stray into new legislation”. He said the sedition laws which were imposed by the colonial government because they never wanted nationals to agitate for independence are still being used by the current regime to muzzle the press (ibid.).

Obnoxious provisions like the Penal Code Sections 48, 52 and 53 which restrict publications considered to raise disaffection with the government of the day, are just examples of the laws that have found maximum currency in Uganda under the NRM (Nalugo 2008).

The journalists in their statement said that the law on sedition makes the person of the

President stand above the law and have a larger than life image. The statement read in part:

Using such archaic and repressive laws, the executive has often trampled upon the rights of journalists and even while many of the cases have been won in our favour, the end result of police interrogation and detention over stories we publish has only been self censorship, a worse crime (Nalugo 2008).

They called on Parliament to amend all the oppressive laws and implement the Access to Information Act passed in April 2006. Gyezaho decried the rate at which the press is being harassed. Speaker Ssekandi said he would consult the Executive to address the issues which were highlighted. He added that he was going to call the chairman of the Uganda Law Reform Commission (Nalugo 2008).

Andrew Bagala also a journalist with the Daily Monitor reported on 27th June 2008 that security personnel had started posing as scribes in riots. He explained that in what appears as a ploy to antagonise free media operations, security operatives are reportedly masquerading as journalists during riots and public rallies organised by the opposition.

Reports say security operatives impersonate scribes from different media organisations but later involve themselves into brutal arrests of people, an act that has put journalists at risk of being confronted by the rioters. On 23rd June, journalists expressed their worries to the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Major General Kale Kayihura, of the continued security operatives' masquerading as journalists (Bagala 2008).

According to Bagala, Kayihura admitted that some of his officers were indeed masquerading as reporters but he described it as part of security work:

The challenge is the security must also do its work but we can't discuss that now because covert security by definition is masquerading. The problem is on security side, they don't have to be known by people like you that they are masquerading.

Bagala (2008) reveals that during the Democratic Party (DP) rally in Kampala on June 7, security operatives reportedly masqueraded as journalists, taking notes and making audio and video recordings. He continues that reporters were shocked when the purported

scribes started executing their regular assignment. Bagala adds that on June 15 at Mulago DP rally, Church Ambrose Bukenya, a Uganda Young Democrat, also accused some of the security operatives of intruding journalism profession which he said had facilitated the arrest of many DP supporters:

There are operatives we have seen at Central Police Station but we were shocked to see them carrying identity cards of recognised media companies around their necks. They carried video cameras, tape recorders and carried out interviews claiming they were taking them to their media houses.

To crown it all, there have been fire outbreaks in some media premises one for the print media and the other a radio station belonging to the former state minister of Health Captain Mike Mukula. Eleven gangsters armed with AK47 rifles on Saturday night invaded and burnt the Red Pepper printing press in Namanve, on Jinja Road on 28th June reported Paul Amoru, Sheila Naturinda and Andrew Bagala of the Daily Monitor. According to these journalists, CCTV cameras caught 11 mask-wearing men storming the Red Pepper compound and overpowering four guards before unleashing the explosives that left a wreckage of the printing press. They added that the incident, which had the hallmarks of a carefully planned operation, was executed shortly after midnight and it lasted only 10 minutes, according to the CCTV footage seen by Daily Monitor.

Richard Tusiime, the Red Pepper managing director, said a generator worth Shs100 million was damaged by the explosives. The blast blew off part of the iron roofing, and there were huge dents and cracks in the walls that housed the printing press. Tusiime described the damage as extensive adding that the explosives may have been home-made petrol bombs. Tusiime said: “They came in [a] pick-up [vehicle] and held our guards at gunpoint....The police came in long after a lot was already [up] in the flames (Amoru et al 2008).

Arinaitwe Ruyendo, the paper’s Managing Editor, called it a “terror attack on media freedom” wrote these journalists. This was the second attempt to burn these same premises according to Daily Monitor. About a month ago, some unknown people carrying four jerry cans of petrol attempted to burn the same premises but were defeated,

according to a reliable source at The Red Pepper. The CCTV footage captured the entry of the arsonists, but it did not show how they left (Amoru et al 2008).

Solomon Muyita (2008) of the Daily Monitor also reported that President Yoweri Museveni on 23rd July vowed to stop offensive programmes on local radio stations, which he said were full of lies about him and his government. During the official opening of the 16th annual Source of the Nile National Agricultural Trade Show in Jinja, Museveni said,

These radios are very stupid. People are talking a lot of rubbish on these radios. They are very poisonous and this is unacceptable. Do they think we fought in the bush to come here and play? We, the liberators of this country are still around. Where do they think our strength went? They are telling lies and lies are unacceptable. They will be stopped. They will stop!

Museveni said that his government, which liberalised the broadcast media in 1993, expected private radio stations to explain development issues but they were broadcasting inaccurate information (Muyita 2008). Museveni is quoted to have said:

These radios should be telling you that we have seeds, markets for our produce and educate you on projects like [the African Growth and Opportunities Act] but instead they are telling a lot of lies. They are now part of the problem (ibid.).

Museveni also claimed that people had continued to abuse him through radio talk shows.

How do you describe a man who went to the bush with 27 guns and was able to defeat an army of 60,000 soldiers stupid? Those who think I'm stupid should watch out...Uganda is no place to play with. If you are clever, you cannot think that (ibid.).

As the report from Africa Media Development Initiative on the State of the media in Uganda noted, one of the difficulties in painting a portrait of media development in Uganda is the lack of reliable data on the sector. To put it plainly, the future for journalism in Uganda seems a little uncertain at the moment.

5. AGENDA-SETTING THEORY

There are a number of theories applicable to this study such as the democratic theory and the development theory, but I decided to use the agenda-setting theory. The chapter begins with the history of the agenda setting theory in general and there after focuses on the first level of agenda setting which is the core of this study. The media, public and politicians set each others agenda at different times. Radio stations usually pick up the issues they discuss on the talks shows from the news because they think they are important and need to give them more time in the public sphere. Other issues are picked from what is discussed in Parliament or from its order paper waiting to be discussed while others are picked, investigated and given more air time on the talk shows because they are of immense interest to the public.

The whole aspect of choosing which issues to discuss brings into perspective the criteria of framing those particular issues picked from the news items and how they end up being placed on the agenda. How a news piece is written will determine how it will be perceived by the audience hence placing it on the agenda. The talk-show hosts in this case can be looked at as part of the audience owing to the fact that they are not involved in the news production process. As Ämmälä (2008: 35) wrote, the agenda-setting influence of the media is a by-product of the necessity to concentrate on a few topics in the news every day. Regardless of the medium, a tight focus on a handful of issues signals to the audience what the most important issues are at the moment. In this respect, agenda-setting studies have concluded that the media indeed tell the public “what to talk about”. (McCombs 2004, pp. 19-20 and 68; Rogers 2004, pp. 9-11, *ibid.*).

After looking at framing and agenda-setting, I will then turn to radio talk shows and the agenda setting theory and end with the three agendas central to my study; the media agenda, public agenda and the politicians agenda.

5.1 History of the Agenda-Setting Theory

Although the term ‘agenda-setting’ was not coined until 1968, there is historical evidence

of this phenomenon in much earlier times. In the British colonies that became the United States, the focus of geographical attention and the salience of place names in the American colonial press changed dramatically in the forty years preceding the Declaration of Independence in 1776. About a third of the place names in the earliest of these decades, the period 1735 to 1744, referred to a location in the larger Anglo-American community that is either Great Britain or North America. But in the decades immediately prior to the Declaration of Independence a third of the names referred to North America alone (McCombs 2004: 32-33).

Walter Lippmann, a prominent American journalist and scholar from Harvard University was the first to analyze the impact of the media on people's perceptions. In 1922, Lippmann described in 'Public Opinion' that people did not respond directly to events in the real world but instead lived in a pseudo-environment composed of "the pictures in our heads". The media would play an important part in the furnishing of these pictures and shaping of this pseudo-environment (Media Tenor 2008).

According to the agenda-setting theory first developed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in their Chapel Hill study (1968), mass media set the agenda for public opinion by highlighting certain issues. Studying the way political campaigns were covered in the media, Shaw and McCombs found that the main effect of news media was agenda-setting, i.e. telling people not what to think but what to think about. Agenda-setting is usually referred to as a function of mass media and not a theory (McCombs and Shaw 1972).

Altogether, there are now more than 400 empirical studies of agenda-setting, many following the original Chapel Hill example and conducted during political campaigns, others monitoring public opinion in non-election periods. Agenda-setting is a robust and widespread effect of mass communication, an effect that results from specific content in the mass media (McCombs 2004: 36).

In summary, the main concerns of the press become the concerns of the public and in so

doing; the public's world disappears as media gatekeepers choose what to cover in their reports. This applies to the topics discussed in various talk-shows because the media views them as very important there by elevating them on the agenda. As such, agenda-setting is believed to occur because the press must be selective in reporting the news. News outlets act as gatekeepers of information and make choices about what to report and what not. What the public know and care about at any given time is mostly a by-product of media-gatekeeping (Media Tenor 2008).

Since its introduction more than 30 years ago, agenda-setting theory has produced a number of studies covering a diversity of topics. Some of the studies have focused on agenda setting and politics (Mermin, 1997; Peake, 2001; Tedesco, 2001; Wanta & Foote, 1994). In the political communication research the agenda-setting theory assumed the return of powerful media (Scheufele and Tewkesbury 2007: 10).

One common condition for agenda-setting is that different mass media tend to share the same set of news priorities. This condition is challenged by the availability of many new online news services, plus the greater chance for a 'news user' to seek news according to a personal agenda (McQuail 2005: 514). The former is true in the case of Uganda given the fact that there are more or less the same sources of news.

It is also true that agenda-setting is a norm in journalism. McCombs (2004: 21-22) expounds that because there is the capacity neither to gather information about all these events nor to tell the audience about them, journalists rely upon a traditional set of professional norms to guide their daily sampling of the environment. The result is that the news media present a limited view of the larger environment and in turn that is what the public views as the most important too.

There are five historical stages of agenda-setting research: first-level agenda setting is concerned with the basic issue salience transfer between the media agenda and the public agenda; the second-level agenda-setting looks at the same transfer of salience but in terms of attributes; intermedia agenda-setting deals with the transfer of salience

among the media; the concept of need for orientation treats the psychological explanation of the agenda-setting theory; and the concept of priming is concerned with the evaluative dimension of the theory (McCombs and Shaw 1993; McCombs 2004; McCombs 2005; Lee 2005; Ämmälä 2008: 34).

It should be noted, however, that the four stages of agenda-setting research exist only in the sense that they have appeared in a chronological order. They are not areas or stages in which one approach succeeds or replaces its predecessor. All phases are still intense areas of research, even though some are more active than others (McCombs and Shaw 1993: 60; McCombs 2005: 544; Ämmälä 2008: 34).

This distinction between the influence of the news media on the salience of issues and on specific opinions about these issues is summed up in Bernard Cohen's observation that the news media may not be successful in telling people what to think, but they are stunningly successful in telling their audiences what to think about. In other words, the news media can set the agenda for public thought and discussion (McCombs 2004: 3).

5.2 The First Level of Agenda-Setting Theory

Theoretically speaking, traditional agenda-setting deals with the first level of agenda-setting. This first level is concerned with the transfer of object salience from the media agenda to the public one (Ämmälä 2008: 35).

Ämmälä (2008: 35) says that Rogers and Dearing's (1993) review of the publications dealing with agenda-setting research since the 1970's showed that 131 out of the 223 publications wholly or mainly concerned this relationship between the media agenda and the public agenda (Rogers and Dearing 1993: 72).

Studies (e.g. McCombs and Shaw 1972; McCombs 2004; McQuail 2005) have revealed that there are stronger links between the increased fame of an issue and the increased knowledge of that issue as opposed to increased fame and strong opinions. As things stand, it is obvious that increasing knowledge of a subject does not necessarily comprise

increasing knowledge that would lead to a change in opinion.

McCombs (2004: 19-20) says that the main focus of the majority of the over 400 agenda setting studies since the 1970's has been on an agenda of public issues. The central part of these studies is that the degree of emphasis placed in the issues in the news affects the way the public value those issues. Therefore, one would not be wrong to conclude that the agenda of the media is basically the agenda of the people. The agenda-setting influence of the media is a by-product of the necessity to concentrate on a few topics in the news every day. Regardless of the medium, a tight focus on a handful of issues signals to the audience what the most important issues are at the moment. In this respect, agenda-setting studies have concluded that the media indeed tell the public "what to talk about". (McCombs 2004: 19-20 and 68; Rogers 2004: 9-11; Ämmälä 2008: 35).

The internet has become the new area for research on the first level for agenda-setting effects. The new digital medium and its consequences on the overall communication landscape set two major hypothesis to be tested in the context of first-level agenda-setting research. First, the agenda setting role of the media has traditionally consisted of focusing our attention on a small number of issues, but the internet might change this. Because the public spreads its attention widely across the internet, there must be a large fragmented Internet audience. The second hypothesis touches the possible correlation between the traditional news media agenda and the agenda of online versions of these same outlets. This hypothesis is based on the logic of distributing the same basic content through several channels. (McCombs 2005: 544-545; Ämmälä 2008: 35-36).

5.3 Agenda-Setting and Framing

The theory of agenda-setting has incorporated or converged with a variety of other communication concepts and theories since the 1970's. These concepts include such notions as stereotyping, image building and gatekeeping. For instance, gatekeeping which depicts and explains the flow of news from one media organization to another leads one to ask who sets the media's agenda. Research executed on this field has identified a web of relationships and effects that reach beyond the news media. Gatekeeping has been

characterised as intermedia agenda-setting that operates at both the first level and second level of agenda setting. As for the theoretical complements to agenda-setting one should take into account cultivation analysis and spiral of silence (McCombs 2004: 86; Ämmälä 2008: 48).

As earlier said, the whole aspect of choosing which topics to discuss in the various talk-shows brings in the issue of framing especially for those topics picked from the news items. How a news piece is written will determine how it will be perceived by the audience hence placing it on the agenda. The talk show hosts in this case can be looked at as part of the audience owing to the fact that they are not involved in the news production process.

Framing, contrary to many more esoteric research concepts, has gained extraordinary popularity both among scholars and the public (Reese 2007: 148). Explication of a second level of agenda-setting, attribute agenda-setting, also links the theory with a major contemporary concept, framing. Sometimes this concept refers to a particular frame in media content and at other times to the process of framing, the origins of frames or their diffusion from the mass media to the public. Applied to the media agenda, a frame is ‘the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration (McCombs 2004: 87).

Specifically in terms of salience and the process of framing:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (ibid.).

As a macroconstruct, the term “framing” refers to modes of presentation that journalists and other communicators use to present information in a way that resonates with existing underlying schemas among their audience. This does not mean, of course, that most journalists try to spin a story or deceive their audiences. In fact, framing, for them, is a necessary tool to reduce the complexity of an issue, given the constraints of their

respective media related to news holes and airtime. Frames, in other words, become invaluable tools for presenting relatively complex issues (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007: 12).

Framing has become the most utilized mass communication theory of the present era, having more or less rapidly reached a high level of popularity, for it barely made the list of the most applied mass communication theories in the 20th century (Bryant and Miron 2004: 695; Ämmälä 2008: 48).

McQuail (2005: 378) writes that Tuchman (1978) cited Goffman (1974) as the originator of the idea that a frame is needed to organize otherwise fragmentary items of experience or information. The idea of a 'frame' in relation to news has been widely and loosely used in place of terms such as 'frame of reference', 'context', 'theme', or even 'news angle'. In a journalistic context, stories are given meaning by reference to some particular 'news value' that connects one event with other similar ones (ibid.).

According to Entman (1993), 'framing involves selection and salience'. He summarizes the main aspects of framing by saying that frames define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments and suggest remedies. It is clear that a very large number of textual devices can be used to perform these activities. They include using certain words or phrases, making certain contextual references, choosing certain pictures or film, giving examples as typical, referring to certain sources and so on (McQuail 2005: 378).

By and large, framing is part and parcel of talk show programmes given their culture of debating. Framing is a way of giving some overall interpretation to isolated items of fact. It is almost unavoidable for journalists to do this and in so doing to depart from pure 'objectivity' and to introduce some (unintended) bias. When information is supplied to news media by sources (as much often is), then it arrives with a built-in frame that suits the purpose of the source and is unlikely to be purely objective (McQuail 2005: 379). As McQuail expounds the manner of reporting, in words and tone makes all the difference and sets the agenda of that issue in the eyes of the public. He adds that the more powerful the source and the more control there is of information flow, the more extramedia

influence there is on the framing process. Ultimately Van Gorp argues that elements of news production are part and parcel of the entire framing process (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007: 13).

McCombs (2004) argues that framing is simply a more refined version of agenda-setting.

As evidenced from above, the idea of framing is an attractive one and provides a strong hypothesis that an audience will be guided by journalistic frames in what it learns. It will also learn the frames themselves. Despite the complexities, there is sufficient evidence, especially from political communication research, to demonstrate the occurrence of effects on audiences that are in line with news frames (McQuail 2005: 511-512).

5.4 The Agenda-Setting Theory and Radio Talk Shows

Radio stations usually pick up the issues they discuss on the talks shows from the news because they think they are important and need to give them more time in the public sphere. In that way, radio talk show hosts set the agenda of the politicians and the public in regard to what the most important issues in their surroundings are. When analyzed from this point of view, the agenda-setting theory is quite circular in nature. I will generally look at the agenda-setting theory and radio talk shows, and then focus on the three agendas central to my study; the media agenda, public agenda and the politicians' agenda and how they affect each other.

Ämmälä (2008: 39) writes that the metaphor of activation tags has been later replaced by the concept of accessibility (Scheufele 2000: 299). The idea of accessibility is the foundation of a memory-based model of information processing. In the agenda-setting research much of the work on the basis of this model owes to Iyengar (e.g. 1990). He promotes the *accessibility bias* model which states that at the moment of judgments individuals tend to rely on information that has a high accessibility. Here high accessibility refers to constructs that can be readily fetched from long-term memory. For instance, information frequently of just recently read in the news is likely to be very accessible in the individual's mind. The accessibility bias model explains why a respondent tends to mention issues or topics that are prevailing in the news when asked

about the most important issues, for instance, facing the country. Some other researchers have titled the same mechanism of information receiving and processing as the accessibility-based model (Scheufele 2000; Kim, Scheufele, and Shanahan 2002, emphasis added, *ibid.*).

That explains why the topics discussed in talk shows find their way on the public agenda easily.

So and Lee (2008) argue that although the 21st century can be regarded as the age of the new media, traditional radio talk show still plays a very significant role in formulating public opinion. The importance of radio talk show has long been recognized by many related studies. However, most of the previous studies focus on analyzing the demographic characteristics of the radio talk show audience and their motives of participating in the show. Scholars have not yet developed any useful theoretical frameworks for understanding the role of phone-in program in the political communication process (Herbst 1995). While we know a lot about “who listens to the show,” we are still uncertain about the functions of these shows in a macro-political sense (*ibid.*).

Information processing theories suggest that people attending to a message and engaging in some level of elaboration of it are most likely to recall information about it later (Eveland 2004). In short, the accessibility of an issue,-and therefore its place on the issue agenda-may be higher when people attend to messages about it. Thus, agenda-setting and framing may appear to operate by similar phenomenological processes. (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007: 13-14).

5.4.1 Media Agenda

Through their day-by-day selection and display of the news, editors and news directors focus our attention and influence our perceptions of what are the most important issues of the day. This ability to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda has come to be the agenda-setting role of the media (McCombs 2004: 1)

Over time, the issues emphasized in news reports become the issues regarded as most important among the public. The agenda of the news media becomes, to a considerable degree, the agenda of the public. In other words, the news media set the public agenda. He adds that while many issues compete for public attention, only a few are successful in doing so, and the news media exert significant influence on our perceptions of what are the most important issues of the day. McCombs also highlights that this is not a deliberate, premeditated influence-as in the expression ‘to have an agenda’- but rather an inadvertent influence resulting from the necessity of the news media to select and highlight a few topics in their reports as the most salient news of the moment.

(McCombs 2004: 2).

McCombs (2004: 6) argues that agenda-setting does assign a central role to the news media in initiating items for the public agenda. Matthews, Dickert and Holliday (1999) add that the media sets an agenda for what the people should think about, and the order of importance of these thoughts. For example, one radio talk show host admits that his listeners have “got to talk about what [he is] talking about or they don't get on [the air]” (Davis 75). The host is setting an agenda for what his listeners are to think about (ibid.).

LManning (2008), a student at Quinnipiac University who contributed to one of their blogs, ‘Media Influence; Agenda during, politics and talk shows’ during the spring term 2008 wrote;

Coming from an internship where I sat in on news meetings where basically producers decide what stories go on the air in what order, I definitely agree that the public’s views on a specific topic are shaped by the attention the media gives to them.

In real layman’s terms, the media gurus know what they want to cover and what presses the buttons of the viewer, reader, or internet surfer, so they tend to find the information that makes the reader think what they want them to think (Matthews et al).

It is important to look at the other agendas of the public and politicians’ because they are influenced by the media agenda to a big extent.

5.4.2 Public Agenda

Although the authors of the theory (McCombs and Shaw) put emphasis on the power of the media, they also recognize that there is an interaction that occurs between the media and its audience, which determines what is accepted as the public's agenda.

Further more, although the majority of agenda setting studies have focused on the flow of information from the media to the public, some agenda setting researchers recognize that agenda setting is a two-way street and that sometimes the public sets the media's agenda (Brosius and Kepplinger 1990; Brosius and Weimann 1996).

Matthews et al emphasizes the fact that the agenda the media decides to follow must be of interest to its audience. To illustrate, another radio talk show host “will often bring up topics that [he] was not prepared to do” because “if that's what [the audience wants] to talk about, [he believes he is] there to kind of serve them and . . . give them what they want” (75). Therefore, the audience is somewhat responsible for what the media places “into [the audience's] heads” (Emery 169). The people do have some control according to the agenda-setting theory (ibid.).

As evidenced from above, there is no doubt that the public sometimes sets the agenda of the media. The immense interest of the public in a certain issue can cause the media to investigate new aspects to it and give it more air time. However, McCombs (2004: 59) cautions that the agenda-setting effects are more than the result of how accessible or available an issue is in the hands of the public. Although the empirical measure most commonly used to predict these effects is the amount of news coverage for an issue on the media agenda, the salience of an issue among the public is not simply a matter of its cognitive availability. Citing the Monica Lewinsky-Bill Clinton scandal, McCombs explains that this issue would have soared to the top of the public agenda. However, with its ‘All Monica, all the time’ approach, the media inflated the salience of this topic on their own agenda, but it never achieved salience among the public as an important public issue.

In conclusion, as Matthews et al note, the agenda-setting theory “hypothesizes that issues prominently displayed and frequently emphasized in the mass media will be regarded as important by the media consumers” (Emery 170). The more coverage a story or issue receives in the media, the more important it will seem to the public. Also, the more important an issue is to the audience, the more coverage it will receive. They highlight the aspect of time too and argue that there is a significant time lag in the time between when a story is considered salient and when it is no longer discussed. Generally, the audience cannot remember the frequently covered issues of past time sequences (ibid.).

5.4.3 Politicians’ Agenda

Dearing and Rogers (1996) define the agenda-setting process as ‘an ongoing competition among issue protagonists to gain the attention of media professionals, the public and policy elites’. Politicians seek to convince voters that the most important issues are those with which they are most closely identified. This is an essential part of advocacy and attempts at influencing public opinion (McQuail 2005: 512).

Lauren Gouzie (2008) a student at Quinnipiac University in their blog ‘Agenda setting, politics and talk shows’ wrote;

I believe that part of politicians agenda setting theory in the media involves these talk shows, because this study proves that they are very powerful mechanisms in engaging the public and encourages the public to become involved. If I were a politician I don't think I could ask for a better tool in my campaign. Almost all of the candidates for this presidential race have appeared on at least one American talk show, which I think is smart because this article proves that the political correlation from talk shows is pretty good.

Joanna Freed (2008) also a student at Quinnipiac University contributed to the same blog;

I think that the media is probably the only way that politicians can get their word, name and platform out to the public so obviously politicians have an agenda for what they want people to think about them.

LManning (2008) is also of the view that politics use the agenda setting theory every time they appear publicly.

I certainly agree with Mellisa Nocera (2008) that the agenda setting theory is a

plausible explanation for what the public believes are the most important issues today. In a world that is so fast-paced, Nocera says that most people feel they don't have enough time to really sit down and thoroughly research issues that are important to them. Their primary source about candidates is what they can get their hands on fastest, like sound bites on TV news, radio or in catching headlines on the Internet or newspapers.

It can be argued that agenda-setting through talk shows generates a win win situation for everyone. The talk shows get points as well as political leaders not forgetting the viewers who gain valuable information.

6. METHOD AND DATA

Silverman (2000: 79) describes research methods as the “specific techniques” a researcher employs to obtain data and information during an investigation. This chapter explains the methods used in this study and the criteria used to select each.

This study employed qualitative interviews and the analysis of selected radio programmes to examine the role of radio talk shows in the transition to multiparty politics and democracy in Uganda after 20 years since 1986. Interviews were taken from the Ugandan Members of Parliament (MPs) with an intention of bringing out the voice of the various political parties represented in Parliament and how they viewed the role of radio talk shows. Emphasis has been placed on the role Central Broadcasting Service’ (CBS) Mambo Bado talk show on the transition to MPP. Secondly, the interviews also helped in appraising the MPP system, two years after the first MPP of 23rd February 2006. The MPs played a very big role in this transition by virtue of the legislative powers entrusted to them under Parliament in which they were tasked with passing various legislations to pave way for a smooth transition. As such, I considered it imperative to hear from them whether they are satisfied with the progress made so far and if not, why?

On the other hand, the analysis of the six Mambo Bado talk show programmes is based on the issues discussed, opinions presented from the audience including those who called in to the show and quotations from politicians are quoted. These programmes serve as a voice of the public considering the fact that all the various shades of people are welcome to the Mambo Bado *kimeeza*. This analysis will bring out the public’s perception and expectations of this transition to Multi-Party Politics and whether their expectations of the Multi-Party Political system have been met.

6.1 Interviews as a Method

At the most basic level, interviews are conversations (Kvale 1996). Kvale defines qualitative research interviews as “attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples’ experiences, to uncover their lived world

prior to scientific explanations.”

As Kvale (1996) stresses, the interviews for research or evaluation purposes may also promote understanding and change, but the emphasis is on intellectual understanding rather than on producing personal change.

On their part, Rubin Herbert & Rubin Irene (1995) view interviewing as a process of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds.

Interviews are one of the most widely used and most fundamental research techniques because they enable researchers to obtain information that they cannot gain by observation alone (Berger 2000: 111). Interviews are also flexible. One can generally record the interviews and thus have a written record that can be analyzed in detail (113: *ibid.*).

Jensen (2002: 240) continues that a “commonsensical justification” for interviewing as one of the most widely used data collection methods is that “the best way to find out what the people think about something is to ask them”. He goes on to specify that “interview statements are, in a strong sense of the word, ‘data’ and they become sources of information only through analysis and interpretation” (*ibid.*).

In the case of the interviews of the MPs, I used what several scholars call in-depth interviewing. Wimmer and Dominick (1997: 100) give some criteria for in-depth interviews arguing that they are usually longer, more detailed, customized to individual respondents and can easily be influenced by the interview climate.

While interviewing the MPs, I also used what Patton (1990: 289) calls a ‘standardized open-ended interview’; whereby, according to Patton, all interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order, but questions are worded in “a completely open-ended format” (*ibid.*: 295-296). He states that the advantage with this technique is that since respondents answer the same questions, this increases comparability of responses and facilitates organization and analysis of the data (*ibid.*). This was an academic exercise, but

due to the fact that I covered Parliament for five and a half years as a reporter, I was already known to the individual MPs as well as the workings of Parliament and so I did not have to give my key respondents the general questions in advance. I did the interviews on spot except for those MPs who had other engagements at that material time and we scheduled appointments when they were free.

To remain focused on the subject and make certain that I obtain relevant information to answer my research questions appropriately, I relied on what Patton (1990: 283) calls an ‘interview guide’. He defines an ‘interview guide’ as a “list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview” (ibid.). He argues that the advantage of the interview guide is to ensure that basically the same information is obtained from a number of people by covering the same material:

The interview guide helps make interviewing across a number of different people more systematic and comprehensive by delimiting in advance the issue to be explored (ibid.).

Concerning the venues where the interviews were conducted, I limited myself to the Parliamentary building because their working environment was crucial as they could easily access the relevant documentary material for my reference. Secondly, they could also be easily accessed at Parliament owing to the fact that I had made no prior appointments with the interviewees.

6.2 Justification of Empirical Data

6.2.1 Radio in Uganda

Being largely an agricultural country, radio fits with the lifestyle of many people in Uganda. It is a popular media channel because it does not require electricity, and because people can listen to the radio while they work, walk or drive. By broadcasting in local languages, radio goes a long way in addressing the information, education and entertainment requirements of its localities and audiences. For many people, especially in rural areas, radio remains the main source of information and entertainment (African Media Development Initiative 2006: 14).

However, not much research has been done in this area to ascertain how radio contributes to the life of an ordinary Ugandan politically, socially and economically. The little research that has been done on the media in Africa deals with newspapers or radio generally; there is nothing specifically on radio talk-shows given the role they play in civic education. As mentioned earlier, radio is the most common and popular medium of communication in Uganda but the most recent study that I came across in this area is by Monica Chibita (2006) on Indigenous Language Programming and Citizen Participation in Ugandan Broadcasting: an exploratory study. My choice to undertake research on the role of radio talk shows in the transition to multi-party politics and democracy is timely because the area is still heavily lacking and it will no doubt contribute to this body of knowledge as well as paving way for further research.

6.2.2 CBS Radio

In 1995, CBS was established as the first vernacular language FM station in Uganda, providing much the same programming format as Capital and Sanyu –that is, news, talk shows, and music. The innovative feature of CBS, however, was that it broadcast exclusively in Luganda, the main language of south central Uganda (Shah 2003:13).

CBS is one of the famous local radio stations broadcasting on a number of frequencies 88.8, 89.2 which also has an up- country station on 87.7, a wide coverage country wide and enjoys a mass audience. CBS, the biggest in the country, commands an audience of over four million, mainly Baganda, found in the country's central region (EastAfricaPress.com).

Uganda's population as of July 2006 was estimated to stand at 31,195,754 million people. The Baganda are the biggest ethnic group in Uganda and they account for 17% of the entire population followed by the Basoga at 8%. Further more, Luganda is the most widely used language in the whole country (Wikipedia 2009). As seen from above, it is no surprise that among other reasons government has been sensitive about what it broadcasts, especially in the local Luganda language spoken and understood by a large percentage of the country's voting population (Connect Uganda Discussion

Board 2008).

If there are over 205 radio stations in Uganda (see chapter three) majority with daily talk-show programs including the Saturday out broadcasts popularly known as the *Ebimeeza*, why is it that President Museveni is more bent on closing CBS and not any other? According to the Connect Uganda Discussion Board Forum, the reporter of this article 'M7 out to Destroy BUGANDA radio CBS!', claimed that they were told by an official of the Uganda Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that Museveni was extremely frustrated by the damage Betty Nambooze, Lubega Sseggon and others are doing on his reputation in Buganda through their CBS radio programs. He continued to write that Museveni was frantically looking for a legal excuse to close the Bulange based radio. Ali Busagwa (2008), argues that given a free and fair election in Buganda that is devoid of his characteristic military intimidations, bribery, political machinations and rigging, Museveni cannot win any single genuine vote in Buganda. The above explains why CBS' talk shows have made Museveni so jittery hence his resolve to close it down.

Looking at how influential Buganda is in Uganda and not forgetting again the fact that it is this same cultural institution which owns the biggest radio station CBS, choosing it for this research was inevitable. Besides, CBS is also online, giving a chance to the Ugandans in the diaspora to contribute to the various topics in their talk shows.

6.2.3 Mambo Bado Talk Show

Mambo Bado is broadcast in Luganda, a language understood by a big majority of the population and is also the most widely spoken language in the country. That is not to say that Mambo Bado is the only talk show broadcast in Luganda, there are others too like '*Olutindo*' (the Bridge) on Radio Simba, '*Saba Saba*' (the Earth Quake) on Radio Two. The difference between Mambo Bado and these other shows is that it is one of the pioneer talk shows and it has been able to maintain its audience. It was not affected by the coming of these other talk shows, it instead became more popular because people were able to rate each one of them and decide which one to tune in to considering

the fact that they are all broadcast at more or less the same time. The Mambo Bado discussions feature ordinary members of the public, MPs, ministers, civil servants, politicians of different shades, among others hence giving a good mix of the show.

The other thing with Mambo Bado is that it is broadcast from a spacious environment outside in the Kingdom's compound which can sit very many people; no one is stopped from attending because the place is full.

Secondly, according to Wikipedia, Uganda's literacy level stands at 69.9%, 79.5% of males are literate while only 60.4% of women are literate (2003 estimate). This means that 30% of the population cannot read or write but have access to radio especially CBS whose signal goes far. It is also true that some people do not speak Luganda but they understand it very well. For example, some of the MPs that I interviewed especially those from the northern region said they do listen but cannot contribute because of the language barrier while others confessed to receiving the Mambo Bado broadcasts from colleagues and friends through word of mouth. Even in such circumstances, the civic education role played by Mambo Bado cannot be ignored. Thus far, Mambo Bado is appropriate for this study.

6.2.4 The Six Mambo Bado Talk Show Programmes

It was difficult to choose which programmes to analyse for this study and are in line with the transition to multi-party politics. Mambo Bado is broadcast every Saturday from 4 to 6p.m for two hours, meaning there are four programs an equivalent of eight hours of talk every month.

In order to ensure that the programmes are relevant to the study in question, I decided to focus on the day the first multi-party elections were held; 23rd February 2006 to guide me on the selection of the programmes. As a result, I zeroed down on the last three programmes broadcast before the elections and the first three programmes broadcast immediately after the elections assuming that this transition to multi-party politics took the day during that period. As a result, I came up with the programmes broadcast on the following days; 4th, 11th, 18th February before the elections and 25th February, 4th

and 11th March 2006 after the elections.

Each of these Talk shows will be analysed against the following:

- Discussion in support of multiparty politics
- Acceptance or rejection of multiparty
- Participation in discussions
- Topics on multiparty politics
- Discussion on the performance of the opposition in Parliament
- Discussion on the conflicts between the ruling party and the opposition

6.2.5 Interviews of the MPs

The Eight Parliament, sworn in on the 16th and 17th of May 2006 is unique in the sense that it is the first MPP Parliament after over 20 years. The Parliament whose term will expire in 2011 has a membership of 332 members; 215 Constituency representatives, 79 District women representatives, 10 Army representatives, 5 Workers' representatives, 5 Youth representatives, 5 representatives of persons with disabilities and 13 Ex-officios. Like other MPP parliaments, Uganda's first MPP Parliament has new features like a Shadow Cabinet, Government Chief Whip, Leader of Opposition and party whips. In terms of gender composition, there are 100 female MPs and 232 male MPs.

To give a good representation of the political parties represented in Parliament, I interviewed three MPs from each of the four political parties; NRM, FDC, UPC, and DP then the only two members of the other parties CP and JEEMA and one Independent MP. The three interviewees from each political party comprise the party chief whips, one male and one female MP. These interviews and the Mambo Bado talk show programmes comprise my data. The table below shows the political party representation in Parliament.

No.	Political Party Representation in Parliament.	No of MPs per Political Party	Gender: F/M	Interviewed MPs
1	National Resistance Movement (NRM)	212	69 females	3
			143 males	
2	Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)	38	12 females	3
			26 males	
3	Democratic Party (DP)	8	No female	3
			8 males	
4	Uganda People's Congress (UPC)	9	No female	3
			9 males	
5	Conservative Party (CP)	1	1 female	1
			No male	
6	Justice Forum (JEEMA)	1	No female	1
			1 male	
7	Independents	40	14 females	1
			26 males	

The assessment of how the MPP system has worked will be based on the interviews of the MPs. Parliament was at the center of this transition and still is in the sense that MPs are the ones who passed a resolution to conduct a referendum to find out whether the public wanted to continue to be governed under the Movement Political System or wanted to change to a MPP system. Despite the outcome of the first referendum in 2000 where Ugandans voted against MPP, Parliament again passed another resolution in 2005 to open up the political space on the advice of the President. It is important to note yet again that it is the MPs who were tasked with initiating, debating and passing all the relevant legislations to ensure a smooth operation of the MPP system. As such, it is only prudent to hear from the MPs on how far they have been able to carry out this task and whether they are contented with the progress made so far. Needless to mention, the absence of the appropriate legislations would only act to keep the current MPP

system in limbo.

Interview Research Questions used

1. It is almost two years since Uganda was ushered into MPP after 20 years, what is your assessment of the progress so far? What is your experience of MPP in Uganda?
2. What is your opinion of multiparty politics? Do you embrace multipartyism?
3. In your opinion, how have the communication channels like CBS been able to project the political opinions of the people?
4. What is the effect of Talk shows like Mambo Bado in shaping political opinion?
5. Judging from the way things are now in your opinion, how do you foresee the elections in 2011 or what is their prediction?

7. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents my research findings of the role of radio talk shows in the transition to MPP and democracy in Uganda using CBS' Mambo Bado talk show as a case. I begin with analyzing the six Mambo Bado talk show programmes where I look at the issues discussed, angle of the programme, opinion presented, discussion in support/ rejection of Multi-Party Politics, participation in discussions (politicians quoted and the callers). I end with the analysis of the 15 interviews of the Members of Parliament.

7.1 Analysis of the Mambo Bado Talk-Show Programmes

Mambo Bado is broadcast every Saturday from 4 to 6 pm for two hours. A total of 12 hours will be analyzed. The six programmes were chosen based on 23rd February 2006, the day of the first Multi-Party elections. The last three programmes broadcast before the elections and the first three programmes broadcast immediately after the elections were selected assuming that the transition to MPP took the day during that period. As a result, the programmes broadcast on 4th, 11th, 18th February before the elections and 25th February, 4th and 11th March 2006 after the elections were selected.

However, the Mambo Bado programme of 4th February 2006 was not analyzed because its topic was limited to the health care system in Uganda. This left only five programmes totaling to ten hours of analysis.

Each of the five Talk Shows was analysed against the following:

- Issue discussed
- Angle of the programme
- Discussion in support/ rejection of Multi-Party Politics
- Opinion presented
- Participation in discussions/ politician quoted/ callers in the shows
- Discussion on the conflicts between the ruling party and the opposition

On the whole, the Mambo Bado programmes reveal that the majority of the people who participated in the programmes including the callers were in support of the return to

MPP. On the other hand, it was evident from some of the participants and majority of the callers that despite the fact that they supported the return to MPP, they had very minimal knowledge of the concept of MPP. They kept referring to other radio talk shows which had discussed the concept of MPP or politicians who were vocal about the transition as the sources of the knowledge they had of MPP in their contributions.

On the issue of participation in discussions, there was a good mix of the fairly elite, average and ordinary Ugandans. However not many MPs attended the selected shows probably because they were busy in their constituencies campaigning. When it came to the discussion on the conflicts between the ruling party and the opposition, two issues kept coming up; government was intimidating the opposition because it was not willing to go Multi-Party all the way and that the playing field was not leveled, the NRM government had access to state machinery and used it to bog down the opposition.

It is important to note that political party affiliation in Uganda is generally portrayed in two things, the four regions of the country; the Central, Eastern, Western and Northern regions and the religious aspect. You will find that most of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) members hail from the West just like President Museveni and they are Protestants, majority of the Democratic Party (DP) members come from the central region and are Catholics, Uganda People's Congress (UPC) members come from the North and are a mixture of Catholics and Protestants while Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) has the most wide spread out members coming from the various regions. The FDC members are also a mixture of Catholics, Protestants and Moslems. For JEEMA, the President and a handful of its members known to me are Moslems while the few CP members that I know hail from the central region and are Catholics.

The Mambo Bado programme of 11th February 2006 was centered on Dr. Kizza Besigye the FDC President and President Yoweri Museveni's main contestant in both the 2001 and 2006 Presidential elections. It is only prudent to give an account of what preceded the elections so as to make it easy to follow the programme discussions.

On 26th October 2005, Dr. Kizza Besigye, a retired Colonel and President Museveni's

main contestant returned from his four years of exile in South Africa and was met with an enthusiasm that took everyone by surprise. He won the nomination as the presidential candidate for FDC in the 2006 elections, there was a surge in the registration of voters, and reports of defections from the ruling NRM. President Museveni cut short his London visit and returned to Kampala. On Monday 14th November, with four weeks to go to the nomination of presidential candidates, Besigye who again emerged as President Museveni's main contender was arrested as he returned to Kampala from a campaign tour. This sparked two days of violent protests, brought down by the deployment of tanks and army personnel. Besigye was charged with treason, concealment of treason, and a rape that allegedly happened in 1997. The charges carried a death sentence, meaning that bail is normally not granted until after six months (previously 360 days) – in this case after the elections. Accused with treason alongside him, were 22 others who allegedly belonged to the People's Redemption Army (PRA), a shadowy rebel group said to be linked to the FDC (Gloppen et al 2006: 2). Besigye literally campaigned for just ¼ of the time because he spent the rest of the time either in jail or in court.

7.2.1 February 11, 2006

- *Issue discussed:* Election violence and threats
- *Angle of the programme:* Government's intimidation of the opposition.
- *Opinion presented:*

A number of participants felt that the election had surprising things every other day. One participant of FDC said that the Museveni camp's tactic of smearing political parties in the past had backfired. He gave an example of Miria Obote UPC party president's visit to Luwero in the central region; a place believed to support NRM and was warmly welcomed. He also said that NRM had centered the elections on Besigye, instead of organizing their campaign adding that the tactic was to wear down everybody; Besigye, the public, lawyers and all. He envisaged a situation where even the Judges in the courts of law would get tired of ruling against the NRM.

Besigye had to be nominated in jail or else he would not contest in the elections. One city lawyer said government portrayed double standards and was inconsistent. The entire

Electoral Commission except their chairman Badru Kigundu decided that Besigye should be nominated in jail, but the Attorney General (AG) Kidhu Makubuya said his nomination would be illegal. The Internal Affairs Minister Ruhakana Rugunda wrote to AG asking for a legal opinion as to whether Besigye could be nominated in jail. AG general was away in his constituency in Katikamu and his deputy Adolf Mwesigye wrote saying that actually Besigye should be nominated. A number of other participants voiced concern that the NRM government had turned political battles into legal wars. Another participant said that the country risks turning the courts into a parliament of sorts, something which taints the independence of the judiciary.

Many of the participants said that government wanted to remove Besigye from the ballot and that this action was meant to be a warning to the entire opposition.

Other participants felt that the government's smear campaign against Besigye only made him more popular. They confessed that the more government brought cases against Besigye the more they wanted to know him and the more they supported him. Some even predicted a run off in the elections.

The participants said the way the campaign was going was emotional and had turned personal, dramatic and was embarrassing people.

- Participation in discussions/ politician quoted/ callers

Most of the caller's contributions suggested that Museveni was scared of Besigye and urged him to leave him alone after all the Museveni camp was going to rig the elections. They emphasized that Museveni had fostered a hate campaign and might make Besigye pay for standing against him.

Another caller from Makerere said Museveni would not stand the heat of MPP. She predicted that MPP will be a very difficult thing to understand and that it won't work. She expressed pessimism that there will be no realistic chance of the opposition influencing policy.

With just two weeks to go for the first MPP elections, putting into consideration that election violence has always been part and parcel of Uganda's elections, the choice of the above issue on Mambo Bado was appropriate. The media in general was the one setting the agenda for the public that the transition to MPP was the most important activity at the time when you look at all the five programmes selected for this study.

The purpose of this programme was to focus the public on what was likely to happen during this election and it certainly achieved this purpose as per the responses from the participants. The selection of this issue of election violence at that point in time enabled the public to compare past elections with how the campaigns were progressing on and give their projections as evidenced by the participant's opinions. The discussion of that issue two weeks to the elections put the public on alert that election violence is likely to be part and parcel of the elections.

An analysis of the above programme states that government was not ready to entertain any competition from the opposition. The NRM practically ignored all the other parties and focused on FDC which they viewed as a serious competitor. They were ready to do anything at any cost to frustrate Besigye's campaign. Their action only confirmed to the public who were already in doubt that Museveni was not committed to opening up political spaces. The public did not expect much from the elections.

The timing of that issue for discussion contributed to the perceptions which people went with to vote and in essence it was the media responsible for them.

7.2.2 February 18, 2006

- *Issue discussed:* The 1st MPP elections in the spotlight
- *Angle of the programmes:* What Ugandans think the first MPP election in 20 years is going to be like?
- *Opinion presented:*

One member of DP said government did not bother to sensitize the public about the concept of MPP, its operations in the already existing frameworks such as

affirmative action, the possible challenges that the country will experience especially at the beginning. She concluded that Ugandans were not ready for the elections because they did not know what was going on.

Another participant from Kampala like many others expressed concern that Ugandans had been ruled under the movement system for so long and which had invested a lot in tainting political parties. She said that a large proportion of the youthful population had no idea how a MPP system operates and might not go to vote.

One of the participants from Kawempe said the NRM lacked sincerity. The Movement government changed itself into a political party to compete for leadership in the 2006 elections. He said it was unfair to expect all the registered parties to compete with the NRM-O that had been in power for that long and still held a grip on state resources.

Many participants decried the widespread corruption that typified the movement political system contributing to poor service delivery. One said that the failure of Government to fight corruption had led to loss of trust by the people in the institutions and their leaders. In turn, this has largely contributed to the commercialization of the electoral processes and she expected it to be worse in the 2006 elections. They criticized leaders who look at vying for leadership as an open ticket for them to become rich, hence using all means, including vote buying to get elected.

One participant said that the army was always involved in the electoral processes and feared that the army may again be used to intimidate and create tension among the population something which leads to low voter turn up.

A member of the Uganda Young Democrats said he was optimistic that the change to MPP will lead to the respect for constitutionalism by ensuring that constitutional provisions for people power such as freedom of speech are operationalised.

According to another participant of CP, recognizing the opposition officially will

provide instruments for checks and balances against the excesses of corruption and other forms of financial misconduct that had characterized the movement.

- *Participation in discussions/ politician quoted/ callers*

Most of the callers kept asking questions as to what it will be like after the elections. Many had no idea, how this system was going to work, if President Museveni won, what was going to happen to the other political parties, would they close down again, how they will share power. Others wondered how the opposition was to fulfill its main role of holding government accountable.

There is no doubt, the media sets the agenda when it comes to the way they select the issues to cover and in this regard, the issues they discuss on the radio talk-shows. It is also true that in the process of the media setting the agenda for the public, they also inform the public. It was evident from this programme that with only four days to go for the elections, a number of the participants felt that the government had neglected its duty of carrying out civic education leaving it to the media.

The choice of this programme was a true illustration of the first level agenda setting which involves the transfer of object salience from the media agenda to the public one. It is inevitable for the media not to set the agenda for the public because new issues keep coming up but they would not be known about if it was not for the media. The importance of this transition to MPP required that kind of coverage most especially before the elections so that the public gets an idea of what they were going in for. I liked the angle from which the host of Mambo Bado approached this programme; it was open-ended giving room for good debate and discussion.

The analysis of the above programme shows that the public was ignorant of what was going on because no civic education was carried out. According to their responses, it seemed like this election did not promise anything new, it was similar to past elections and a number of the participants did not expect much. More so, many of the participants especially from the rural areas did not know what was going to happen after the elections. Their attendance of the Mambo Bado programme made all the difference, it was

very informative. Many participants had already predicted by then that the election would not be free and fair. The media agenda setting always changes the status quo either positively or in a negative way.

7.2.3 February 25, 2006

- *Issue discussed:* Review of the 1st MPP election
- *Angle of the programme:* How did you view the 1st MPP elections, were they free and fair?
- *Opinion presented:*

According to the participants the 59.2 percent won by President Museveni was not genuine; they think he got 51% over all. They think there was some rigging¹

Many of the participants said the elections were not free and fair right from the onset. Some felt that Besigye had been marginalized in the elections owing to the fact that he campaigned for only ¼ from the time he returned and he spent close to 78 days in jail. They were of the view that without the arrests, Besigye would have won the elections.

Another participant from Entebbe in the out skirts of Kampala said Besigye's arrests had no ability to form a coalition but they awakened people to the form of government thinking and many thought that government wanted to take the country back to where it had come from.

There was a protest element in the election. There was a decline in the support of the NRM and generally the number of those who turned up to vote.²

¹ As noted above, FDC's Besigye came second with 37.39%, DP's John Ssebaana Kizito was third with 1.58%. Independent candidate Abed Bwanika won in fourth position with 0.95% while UPC's Miria Obote came last with 57,071 votes and 0.82%. In total 6,934,931 million Ugandans voted out of a population of 31,195,754 million an estimate as of July 2006 (Wikipedia).

² According to Wikipedia, a total of 6,934,931 million Ugandans voted out of a population of 31,195,754 million an estimate as of July 2006 (Wikipedia).

- Participation in discussions/ politician quoted/ callers

Many callers said the elections were not free and fair, they gave incidences of rigging, missing names from the register, the presence of the army in their voting areas. To many, the 1st MPP election was no different from all the other elections. Some callers said they did not know that the four candidates who contested against President Museveni represented other political parties. Majority of the callers expressed pessimism about the entire transition emphasizing that the government has not changed in any way and did not expect much even afterwards.

Just listening to this programme made me wonder what it would have been like if there if there were no programmes like Mambo Bado to inform the public what was going on and help them digest any information there is to prepare themselves for what ever was to come. One thing is for sure, radio talk-shows empowered the public to speak out on the transition to MPP.

In essence, the first MPP election fell short of the people's expectations and it instead brought out the aggressive side of the government which went to every length to see to it that they stayed in power. I think this was the turning point; the transition to MPP had started on the wrong note no wonder, it took time for some people especially those in the rural areas to know that the country was no longer governed under a Movement Political System but MPP. Who could blame them? The status quo and the way of doing things was pretty much the same with the past.

The elections did not straighten out anything; the country instead saw more confusion and bickering as everybody tried to defend their side because of the difficulties they faced in the actual transition from the Movement to MPP now that the elections had ended. Party members continued to fight against each other, political parties making it even harder to move in unison because it was very important at this point. The same confusion still reigns raising so many questions as to how the second MPP election is going to be.

It is clearly evident from the above program that many Ugandans abstained from the

vote probably because of its nature and environment. The army and police were involved, some decided to play it safe and stay home. All the above proceedings only continued to make the public question President Museveni's commitment to MPP and whether anything was really going to change. The media in particular radio talk-shows seemed to be the only avenue where Ugandans could get information, give their views and opinions, express their anger and dissatisfaction. In the absence of such fora, Ugandans would be governed in the dark. The above portrays the opposite of political pluralism. One is left to wonder whether the country will indeed enjoy the fruits of MPP.

7.2.4 March 4, 2006

- *Issue discussed:* The financing of political parties
- *Angle of the programmes:* Should the government finance political parties?
- *Opinion presented:*

The 'yes' that government should finance political parties was unanimous. One of the reasons given was that it will level the ground and open up the political space in the real sense of the word.

A number of participants were positive that financing political parties would go a long way to strengthen them as well as enabling the establishment of party systems that adequately represent the objectives and interests of citizens.

One participant from Makerere said that there is an unavoidable linkage between money, political parties and election campaigns. The day to day functioning of a political party and its involvement in elections are activities that require having adequate financial resources. This linkage is also crucial for the quality of democracy and concerns have been raised over the past few years about money flows from private sources that they often compromise the independence of political parties in the performance of their duties.

One of the concerns raised was that the electoral playing field is in most cases skewed in favour of the ruling party because it controls the human and material assets of the state including the media and the press (which are very essential during election time). As

a result, the funding structure of parties is biased in favour of the serving party, because of the lack of separation between the state and the party in power. In such circumstances, the opposition can not portray itself and function as a viable substitute to the incumbent authority. Increasing its resources would help create a balance of political forces thereby improving competition between political actors.

It was noted that the transition had a number of challenges such as difficulty in setting up a network of long-lasting structures countrywide; the incapacity of new parties to survive over time; lack of sufficient resources; and the inability to develop up a comprehensive vision of political state of affairs.

Politics is still for the most part an elite activity, with less grass root engagement. Most of the people who claimed to belong to some political party did not hold membership cards. This too confirms stern limitations on the ability of political parties in collecting membership dues, which in turn increases dependence on alternative sources of funding.

- Participation in discussions/ politician quoted/ callers

According to the people who called in, it was evident that many Ugandans were not aware of the other concrete core roles of political parties and the important function they play in the democratic process, which includes providing policy options, providing leadership, providing a substitute government, and partake in influencing the political will of the people. Ugandans generally do believe that political parties play an important role in the country's democracy, but have a restricted idea.

The host of the Mambo Bado talk-show could not have made a better choice of the issue to discuss at that point in time. It was certainly a long hectic transition from the Movement to MPP system coupled with the campaigns which equally took a long time many thought the elections were not free and fair. However at that point, what was already done could not be undone; all that was required was to strategize on how to best make the new political dispensation work. Therefore the choice of the issue on the financing of political parties was timely because the 20 years of non activity

required a lot funding to revive the political parties at the grass roots, but would the government take it on? I honestly wish it had because the participants had very brilliant suggestions which would have given a very good starting point.

Taking up this issue of financing political parties would have given the government a lot of credibility from the public owing to the fact that the same government which opened up the political space also contributed to tainting the name of political parties. That action would have gone a long way to show government's commitment to make the MPP system work. The failure for government to finance political parties in any way meant that not many parties would be in position to take on the challenge ahead of them as a number of them existed only in name and needed to make contact with the grass roots.

Analysis of the programme suggests that the financing of political parties would go a long way to level the ground because many structures were destroyed as a result of the 20 years of non-activity. It also came out strongly that the NRM political party had full access to state resources controlling them as it had under the Movement Political System. That is certainly a big disparity which only questions whether democracy will indeed be the pinnacle of this new political dispensation. The government of the day did not seem to want any competition; it was more comfortable with the status quo where parties were financially constrained to entrench themselves in the country coupled with an uninformed public.

7.2.5 March 11, 2006

- *Issue discussed:* Women's experiences in the transition from the Movement to Multiparty system of governance
- *Angle of the programmes:* Women's voices on the political transition in Uganda
- *Opinion presented:*

It was stated that women were so oblivious; they did not welcome the issue of political transition as a direct concern of women. Very few were well-informed of the issues of debate with the exception of what was reported in the media. The process just passed, with little or no interest in it for many.

In July 2003, women hosted a breakfast meeting with leaders of the main opposition parties to challenge them on their party gender agendas. Unsurprisingly, women found that very few of the parties had even addressed their minds to women's issues.

Women urged political parties to ensure representation of women in key leadership positions within the party as well as initiating the necessary changes to make parties attractive for women to join.

Women expressed dissatisfaction that many of their suggestions were never taken on board by either government or the other political parties. Suggestions were made that women in this new era should reconsider their potency and capacities, and change themselves into a force which would be politically risky to disregard.

Some of contributors called upon the ruling party to deliberately learn to behave like a political party and do away with any Movement stands that go against the grain of MPP. On the other hand, they urged the other parties need to consolidate themselves and their party positions countrywide.

Women called upon all political parties to acknowledge the principle of affirmative action and make sure that more women participate in executive positions of party structures. Whereas the constitution provides for 30% representation, some women asked political parties to boost this to 40-50%. Some women voiced concern that parties pose a big challenge to women's participation at the executive levels because of the absence of a clause in the Political Parties and Organizations Act stipulating a proportion of women's representation. They feel that that will make it enormously difficult for new political entrants to vie with men who have been politically active.

The women also asked government to broaden affirmative action further than the political sphere to include the economy.

Government was urged to desist from making unnecessary amendments of the Constitution.

On the whole Uganda is not fairing bad in regard to female representation. Statistics comparing female representation in sub-Saharan African legislatures suggest that a small group of countries in Sub-Sahara Africa contribute to the relatively high female representation. Uganda is one of these. With 24% women in parliament, Uganda is not far behind the countries with highest female representation, like Rwanda (49% women) Mozambique (35% women) and South Africa (33% women). Uganda's high level of female representation in parliament is linked to the fact that in addition to the 214 county MPs, each of the districts in Uganda elects one District Woman Representative to parliament (Nordstoga 2005: 2).

- Participation in discussions/ politician quoted/ callers

Many callers acknowledged the fact that women have made very significant progress over the year and come out of their cocoon; the home and joined the male domain in politics, the economy among others. However, some callers said they do not expect women to do any better more so under the Multi-Party system of governance. They are of the view that the status quo is going to remain like this.

Politics is no place for women; they are still seen to belong to the kitchen and their efforts to challenge this belief have not paid off mainly because they sometimes do not endeavour to keep in the know of what is going. For example, while the women activists were busy dialoguing with the leaders of political parties to see how best women could be brought on board under the MPP arrangement; many women did not know what was going on in the country. Ignorance of the women generally has continued to down play the efforts of women activists, we are not moving together.

From my own experience as a journalist covering Parliament, it has always been assumed that women's issues do not sell. That could probably be one of the reasons why very few political parties if any bothered to address women's issues in their party manifestos. This scenario however is not exclusive to the MPP dispensation, it cuts all round and has

always been the way of looking at things regarding the women. The women felt left out in the new political dispensation.

Elevating women in the political arena is yet to be appreciated in Africa as opposed to the west. In Uganda for example where every district must have a woman representative in Parliament which is an achievement, it is instead seen as a token to garner more support from women as opposed to empowering them. Such arguments only succeed in bringing down the place of the woman. MPP which is about variety would have been a very good avenue to revisit the above arguments and affirmative action but as it were not much attention was paid to it.

In conclusion, the analysis of the five Mambo Bado talk-show programmes shows that indeed, the media in particular radio talk-shows played a very significant role in the transition to MPP in Uganda. The discussions show that a big number of the public learnt a lot about Uganda's political history and the MPP dispensation from the radio talk-shows. They seem to have been the only source of information and in their absence the public would have been ignorant. They virtually took over government's role of civic education.

7.3 Analysis of the Interviews

Patton (1990: 376) proposes two strategies for analyzing interviews. In the 'case analysis' procedure, the researcher writes a case study for each person interviewed or each unit studied (*ibid.*). Another strategy is 'cross-case analysis' whereby the researcher puts together answers from different people to common questions or analyzing different perspectives on central issues (*ibid.*). Patton adds that although these strategies could be used separately, they are in most cases supplementary (1990: 377).

I will use the 'cross-case analysis' technique to present the findings of the interviews. I will analyze the responses from the individual questions at the same time starting with the first question in that chronological order to the fifth.

The assessment of how the MPP system has worked will be based on the interviews of the MPs. Parliament was at the center of this transition and still is in the sense that MPs are the ones who passed a resolution to conduct a referendum to find out whether the public wanted to continue to be governed under the Movement system or wanted to change to a MPP system. Despite the outcome of the first referendum in 2000 where Ugandans voted against MPP, Parliament again passed another resolution in 2005 to open up the political space on the advice of the President. It is important to note yet again that it is the MPs who were tasked with initiating, debating and passing all the relevant legislations to ensure a smooth operation of the MPP system. As such, it is only prudent to hear from the MPs on how far they have been able to carry out this task and whether they are contented with the progress made so far. Needless to mention, the absence of the appropriate legislations would only act to keep the current MPP system in limbo.

The 15 interviewees are:

NRM

- **Kabakumba** Labwoni Matsiko (Chief Whip)
- Emmanuel **Dombo** Lumala
- Mary **Karooro** Okurut

FDC

- Morris **Ogenga Latigo** (Leader of Opposition)
- **Kassiano** Wadri (Chief Whip)
- Olive **Beti Kamya**

DP

- Issa **Kikungwe** (Chief Whip)
- Erias **Lukwago**
- Richard **Sebuliba Mutumba**

UPC

- John Livingstone **Okello-Okello** (Chief Whip)
- John **Odit**
- Jimmy James **Akena**

CP

- Susan **Nampijja** Lukyamuzi

JEEMA

- Hussein **Kyanjo**

Independent

- Jerome Ssozi **Kaddu-Mukasa**

No female candidates were interviewed from UPC and DP because all the representatives in Parliament are male. The interviews were conducted at the Parliament of Uganda between the 12th and 22nd of December 2007. The MPs will be referred to by the names in bold.

7.3.1 Progress and Experience

It is almost two years since Uganda was ushered into Multi-Party Politics after 20 years, what is your assessment of the progress so far? What is your experience of Multi-Party Politics in Uganda?

Thirteen out of the fifteen interviewees said there was no remarkable progress made so far because the Movement government accepted MPP just for convenience and it is instead suppressing other political parties.

Independent candidate *Kaddu-Mukasa* said members from other political parties were not allowed to hold rallies in their constituencies to express their views on MPP or sell their party ideologies and he concluded that MPP had not gone down to the people. *Kaddu-Mukasa* also said that people in the rural areas thought they were still in the Movement.

Lukwago said the progress was not impressive because the leadership was never interested in the restoration of MPP in the first place. He added that there were no institutional reforms, policies were still hedged into the old mold of the Movement political system and it largely perceived the opposition as saboteurs of government programmes and enemies of the state.

Nampijja said there was no freedom of expression.

On her part, *Kamya* described her experience from two angles; the scenario in parliament and the scenario outside parliament. She said that Multipartism practiced in

parliament was completely different from the multipartyism practiced outside parliament. There was a semblance of multipartyism in Parliament, because it was a very small community and it was structured to operate like that with the opposition and government sitting on different sides of the house and indeed debating as the opposition and government. Like her colleagues, she said that there is no semblance of MPP outside parliament because the government of President Museveni never intended multipartyism outside parliament. They always intended multipartyism to work in parliament as a showcase for the international community to claim that there is multipartyism in Uganda. So what is seen outside parliament is opposition MPs fighting with police, street battles with police, opposition MPs not allowed to hold political rallies and gatherings.

Kikungwe's concern was about the internal democracy within the parties that it was still lacking. He said for example that if primaries are not conducted in a manner that is really very transparent, parties were going to be even weaker when independent candidates come to contest party candidates yet they are from within the parties. Secondly, he raised an issue that many of the parties thought that party interests were above national interests which he said is wrong. He insists that parties should put national interests above their individual party interests. He also talked about the caucusing in Parliament that it had undermined the operations of Parliament as an independent arm of government which is unfortunate.

Odit from UPC said that clearly on the ground, there was no MPP, it was just on paper. He said it was very strange for a country which had more than 30 parties to have over 200 MPs on the side of government and less than 100 on the side of the opposition political parties yet if you looked at the Presidential poll; President Museveni won slightly above 51 percent. That would also under normal circumstances have been the return for the representation of his party. *Odit* also mentioned the lack of resources for parties to move about in the country and the Penal Code and Police Act which tend to suppress the parties in opposition; they have to seek permission from the police to organize and they do not easily allow them. Lastly, *Odit* said parties have a challenge of cleaning their image, shaping up and offering alternative programs because for a long time, the government in place had been demonizing parties as a source of division, sectarianism, and corruption. He decried the investment of money in politics yet the campaign period is so long and it sometimes it takes two years, sometimes one year.

Akena from UPC said the progress had not been as fast as they would have wanted. He explained that much as they had got the legal framework for multipartyism, they were still having difficulties within the parties to cope in the new environment; the 20 years of non activity affected the functioning within the parties. According to *Akena*, the element of the individual was still very prevalent in the politics.

On his part, *Sebuliba Mutumba* said the country was moving in the right direction but the good will from government was still not there.

UPC Chief Whip *Okello-Okello* said the progress was slow but on course because

even understanding what multipartyism is all about was a very big problem even among the MPs.

Kyanjo of JEEMA said the progress was marginal because the intentions were not very good; they did it just as an unavoidable assignment not as a matter of good faith. Like *Kamya*, *Kyanjo* also said there is a semblance of MPP in parliament but in public, people were still consistently biased to individuals rather than to members of parties.

FDC's *Kassiano* also raised the lack of commitment and good will on all the actors particularly, the government of the day in sincerely ushering in MPP dispensation because there were still very many laws which required a lot of attention. He cited the Electoral Commission that under the MPP dispensation, it should be constituted with the input of other political players.

FDC's *Ogenga Latigo* and also the Leader of Opposition said the last one and a half years had been a tough time for parliament to find its level because there were no recent precedences to work on, whatever one did was looked at from various perspectives whether you were an ordinary member, Leader of Opposition or the Chief Whip, there was always suspicion. He also said that the element of individual merit, individual decision still reigned and therefore as the Leader of Opposition, it became a very big problem to push for order without really causing too much chaos. On the whole, he said the country had made very significant progress in terms of focus.

NRM's *Dombo* said the new MPP dispensation had its own challenges especially at the legislative level, where you had to act as a group instead of an individual and it became even worse where you had MPs who had been practicing individual merit with individual manifestoes but were in parties now and had to tow the collective line of the organization even when it was against their conscience.

Kabakumba, the NRM Chief Whip was optimistic, she said they were covering ground and members were beginning to appreciate the MPP we are in.

Karooro put the progress made for the last one and a half years at 65% but cautioned that unless we got to that stage where we could distinguish between individual merit and a flag bearer to know that a party supersedes the individual, no further progress will be realized.

From what the MPs said, it can clearly be discerned that very little progress has been made and their experiences of MPP in Uganda only confirm that a lot still has to be done if the country is to truly celebrate and enjoy the opening up of political space. The responses of the MPs portray the magnitude of the work that still needs to be done before Ugandans can confidently say that they are being governed in a fully fledged MPP system. The question is, if the MPs who are in position to move things such as the

legislations, continue to sensitize the masses about MPP and the way forward have had their hands tied and cannot do much at that level, who will do that job or what is going to happen?

Talking from own experience as a reporter who has been covering Parliament since 2002, the first MPP elections in February 2006 and there after, I agree with the MPs who said that MPP is just at the parliamentary level but not outside. The MPs themselves were grappling to understand how the new system works, some kept opposing the way of doing things under the MPP system because of the individual merit hung over they still had from the Movement Political System. The beginning was really tough. It is no surprise that thirteen out of the fifteen interviewees felt that no remarkable progress has been made so far. In order to move from this point, serious dialogue and mutual respect between political parties is needed to come up with a unified position for implementation.

7.3.2 Opinion

What is your opinion of multiparty politics? Do you embrace multipartyism?

All the fifteen MPs interviewed unanimously embrace MPP but for various reasons.

In *Kaddu-Mukasa's* opinion, it gives checks and balances as opposed to moving in a convoy like the Movement and everybody believes in one thing.

Lukwago said that in the case of Uganda, MPP will help dismantle the legacy of the Movement political system which is still very much alive.

Nampijja of CP said MPP allows for separation of powers, freedom of expression, transparency and accountability which are very fundamental in a MPP dispensation.

Kamya stated that MPP is a gradual change which needs total commitment from all the key players adding that they will not rest until government delivers on its promise.

Kikungwe said MPP offers choice to every other person.

Odit said MPP is a God given right and an international standard for any civilized state to compete for power where the parties are free to organize, design policies in their own manifestos and sell to the electorate.

Sebuliba Mutumba who believes in natural competition said MPP is the best way to enhance good governance and accountability as well as accommodating each other's differences.

UPC Chief Whip *Okello-Okello* said MPP gives people a sense of where to belong.

Kyanjo insists that MPP is the only way to go because the other alternatives have not been proven to be good any where they have been attempted either by dictators or by fascists, it has not worked out.

On his part, NRM's *Dombo* is of the view that political parties are only helpful at national level. He sees no value of multipartyism in local government elections at the district because basically there, it is only service delivery. He explained that parties are so strong in consolidating and shaping policy issues about education, about governance, about forestry, about health and added that once you have approved them at national level, the remaining levels are only for implementation. He would rather that in future, they completely abolish parties from local government elections and at that at that level they just elect individuals and a council to execute government programs the way it is done in Ghana.

Kabakumba said MPP is a constitutional and legal thing; there is nothing to debate on.

Karooro of the NRM said that despite the fact that there is a time and place for everything, it would have been ideal to remain in the umbrella of the Movement but there were people who did not want it and they could not be coerced.

The MPs' unanimous 'yes' is a positive response. In reality, the issue of MPP cannot be subject to the vote, there are no two ways to it. However, it requires total commitment from both sides; the government in power and the other political parties. Most of the research done in this area agrees with the above but the only problem has been with the way the transitions have taken place. They have taken place in haste with little or no planning at all. The above is true in the case of Uganda.

The west set the pace for MPP. It was rare most especially in the beginning for the MPs to debate in the house on contentious issues without giving reference to how things are done in the west and how successful they have been. I have always had a problem with this. Yes, there are some universal rules when it comes to MPP but I still think it is up to the various countries do things as they suit their situations as opposed to going by the

book. It is one of the reasons why many African countries which have embraced MPP are still struggling to make it work.

From the interviews of the MPs, it is clear they support MPP and are ready to make it work because the prospects are good.

7.3.3 CBS

In your opinion, how have the communication channels like CBS been able to project the political opinions of the people?

Fourteen out of the fifteen MPs agreed that channels like CBS project the political opinions of the people.

Independent candidate and host of the Mambo Bado talk show *Kaddu-Mukasa* commended CBS for remaining independent unlike some other media houses in the country which sided only with the ruling party to the extent of denying chance to other people with different opinions other than that of the ruling party to come up and express their views to the public.

Lukwago said programmes like Mambo Bado have done a lot to promote Multi-Party democracy. He finds the media largely open to different political parties and that they are given equal treatment in the way the shows are moderated.

Nampijja said CBS is one of the radio stations that created enough awareness to the public thereby empowering all categories of people. Secondly, *Nampijja* said communication channels like CBS have helped to bridge the gap for instance bringing together the three arms of government the executive, the judiciary and parliament to discuss their roles and what they can contribute to the development of the nation.

Kamya of FDC said radio stations have done a great job and the country would not have made that progress without the media. She said the media helped to broaden people's appreciation of the world beyond their own environment.

DP Chief Whip *Kikungwe* explained that Uganda was in a situation where politicians didn't use their mandate to guide their voters but rather used their voters to guide their brains. *Kikungwe* criticized politicians for not telling their voters the wrong just because they anticipate it might take away their votes. He summed up that radio talk shows have had a very big impact on voting patterns in the country and the decisions of policies in the country. He said that for instance, that is why government introduces policies and all of a sudden they are changed after hearing the sentiments or reactions from the people.

Odit stated boldly that the little gain the Ugandan community has benefited from the politics of the country is through the electronic media particularly the talk shows. He added that without radio programs like Mambo Bado which have a wide listener ship, there would be no opportunity for parties to sell their programmes.

Akena on the other hand was frank; he said that in the case of UPC, he does not see how CBS has contributed in articulating the positions of UPC. He cited the language barrier as the main reason. He however agreed that on the whole, radio has provided the greatest medium of communication and therefore it makes sense to use radio to try and get your opinions across and raise issues of concern.

Sebuliba Mutumba said the *Ebimeeza*, which he referred to as the people's parliament was a very creative initiative. He argues that the people can now vent their venomous anger on the politicians for not attending Parliament, for increasing their salaries at the expense of their suffering, question the lack of medicine in hospitals, bad roads. He said that way, people also come to panel bit them because they are more willing to come out boldly and speak their minds. He insists that 90% of their complaints are genuine.

Much as the UPC Chief Whip *Okello-Okello* too commended radio stations that they have done very well, he complained that they are restricted to city dwellers. He said that he is normally very reluctant to participate in talk shows because the people in his constituency don't hear them. He wants radio stations to spread out so that their network is country wide. Despite the fact that he can not speak Luganda, the language used on Mambo Bado, he was in agreement that CBS has gone a long way in educating and informing the people. He said that he always got people talking about something on CBS every now and then and he thinks CBS has had a lot of influence on the events in this country.

On his part, *Kyanjo* said communication channels like CBS have every so often re-shaped government policy as a result of the comments derived from those radio talk shows.

CBS has alternatives for those who cannot speak Luganda. *Kassiano* said he had not been there at Mambo Bado because of the language barrier but he has been a guest of CBS' Cross Fire, another English political talk show program. He thinks the media plays a very important role, for instance when it comes to the debates they conduct in Parliament, he revealed that he is so surprised that when he makes statements on the floor of the house, and goes to his constituency the people tell him they heard the submissions he made on the floor of the house.

Leader of Opposition *Ogenga Latigo* admitted that one of the elements that has helped a lot in the growth of Multi-Party Politics has been the media in particular the radio talk shows because all those fora allow people to engage each other actively.

On the other hand, *Dombo* said that in a country where the literacy levels are still low, the circulation levels of news papers still limited and the purchasing power of people to buy those papers even if they were able to read also limited, the people may remain with no

other option. He said that news channels, talk shows and radios like CBS that have a wider audience have done very well in projecting people's political opinions, they keep them updated on what is going on in the country.

Unlike her colleagues, NRM Chief Whip *Kabakumba* said communication channels like CBS do not project the political opinions of the people. She said that people go to these talk shows just to talk and talk and talk and according to her; they simply derive pleasure from abusing and criticizing government without offering positive criticism and /or alternatives.

On her part, NRM's *Karoo* unlike her Chief Whip said the communication channels have done very well though people sometimes abuse this freedom. But on the whole, especially on multipartism, *Karoo* agrees that they have done quite well but cautioned that they must be very careful with these radio stations because what ever the people hear on radio is gospel truth.

Radio remains and will continue to be the cheapest means of communication in Uganda because it is easily accessible and cheap. There were approximately 205 radio stations in the country by the end of 2008 according to the Uganda Broadcasting Council Secretary Kagole Kivumbi. That is a number to reckon with and can not just be ignored. As a rule of thumb in the business world, when ever demand increases, supplies increases as well. Following this rule, it is assumed that the more the radio business became vibrant, the more people opened up radio stations. But who or what makes the radio business to flourish? The answer is simple, it is the listeners and what attracts the listeners is the way the various radio stations package their programmes. The above explains why CBS became very popular among the populace.

The more the number of radio stations increased, the more the business became competitive. Radio stations had to be very creative and innovative to remain afloat. CBS did well in this regard and it is one of the radios that has even enabled Ugandans in the diaspora to participate in their talk-shows. The MPP system came with its own challenges and radio stations like CBS are already feeling the heat. Whether they manage to maintain the standard they set in the beginning will depend on whether they tow the CBS policy or the government one.

There is no doubt, radios like CBS have changed the way of doing politics in Uganda and

their role is indispensable but government must give them more weight and importance instead of fighting them and attaching them to the opposition.

7.3.4 Talk Shows

What is the effect of talk shows like Mambo Bado in shaping political opinion?

Fourteen out of the fifteen interviewees are in agreement that talk-shows like Mambo Bado shape political opinion.

Mambo Bado talk show host *Kaddu-Mukasa* said Mambo Bado not only shapes people's opinions, even government gets to know what people think but a particular problem, it is another thing not to implement what people want. He added that Mambo Bado has had a very big effect on the participants, it has brought up so many people politically, and it acts as a mediator where people can vent their anger. *Kaddu-Mukasa* confided that it is not easy to handle the Mambo Bado talk-show because people come with different opinions, ideas, some of which are violent in nature and it is his responsibility to control and guide them. He said that because he is well versed with the politics of the country, the do's and don'ts of the constitution; he is able to guide the participants. As it was manifested in the past elections, many members of Mambo Bado went into political offices ranging from Parliament to districts, local councils because they were nurtured by this very program, they knew how to talk to people politically and how to handle different situations says *Kaddu-Mukasa*.

Lukwago said he usually features there quite often and that he has seen many guests come from all over the country including from deep in the villages, the President, different leaders of political parties and ministers. *Lukwago* said that Mambo Bado would go a long way in promoting constitutional governance if the people's views are listened to.

Kamya said Mambo Bado helps people to broaden their understanding and it provides civic education to many people. Although civic education is a constitutional obligation of government, government spends money on everything except civic education simply because they prefer an uninformed community. Like *Kamya* said, Mambo Bado is accessible to the people; you just walk in and register yourself if you have an opinion you want to share. *Kamya* revealed that she has heard some really high quality debates from some otherwise uneducated people if uneducated in Uganda means not being able to speak English. Some of the debates are of a much higher quality material than those of the MPs only that they do it in their local languages according to *Kamya*.

Kikungwe, the DP Chief Whip said all those who successfully participate in Mambo Bado, have had their ratings go up in their constituencies because their people keep hearing them on radio and people take what is said on radios as gospel truth.

Odit raised an issue that whereas the communities who have listened and

accessed programs like Mambo Bado now know what they should be doing, when it comes to elections, they are still bought off, they are intimidated, hence losing their direction at that very moment. However, Odit maintained that Mambo Bado has helped a lot to bring out political issues and in his view; no single Ugandan can claim they don't know the politics of the country any more.

Akena said talk shows like Mambo Bado are possibly the greatest tool political parties have at the moment for communicating with the public to make them aware of what party to stand for and why as well as the general political climate in the country.

According to *Okello-Okello*, talk shows like Mambo Bado give the listeners a basis for assessment as to who is talking the truth, a lie, who is not doing well, which political party is doing well, e.t.c.

Kyanjo said that Mambo Bado gives policy makers an opportunity to simplify the technical issues discussed in Parliament for the public to digest because radio does not put the burden of reading, or watching on the public and everything is broadcast in the local language.

Kassiano said that talk shows like Mambo Bado mitigate opportunities and injuries that could have been caused by only having one person have access.

Dombo looked at Uganda's political spectrum and explained that when you are discussing politics or in the bar, on a radio station or at parliament, you can see so many people quoting the talk shows; Did you hear so and so on radio? Did you hear how the public responded? Did you see how he was harassed by the public? Did you see how this and the other happened? He says that if you conducted an opinion poll using phone in calls, you would see that they tend to project the views of the people adding that talk shows have been very strong in creating opinion about what is happening in the political play ground. They are a point of reference.

Kabakumba again does not agree that talk shows like Mambo Bado have any effect in shaping political opinion. She said those who participate in the *Ebimeeza* generally are just individuals and some of them run from parliament and go and give their own opinions.

Politics is what made *Ebimeeza* popular. For the very first time in Uganda's history, the public had an opportunity to take part in a fora thought to be for the educated and the rich. Anne Lydia Sekandi, the former Radio One's Head of News Department and Producer of the *Ekimeeza* talk-show said in an online interview that the public agenda at the time the *Ebimeeza* talk-shows started was in favour of political debates. She said that

efforts to make other issues generate interest have been futile since in the absence of political pluralism, some populist opposition politicians find these talk-shows the best fora to express their views (Tayeebwa 2003: 89-90).

Talk-shows are in a way campaign platforms for politicians. Many look at them as a way to position themselves politically, to let the public know that there are there, they intend to contest or remain in the race. Those who have continuously attended and participated in these talk-shows have gained political clout and their ratings have gone up. That could be one of the reasons that led to the popularity.

The level of interactivity was and still is unimaginable due to the fact that a number of the *Ebimeeza* like Mambo Bado are conducted in the people's local dialects such as Luganda. My biggest concern is whether government bothers to take any of those debates seriously. The *Ebimeeza* have influenced policy a number of times but in favour of the government because they some times use them to come up with a way forward especially on the contentious issues but not to benefit the public. In a young democracy like Uganda, talk-shows such as Mambo Bado make a very big difference but the government on a number of occasions views them as avenues where the public attacks them and is never appreciative of their efforts. All that depends on who is affected by the talk-shows.

From the interviews conducted, it is clear that radio talk show programs have given people a right to be heard to convey their views explicitly in a manner unprecedented in Uganda's broadcast industry.

7.3.5 Elections 2011

Judging from the way things are now in your opinion, how do you foresee the elections in 2011 or what is their prediction?

Thirteen out of the fifteen MPs interviewed predict a very violent election in 2011.

Kaddu-Mukasa is concerned that the NRM has turned national institutions like the Police, army, Electoral Commission into party institutions and they are all working in the interests of the ruling party. He said the 2011 elections are going to be very tough.

Lukwago said it is going to be the same old story where elections are rigged through intimidation, falsification of results, bribery, stuffing of ballot papers, pre-ticking of ballot papers, chasing away of polling agents among others. No fundamental reforms have been carried out such as strengthening the capacity of the current Electoral Commission to manage a MPP election.

Kamya said the 2011 elections are going to be like the Kenyan elections in 2007 where Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga caused a stand off in the entire country. *Kamya* predicted that the opposition will win the election but government will want to hold on at any cost. She appealed to those in power to try setting the stage now and come up with the necessary electoral and political reforms.

Kikungwe also said there is likely to be too much violence in the elections just because one man Kaguta Museveni is going to be part of the elections. He is of the view that if Museveni opted out of the process, it could be the most peaceful Uganda has ever had. He also predicts that NRM is likely to lose out and if the opposition is organized and harmonizes their differences that would be a very good opportunity for them to come into power.

Akena is concerned about the political system in place which turns more on presidential system as well as the parliamentary system at some level. He hopes that after the 2011 elections, the country will go more towards the parliamentary than the presidential system where for example leaders of political parties are allowed in the house arguing that it will increase debate and bring out more issues.

Sebuliba Mutumba posits that unless the government in power stops its radicalism approach of threatening and bribing people, the elections of 2011 are going to be very chaotic.

Okello-Okello sees very little change if any will come their way because no civic education is being carried out. As a result, people don't know their rights, duties and responsibilities. He gave an example of his constituency during the last election in 2006; people sold their votes for 500 shillings an equivalent of close to 25 euro cents. He also wants all the political parties to take part in appointing members to serve on the Electoral Commission the way it is in Kenya.

According to *Kyanjo*, looking at the realities, what is most appropriate is to advise the president to drop the idea of continuing as head of state. However, he says that unlikely as it seems, he sees two scenarios; a very violent election in 2011 and two a no election scenario. He explained that from the look of things, it seems as if there is a design to come and give an explanation to the general public of the expenses made in the past including those made at the Common Wealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGUM) in November 2007 so as not to go through an election time during 2011.

Kassiano deeply regrets the removal of the presidential term limits by the 7th Parliament. He said that it is very unfortunate that the 7th parliament went ahead and removed the presidential term limits when it amended article 105 of the constitution and it is an act for which the 7th parliament will never be forgiven by Ugandans. He added that when members were bought with 5 million, 10 million, 15 million to lift these term limits, it was the undoing of all the hopes and aspirations of Ugandans. He advised the most populace societies like Buganda and Busoga not to continue frustrating their efforts by voting president Museveni back.

The Leader of Opposition in Parliament too deeply regrets the removal of term limits because they were like insurance. *Ogenga Latigo* said that if Museveni maintained his interest in the presidency, he sees a very difficult future not only for him but for the entire country because the country wants change and that change will come no matter what.

The 2011 elections will be the second after the first MPP elections and it will be the first real test whether the current government has delivered on its promises or not, whether the people have matured into forming opinions whether to support NRM or any other party said *Dombo*. He also pointed out the issue of pledges, the president promised that in 42 months Uganda will have energy and electricity, there will be no load shedding, and that he will have tackled the challenge of jobs. *Dombo* said the competition is going to be tough adding that a lot of restraint will be needed within the various organizations to ensure that there is a proper playing field of politics.

Kabakumba preferred not to speculate saying that since there are no term limits, anything can happen and so long as it is not against the law, we will go by it.

With less than two years to go before the second MPP election, one can only wait but as per the interviews, it might be one of the toughest elections in Uganda's history.

In conclusion, the analysis of the interviews also shows that very little progress has been made ever since the first MPP election in February 2006 after 20 years. The MPs attribute this to the lack of commitment on the side of government because its intention was not to open up political space. As a result, the opposition is always intimidated and suppressed, the opposition MPs feel that radio talk-shows are the only avenues where they can sell their party ideologies. Some institutional reforms have not been made as is supposed to be the case in a MPP dispensation and they predict a very violent election in 2011. The future still looks very hazy.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The first task of this study was to review the transition to MPP in Uganda after 20 years prior to the first MPP elections in 2006 and to assess how the MPP system has worked. A review of the political history of Uganda to date in chapter three clearly shows that the country has never recovered from the series of political crisis, which plunged it into a military dictatorship in the 1970s.

Uganda, just like the other African states inherited a constitutional government that at least in theory assured basic democratic rights, such as freedom of association, religion and press. The states also respected the separation of powers between the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary and public accountability through regular MPP elections in which each adult citizen had the same voting rights.

In the development of independent states, African leaders have sometimes disposed of the democratic principles out of pragmatism ambition or certainty. The political instability that bedeviled Uganda just like in most other African states of course played a key role in the failure of democratic experiments. Often during civil clashes, democratic principles have been shelved. MPP democracy has in fact been blamed for aggravating social conflicts. Frail democratic institutions have not proved to be effective deterrents to the personal aspirations of national political leaders.

Using mainly the interviews, chapter seven has ascertained that the progress made three years after the first MPP election is minimal and the future does not seem to hold much. Fourteen MPs out of the fifteen interviewed clearly stated that MPP in Uganda is simply on paper but there is nothing on the ground because there is no commitment from the government of the day. They also indicated that the NRM government has continuously ignored its responsibility to carry out civic education because it is much easier to govern an uninformed public.

The issue of government intimidation and suppression of the opposition came out

strongly from the analysis of both the Mambo Bado programmes and the interviews. Concern was raised that there is no apparent divide between the army and politics, something which can be attributed to the history of the military struggle and as such, the army is part of everything. The army is also at the centre of the electoral and political system and is even represented in Parliament. The army is the foundation from which the President and the government hail. Similarly, the Police has been militarised to maintain law and order.

Owing to the fact that the current army was a liberation army, it is partisan and loyal to President Museveni as its leader. It is capable of rebelling against another President. The authority of the ruling party has been felt in the various sectors. The above sent signals to the public that it is better to play it safe by belonging and supporting the NRM to survive. Much as there is a variety to choose from, the people still do not have the liberty to choose freely, their actions might have repercussions.

Despite the consciousness for change, there was no concurrence on how to manage the change, or when the change should commence, or what kind of liberalization is predicted. Even where the central part of the Movement admitted the call for change, it wanted the changes as near to 2006 as possible. On the other hand, those in favour of opening up political space and the tolerant Movementists craved for a long transition period so as to put in place the legal and institutional framework required for a legitimate democratic process.

More still, the public except for the elite in the urban centers to be precise Kampala was also undecided on the most important political question of whether to open up political space or not as portrayed in the 2000 and 2005 referenda. There was a sudden change of heart from a 'no' vote in 2000 to a 'yes' vote in 2005 and President Yoweri Museveni was the chief campaigner in both instances no wonder his sincerity was questioned.

The July 28 2005 referendum re-instituting the political parties was preceded by the removal of presidential term limits in July 2005 to make it possible for any president to stand for more than two terms. The controversies surrounding all these

happenings attracted the media to cover the various aspects to these issues in form of radio talk-show programmes, news items, editorials, features, opinion polls and exclusive interviews. All the above fora elevated the transition to MPP on the debate platform enabling the various political parties and the public to give their views most especially the radio talk shows; they gave the issue unlimited airtime every day.

The weekly *Ebimeeza* usually attract so many people ranging from politicians to civil servants, the average and ordinary Ugandans because they are broadcast from an open place and there is no restriction on attendance. That is a definite plus for *Ebimeeza*, that aspect adds meaning to the debates when it comes to the contributions. The public's participation in the Mambo Bado programme during the six selected weeks showed how interested Ugandans were in the subject matter. There is no doubt that the *Ebimeeza* helped Ugandans to come on board with the transition; they were given information, they sought for clarification, gave their opinions and comments on what was going on, they offered suggestions.

Seeing the impact the *Ebimeeza* had on the populace, government mounted a big fight against the *Ebimeeza* and wanted them banned, something which raised a lot of criticism. Government claimed that people were using the radio talk-shows to abuse the President and they and that they will not accept it. The *Ebimeeza* still exist to the present day and their popularity among the public increased but they have toned down their broadcasts. Government has always been interested in particular talk-shows because it views them as threats. CBS' Mambo Bado is one of them because of its popularity, has wide coverage and they normally discuss what the public refers to as 'sensitive issues'. Government's collision with CBS has been continuous with threats to close it down and now the Broadcasting Council late last year issued what it called the last warning to all radio stations especially CBS, to adhere to the minimum broadcasting standards. CBS was not the problem per say, it was the Mambo Bado talk-show because of its big attendance yet the issues it handles are deemed to be putting government in the spot light. As earlier mentioned, government prefers to govern an uninformed nation. It is as if programmes like Mambo Bado keep coming in their way; everything is put on the table for

discussion. Times are changing, leaders on the African continent ought to start listening to the people they govern or else stability in most African states will never be realised.

Government is doing all it can to take action against CBS through the Broadcasting Council. The Broadcasting Council wrote to CBS demanding that it installs a “pre-listening device that would enable them to at least control what is broadcast,” according to the October 22nd 2008 letter to CBS radio manager wrote EastAfricaPress.com. The Council further demanded “adequate technical facilities” that will enable presenters of the popular Mambo Bado talk-show hosted outside the studio control the crowd. Officially this is the reason CBS’s license has not been renewed. I don’t think their demands are realistic at all. It is as if they are asking CBS to start playing pre-recorded Mambo Bado programmes which have already been edited because when someone gets on the microphone you don’t know what they are thinking or what they are going to say. It all comes back to the same thing, what is going on in the country and what do the people say about it? I already said it and I will say it again, government must learn to listen to those they govern it is the only way forward. The demands of the Broadcasting Council to CBS are not valid at all. The above only sets a bad precedent.

One would wonder why I used only one radio station yet there are close to 205 radio stations. Well, given more time, a study of this nature ought to use more radio stations since most of them have *Ebimeeza* and more radio programmes would be analysed. In my view, five radio stations and 10 programmes would be more representative.

The analysis of some of the Mambo Bado programmes shows that several callers and participants did not know what was going on, and would probably still not know had it not been for these talk shows. Many thought they were still in the Movement Political System. The *Ebimeeza* is all that Ugandans have and they ought to be supported no matter what. MPP is all about accommodating each other even if certain things are not in your favour. Government’s failure to acknowledge this starting with such talk-shows continues to put their commitment in balance. I hate to think or even imagine how the country would be like in their absence; the people would be living in a vacuum.

As clearly established by this study, radio talk-shows played a very significant role in the transition to MPP and democracy in Uganda.

Agenda-setting is one of the roles of the media and is still one of the most popular theories in mass communication. It is inevitable for the media not to set the agenda for the public because new issues keep coming up and they would not be known about unless the media puts them in the spot light. On the other hand, the public too in a way sets the media agenda in the sense that the more they respond to a particular issue, the more the media will look for new angles to approach that issue.

Ugandans lack a culture of reading and this culture is continuing to go down. What has not been talked about on radio, TV or written about in the papers does not 'exist' to them. One can even argue that the media thinks for the public. They tell them what to think about. For example it is not uncommon to find people in the taxi going home, in a bar chatting and drinking referring to what was talked about in one of the *Ebimeeza* or who said what and what the callers said. Radio talk-shows are a point of reference to the public and what ever is discussed or said is taken to be the 'gospel truth'. The moment the media said, yes, it is time to focus on the transition to MPP, the public did not hesitate, they participated fully. It is true that the more an issue is talked about, the more popular it will become popular and the knowledge of that issue will increase.

Agenda-setting is one of the strategies of doing business in the media industry. Every media house would want to portray itself to the public as the most credible and prompt in covering and breaking stories. However, that entire process is partly dictated by someone else, the advertisers because running a media house is a business in every sense, it has to break even at the end of the day. On the other hand, advertisers and sponsors also tend to associate themselves with issues that have successfully made it to the top of the agenda and in such circumstances; the media tries to see to it that such issues keep featuring on the agenda. The biggest concern here has always been that some of the things that affect the public directly have been ignored simply because they are difficult to sell to the advertiser and the public does not have a hand in choosing what should feature where

and when. Business is business, but the media should strive to balance in the name of the public good.

From experience as a journalist and someone who has had the opportunity to host a political call in talk-show, it is difficult to come up with an issue for discussion without framing it. Framing here refers to the selection of the issues to be discussed some times and the angle of discussion. In so doing, talk show hosts impart in the public a certain line of thinking and way of looking at things which in turn is responsible for their contributions. By and large, I think the media agenda sets the public agenda including the politicians' agenda as well. The former set the latter's agenda to a small extent. In the absence of the agenda setting role of the media, the public would not have much to talk about because it usually looks up to the media to know what is going on around them.

This study adds evidence to the core idea that the news media indicate to the public what the main issues of the day are and this is reflected in what the public perceives as the main issues. As Trenaman and McQuail pointed out, 'The evidence strongly suggests that people think about what they are told but at no level do they think what they are told' (McQuail 2005: 512).

On the whole, it will take Uganda or Africa for that matter a very long time to realize a true MPP dispensation. There is certainly no alternative to MPP and it would be catastrophic for the African countries which have embraced MPP to change and go back to one-party systems. The way of doing things is what has to change. However, there is no uniform criterion for doing this because various countries have different experiences and contexts which led to the transitions. It should be done on a case by case basis. The donor community is very crucial here because they influence so many things but they must be ready to give Africa time.

I have tried to keep track of what is going on in the country by reading the online papers since December 2007 when I did the interviews. My conclusion is that the status quo has not changed and the findings of this study still stand.

Uganda's Movement system is not novel for Africa or any where else; it is just another name for one-party systems. It contradicts the doctrine of MPP; it encourages individual merit, which is no longer fashionable as opposed to choice or variety.

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