INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
IN UGANDAN BROADCASTING: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

by

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DECLARATION

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I declare that 'Indigenous language programming and citizen participation in Ugandan broadcasting: an exploratory study' is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

……………………………………… ………………………….
SIGNATURE DATE
(MRS. MB CHIBITA)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my husband Mike Chibita, and to our children Benezeri, Maria, Semu and Joshua for understanding that this is something I needed to do, and that there was never going to be an ideal time for doing it, and to Dick and Ivy Otto and Deon and Teresa Conradie for providing that badly needed space for me to accomplish this task.

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ACRONYMS

Legco Legislative Council
UPU Uganda People's Union
UPC Uganda People's Congress
DP Democratic Party
KY Kabaka Yekka
UPDF Uganda People's Defence Force
TPDF Tanzania People's Defence Force
NRA National Resistance Army
NRM National Resistance Movement
NPC National People's Congress
UNLF Uganda National Liberation Front
RC Resistance Council
LC Local Council
UBS Uganda Broadcasting Service
UBC Uganda Broadcasting Corporation
LRA Lord's Resistance Army
MW Medium Wave
SW Short Wave
FM Frequency Modulation
PPU Presidential Press Unit
VPPU Vice President's Press Unit
PMPU Prime Minister's Press Unit
Sida Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency

SUMMARY

The thesis, *Indigenous language programming and citizen participation in Ugandan broadcasting: an exploratory study* constitutes an analysis of the significance of policy on indigenous language programming in Uganda's broadcast media. The thesis is conceived broadly within a critical studies' framework. It emphasises the role of the broadcast media in the public sphere, as well as policy on linguistic diversity in making the public sphere more accessible to the majority of Ugandans. Fundamental assumptions of the thesis are the following:

- The imperatives of the market are in tension with the need to preserve a significant amount of indigenous language broadcasting in Uganda's broadcast media for purposes of diversity;

- This tension can be discerned in the political-economic environment within which the broadcast media in Uganda have evolved and operate as well as in public debate on indigenous language programming in the broadcast media;

- The current state of the media's structure, operation and regulation have their roots in Uganda's political history; and

- Policy on the indigenous languages has a bearing on Ugandans' capacity to participate meaningfully in the democratic process via the broadcast media.

The thesis documents key social, political and economic factors surrounding policy on indigenous language broadcasting in Uganda using interviews, an analysis of Uganda's political history as well as key legal documents related to diversity and participation. It documents public debate on the significance of language policy for the participation of Ugandans in the democratic process through the broadcast media and examines how changes in the structure and operation of Uganda's broadcast media, especially since the liberalisation of the airwaves in the early 1990s, are perceived by Ugandans to have affected their participation in the democratic process through the media. Finally the thesis makes recommendations for future communication policy with regards to the role of language in enhancing diversity and participation.

Key terms: broadcasting, democratic participation, diversity, indigenous language, media, radio, policy, public sphere, Uganda.

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CHAPTER 1

1.0   INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

This thesis entitled '*Indigenous language programming and citizen participation in Ugandan broadcasting: an exploratory study'* seeks to discuss the historical context of the broadcast media, broadcast policy and regulation on indigenous language programming in Uganda. The thesis further examines the way key political, economic and cultural factors in this context are related to broadcast policy and regulation, and what bearing this relationship has on the ability of the average Ugandan to participate in public debate through the broadcast media on issues of concern to them. The study therefore focuses on broadcasting in the indigenous languages and the way this relates to diversity and participation in Uganda.

The thesis examines key economic, political, social and cultural factors influencing indigenous language programming in Uganda's broadcast media. The study also examines the growing tensions between the public interest imperative of the 'public' (state-owned) broadcaster and the pressures to compete favourably with new commercial broadcasters. It assesses the implications of the prevailing situation for the average Ugandan's participation in the broadcast media. Finally, the thesis makes some recommendations for communication policy.

1.2   STUDY CONTEXT

Uganda is located in East Africa, West of Kenya and South of Sudan. The country covers a total area of 236,040 sq. km. According to the most recent population census (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2005:viii), Uganda has an estimated population of 24 million people. Twelve percent of these live in the urban areas while the rest live in the rural areas.

The country is divided into 77 districts (see Addendum 1d. Districts of Uganda 2006). Ethnically, Uganda constitutes a mosaic of Bantu, Nilotic and Sudanic groups although Ethnologue (2001) breaks these down further into Bantu, Central Sudanic, Kuliak and Nilotic (see Addendum 1a. Ethnic Map of Uganda). The Baganda are the largest ethnic group constituting 17.3%, followed by the Banyankore who constitute 9.8% (cf. Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2005:viii). Nearly half the population are Catholic while another one-third are Protestants. The rest of the population is

divided among Muslims, traditionalists and other denominations. Since the introduction of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme in 1994, 68% of the population is literate (i.e. can read and write in one or more of the languages of Uganda).[1]

 English is the official language of Uganda although it is spoken fluently by less than one quarter of the population. Kiswahili, spoken by an even smaller proportion of the population, was recently made the second official language. Luganda is the indigenous language spoken by the largest number of Ugandans, but according to the most recent census report, there are 56 other distinct ethnic groups in Uganda. Each of these has at least one corresponding indigenous language or dialect. Nine of Uganda's ethnic groups have a population of more than one million. These are the Baganda, Banyankore, Basoga, Bakiga, Iteso, Langi, Acholi, Bagisu and Lugbara (cf. Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2005:12).[2]

1.2.1   The broadcast media in Uganda

The broadcast media in Uganda were liberalised in 1993. As of July 2005 there were 87 registered parent radio stations and 37 repeater stations. There were also 10 television stations in operation. The broadcast stations have now increased to 130 registered radio stations, with 99 of them on air. There are also 27 television stations with 14 of them operating. These include the former *Radio Uganda* and Uganda Television, which have since been merged to form the *Uganda Broadcasting Corporation* (*UBC*), the state broadcaster. Most of these stations are located in Kampala and a few of the other metropolitan centres throughout the country (see Chapter 5 for a more detailed treatment of the structure and operation of the media in Uganda; see also Addendum 2b. Radio stations licensed and operating 2006).

The liberalisation and privatisation of the media sector in Uganda has unleashed a new set of ownership dynamics in the media sector that reflect a distinctly urban and commercial priority (see Chapter 5 for a detailed treatment of media ownership in Uganda). Sixty-five radio stations are currently based in the capital city, and together operate in a maximum of five of the over 30

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[1] The above figures are based on the final report of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics resulting from a population and housing census conducted in 2002. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics is a semi-autonomous government agency in charge of generating and disseminating official statistics about Uganda's population.

[2] It should be noted that two clusters, the Bakiga, Batooro, Banyankore and Banyoro and the Banyole, Basamia and Bagwe speak languages with a high level of mutual intelligibility and have been treated as two instead of 7 language groups for purposes of broadcasting on the state media. This fact however rarely comes out in debate on which languages are most widely spoken.

languages and dialects of the people of Uganda.[3] Ten out of the 14 television stations on air are based in the capital city. Hardly a decade after the broadcast sector in Uganda was liberalised, the competition has snuffed out some of the stations, and bigger media are beginning to buy out smaller ones. The potential for media concentration is also evident.[4] Furthermore, there has been intense resistance to a proposed new policy that seeks to regulate ownership and content which have hitherto been unregulated. The resistance has come mostly from commercial media owners. The state of the broadcast industry is examined in more depth in Chapter 5.

1.3   CENTRAL ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

A fundamental assumption of this thesis is that the imperatives of the market are in tension with the need to preserve a significant amount of indigenous language broadcasting in Uganda's broadcast media for purposes of diversity. This tension can be discerned in the political-economic environment within which the broadcast media in Uganda have evolved and operate, as well as in public debate on indigenous language programming in the broadcast media. The thesis also makes the assumption that the current state of the media's structure, operation and regulation has roots in Uganda's political history. Finally, the study proceeds on the assumption that policy on the indigenous languages has a bearing on Ugandans' capacity to participate meaningfully in the democratic process via the broadcast media.

This inquiry therefore sought to:

- Probe the political, economic and cultural context of the broadcast media and media policy in Uganda;
- Analyse the regulatory framework governing broadcasting in Uganda as it impacts on diversity and participation, with an emphasis on indigenous language broadcasting;
- Document the content of the debate on indigenous language broadcasting policy in Uganda and its relation to citizen participation in Uganda's broadcast media; and
- Make recommendations for future broadcast policy on indigenous language programming and diversity.

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[3] This excludes the state radio which operates in 24 languages. State television operates mostly in English with one bulletin each in Luganda (the majority language) and Kiswahili, the regional lingua franca.
[4] The Aga Khan group based in Kenya and the IPP group based in Tanzania already have interests across media types in Uganda.

1.4   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the inquiry:

- What are the key political, economic and cultural factors at play in influencing broadcast policy and programming priorities of the broadcast media in Uganda, especially since the liberalisation of the airwaves starting from 1993?[5]

- What are the salient features of broadcast policy and regulation in Uganda with specific reference to linguistic diversity?

- How do these features relate to the wider context of the commercialisation of the broadcast media as well as to other political and cultural factors?

- What are Ugandans saying about indigenous language broadcasting policy, and the significance of indigenous language programming for their participation in important political debate via the broadcast media?

- What are the implications of the findings of the socio-historical analysis, the analysis of the regulatory framework, and the examination of the debate on indigenous language programming in Uganda's broadcast media for future broadcast policy on indigenous language programming and diversity?

1.5   METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis to a large extent relies on the methodological framework that Thompson (1990) has called 'depth hermeneutics' to make sense of the various layers of knowledge relating to indigenous language broadcasting and participation in Uganda's media. Depth hermeneutics, Thompson argues,

> …enables us to develop a methodological framework which is oriented towards the interpretation (or re-interpretation) of meaningful phenomena, but in which different types of analysis can play legitimate and mutually supportive roles (1990:21).

According to Thompson, depth hermeneutics accommodates both the structures within which symbolic forms occur, and the 'social historical conditions of action and interaction' (Thompson 1990:21). Thompson sees different levels of analysis as mutually reinforcing rather than antithetical. He acknowledges that in the process of interpreting social phenomena, no one method

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[5] 1993 is when the first privately owned radio station came on air in Uganda.

or level of analysis is capable of telling a comprehensive story. For an exploratory study such as this, therefore, the depth hermeneutics approach seems ideal for approaching the problem from multiple fronts to get a more comprehensive picture. The framework is appropriate both for its depth and its flexibility.

For Thompson, individual methods that throw light on a limited aspect of a problem 'may best be regarded as partial stages within a more comprehensive methodological framework' (Thompson 1990:21). Thompson thus describes depth hermeneutics as '…a general methodological framework for the analysis of cultural phenomena, that is, for the analysis of symbolic forms in structured contexts' (Thompson 1990: 21).

Thompson's framework comprises three phases. The first one, social-historical analysis, concerns itself with unearthing the social historical conditions of production, circulation and reception of symbolic forms. The second phase, formal or discursive analysis, concerns itself primarily with 'the internal organization of symbolic forms, with their structural features, patterns and relations' (Thompson 1990:22). The third and final phase in Thompson's methodological framework is interpretation. This phase concerns itself with the construction of meaning. It builds upon the findings of the first two phases. However, Thompson posits, interpretation:

> …moves beyond them in a process of synthetic construction. It uses socio-historical analysis and formal or discursive analysis to shed light on the social conditions and structural features of a symbolic form, and it seeks to interpret a symbolic form in this light, to explicate and elaborate what it says, what it represents what it is about (Thompson 1990:22-23).

This thesis substitutes formal discourse analysis with an analysis of the content of the debate on policy on the indigenous languages in Uganda's broadcast media and how this relates to linguistic diversity and participation. This is because the central concern is not so much with the content of a specific programme or programmes but rather with the overall discussion relating to the distribution of roles in the media and in the public domain for the indigenous languages in Uganda.

Thompson concerns himself specifically with the notion of ideology, which he describes as 'meaning in the service of power' (Thompson 1990: 23). He argues that the various phases of the depth-hermeneutical approach are employed with the aim of highlighting the ideological character of symbolic forms (or in this case, public debate and policy-formulation) that is, with the aim of highlighting the ways in which policy serves to establish and sustain relations of domination.

Thus the interpretation of ideology, according to Thompson, is depth hermeneutics with a critical intent (Thompson 1990:23).

For Thompson, just as it is important to analyse power relations inherent in media messages (or in the case of this thesis, media policies), it is equally important to analyse how audiences perceive these power relations as well. This is a departure from traditional positivist research, which typically analyses the different aspects of the equation of mass-mediation (e.g. media institutions, content or audiences) as discrete units. Thompson therefore sees analysis of mass-mediated communication phenomena as a complex and integrated process.

The emphasis of this thesis is on how structure (and in particular policy) and human agency interact in the process of giving significance to indigenous language programming. Indigenous language programming in Uganda is crucial to democracy, given that many Ugandans are hardly able to express themselves meaningfully in public debate through the media except in their indigenous languages. This is related to the fact that facility with English is linked to post-primary levels of education and other differentiated socio-economic privileges. Programming in languages other than the indigenous ones therefore tends to favour only a section of the population: those that have received formal education and/or have been exposed to Languages of Wider Communication like English. Without the intervention of policy, this can result in major inequalities as far as participation in public debate is concerned.

The thesis takes debate relating to policy on indigenous language programming as a site where these factors come into full view. It thus seeks to identify some complex macro and micro factors that shape the debate on policy regarding indigenous language programming in Uganda's broadcast media and to relate these to factors in the environment influencing participation in the democratic process through indigenous language programming. The thesis in particular takes cognisance of the tension between public service broadcasting and the commercial imperatives emerging from the commercialisation of the broadcast media.

1.6 DATA-GATHERING TECHNIQUES

This inquiry employed a combination of research techniques. These included qualitative interviews and analysis of media, communication and education policy documents and other archival sources to elicit information at various levels on indigenous language broadcasting policy in Uganda. Placing the debate on indigenous language policy in historical context made it possible

to examine the possible relationship between linguistic diversity and citizen participation in Uganda's broadcast media.

1.6.1   Qualitative interviews

Lindlof and Taylor (2002:170) define the qualitative interview as 'an event in which one person (the interviewer) encourages others to freely articulate their interests and experiences'. They point out that so important has the interview technique become that it is employed in nearly all qualitative research (cf. Bryman 2004:319). This method is particularly relevant for eliciting large amounts of authentic data. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002: 174-175), interviews provide accounts of people's experiences, offer explanations of behaviour; enable the researcher to understand native conceptualisations of communication and elicit the language forms used by social actors in natural settings. The qualitative interview is more focused on eliciting the interviewee's point of view than confirming the researchers fixed positions (Bryman 2004:319). Interviews are also useful in gathering information about things or processes that cannot be observed effectively by other means and in inquiring about the past. They can be used to verify, validate or comment on information obtained from other sources and achieve efficiency in data collection. The interview was thus utilised in this inquiry to obtain new information, for instance from government officials, to verify information as well as to get a clearer picture of different points of view on the issue of language and broadcasting in Uganda's media.

While some interviews target 'savvy social actors' who would give the researcher insights into key features and processes, significant cultural knowledge and power relations (Lindlof & Taylor 2002: 176-177), others are used to elicit open-ended responses. In the latter case, rather than technical expertise, interviewees are only required to have 'appropriate experience' in a situation (Lindlof & Taylor 2002:179). In this inquiry, interviews were used to gather historical information, as well as information relating to the broadcast media and broadcast policy in Uganda (cf. Chapters 4, 6 and 7). They were therefore useful in making sense of the political, economic and cultural environment of the broadcast media in Uganda, and of policy on the use of the indigenous languages. The questions used to elicit information were semi-structured to allow for maximum flexibility and put the interviewees at ease. Thus while the researcher had a list of broad areas of inquiry and related questions, the inquiry did not always proceed question by question in a fixed order. Interviewees were free to express themselves at length and to digress although the researcher endeavoured to, with each interview, cover all the important areas while accommodating new directions (see Addendum 4. Broad areas of inquiry; cf. Bryman 2004:321).

Apart from individuals, interviews were also conducted with groups, particularly of listeners attached to different categories of radio stations (state, commercial and community). These particularly served to augment findings from the documentary sources and from the socio-historical analysis. Interviewees were, for instance, asked to give their evaluation of the political significance of indigenous language programming in general, and of current policy on indigenous language programming in Uganda's broadcast media. They were also asked to identify areas of concern for future policy on indigenous language broadcasting and to propose what they perceived as the ideal language policy for the broadcast media. Responses emerging from group discussions tend to give an indication of community consensus on an issue or set of issues, so these responses were valuable in validating the outcome of the other forms of analysis. Interviews with groups rather than individuals were thus considered particularly pertinent in an oral culture like Uganda's where the average respondent may not have that much formal education and may not be as articulate in a one-to-one interview as in a group of people with whom they share some cultural experience/s.

1.6.2 Analysis of policy and archival material

This study relied heavily on archival information regarding the evolution of the broadcast media as well as the trajectory of the language debate in Uganda[6]. The key sources for such archival information were the Makerere University Main Library, the Makerere University Mass Communication Department's Book Bank, the British Council Library in Kampala, and the University of South Africa's Main Library in Pretoria, the Centre for Basic Research in Kampala, the Uganda Government Printer (Entebbe), the Ministry of Education and the Department of Information in Kampala.

A significant part of the inquiry also depended on analysis of broadcast policy and related documents. Hansen, Cottle and Negrine (1998:67) explain that policy analysis '…seeks to examine ways in which policies [in the field of communication] are generated and implemented, as well as their repercussions or implications for the field of communication as a whole.'

Hansen et al (1998) caution that communication policy is not always made up of coherent, well thought out or comprehensive statements and that it is sometimes not even written down. The consequences of a given policy may be unintended, and policies may be contradictory (cf. Bamgbose 1992:111). They add that the task of determining what the policy on any issue is, or

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[6] The 'language debate' here denotes public discussion on the roles different Ugandan languages play and should play in the public domain.

how it came into being, tends to be complex and often requires searching various sources, as well as probing interrelationships within the overall context of the policy (1998:68). Thus Scott (1990:6) cautions that any examination of documents should bear in mind the imperatives of authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. Authenticity relates to whether the evidence is genuine and of unquestionable origin. Credibility relates to whether the evidence is free from error and distortion. Representativeness relates to whether the evidence is typical of its kind, or, if not, whether the extent of divergence from the norm is known. Finally, according to Scott, meaning concerns itself with whether the evidence is clear and comprehensible.

This study employed semi-structured interviews with policy-makers and regulators in the area of communication, as well as examining official policy documents, White Papers, laws and statements from government officials. Some of the documents examined came from sectors other than broadcasting, such as Uganda's Ministry of Education, because of the inter-linkages with regard to policy on language use in the media and in education.

Views on ongoing debate on the subject of indigenous language broadcasting as it emerges in the Ugandan media, in parliamentary and cabinet discussions on the subject, in discussions among media owners (the National Association of Broadcasters-NAB) and in public debate outside the media (mostly gauged through group interviews with listeners) were compared and evaluated against the documentary evidence.

1.7   ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted over three years (2002-2005). For purposes of obtaining a broad picture of the language issue in Uganda, the inquiry for the study was conducted in the districts of Mbale and Sironko (Eastern Uganda), Lira and Apac (Northern Uganda), Mbarara (Western Uganda) and Kampala and Wakiso (Central Uganda) (See Addendum 1d. Districts of Uganda 2006). The specific districts visited were selected basing on their physical accessibility and linguistic make-up. These districts were further selected because they are considered media hubs in their regions and are served by the state media, at least one community station and several commercial stations. Since these districts are located in the four major regions of Uganda, it was also envisaged that a broad range of views on the language issue would be elicited.

The study obtained views and information from legal and other official documents, existing literature, newspaper articles, and qualitative interviews with historians, academics, policy-makers

and regulators, media owners, managers and practitioners as well as radio listeners. It should be noted that there was an inevitable level of overlap in the execution of the inquiry for the different phases. For instance information relating to the history structure and operation of the media which falls in phase one of the study was often elicited on the same occasion and from the same people as information relating to the language debate which falls in phase two. Thompson's phases, in this case therefore, were employed to the extent that they brought order and internal cohesion to the study rather than as rigid categories. The inquiry for this thesis was executed in three major phases as elaborated below.

1.7.1 Phase one: socio-historical analysis

The first phase of the study constituted a socio-historical analysis and review of media laws and broadcast policy documents. This phase examined the political, economic and cultural context of the broadcast media and broadcast law and policy in Uganda. It probed the traditional roles of the broadcast media and how these were being affected by the phenomenon of the liberalisation of the airwaves. This phase also sought to place changes in the priorities of government, media owners and managers with regard to diversity in a broader regional and global context.

The key methodological techniques employed in the first of phase the inquiry were archival research and qualitative interviews. Through document analysis, salient features of broadcast policy and regulation in Uganda as they relate to indigenous language broadcasting and to citizen participation were identified and analysed. Key legal documents examined included the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (Uganda 1995), the Penal Code (Amendment) Act (Uganda 1998), the Electronic Media Act, (Uganda 2000a), the Communications Act (Uganda 1977) and the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (*UBC*) Act (Uganda 2005). Also examined were the Education White Paper (Uganda. Policy Review Commission 1992), the Communication White Paper (Uganda. Department of Communications 1998), the National ICT policy (Uganda. Ministry of Works, Transport and Communications 2002) and the Draft National Broadcasting Policy (Uganda. Directorate of Information 2004). These documents together with information from other sources provide a relatively coherent picture of the regulatory context of indigenous language broadcasting in Uganda as well as government and the media's priorities with regards to linguistic diversity.

Furthermore, interviews with historians in the first phase illumined the political history of Uganda, while academics in the area of Language and Communication, policy-makers as well as regulators provided key insights into the significance of the media, and specifically of indigenous

language programming in the media. Interviews were also conducted with key players in policy and regulation. These included policy-makers and regulators from both the Directorate of Information in the Office of the President (under which the broadcast media fell)[7], and from the Ministry of Education. These were regarded as key in throwing light on the regulatory environment within which indigenous language broadcasting in Uganda operates, as well as on the priorities underlying current broadcast policy.

At the national level, the researcher interviewed the then Minister of State for Information in the Office of the President as well as three former ministers of information. In addition, the researcher interviewed key administrators at the state broadcaster, one senior broadcaster and one presenter from each of the major sections of *Radio Uganda*. The researcher also interviewed five policy-makers and five regulators.

Media owners were also interviewed to elicit information on the workings of the broadcast media, as well as gauge priorities with regard to linguistic diversity. In this regard, the researcher visited the state broadcaster and at least one commercial and one community station in each of the four major regions of Uganda, the Eastern, Central, Northern and Western regions. Interviews with media owners, managers and practitioners were conducted at radio stations in the districts of Mbale and Sironko (Eastern Uganda), Lira and Apac (Northern Uganda), Mbarara (Western Uganda) and Kampala and Wakiso (Central Uganda) (see Addendum 3. List of interviewees). One or two people with responsibility over programming were interviewed at each broadcasting station visited.

As part of understanding how people feel about the language issue, a number of radio stations were visited based on regional representation, representation of the different tiers of broadcasting, the existence of established listeners' groups, as well as logistical accessibility. The specific stations visited were also selected in terms of their popularity in the region. Thus the selected stations in the Eastern region were *Radio Uganda*, *Open Gate FM* and *Radio Maria*; in the Central region, *Radio Uganda*, *Central Broadcasting Service (CBS)*, *Simba FM* and *Maama FM*; in the West *Radio Uganda*, *Radio West*, *Greater Afrika Radio* and *Vision FM*. Group interviews

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[7] The Directorate has since been turned into the Ministry of Information and National Guidance.

were conducted with members of listeners' clubs[8] for each of the stations visited[9] (see Addendum 3d. List of stations where group interviews were conducted with listeners).

The group interviewees represented a wide range in terms of gender, age, social status and occupation. The majority of participants in the group interviews were males, aged between 30 and 45. In some groups, like the *Open Gate FM* listeners' group and the *Radio Uganda* listeners' group in Mbale, there were no women, while the majority in the *Radio Wa* group in Lira were female. There was a fairly wide range in terms of age among the interviewees, with the youngest participant being 16-years-old old and the oldest 79. The groups interviewed were composed through a combination of personal contacts in the media and use of local guides. Compared to the individual in-depth interviewees, the participants in the group interviews, on the whole, consisted mostly of people with a relatively low level of formal education (hence farmers, traders, civil servants, *boda-boda* cyclists,[2] housewives and the unemployed).

At the stations visited, interviews were conducted with senior producers, broadcasters and managers. Both the stations and interviewees were purposively selected to ensure that every region of Uganda and each tier of broadcasting (state, commercial and community) were represented. Participants in the group interviews included youth and older people, male and female from all walks of life, thus some teachers, students, farmers, housewives, civil servants, retired civil servants, market vendors and petty traders were interviewed.

In probing the state of independent production in Uganda, five independent producers who deal in both audio and video production were interviewed. At the time of the interviews, one of these producers dealt in English content only while the others produced in both English and the indigenous languages. However, even the ones that dealt in the local languages typically translated from an English master copy. Given the fledgling nature of the Ugandan local production sector, it was expected that these would give a fairly indicative picture of the

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[8] This is an emerging phenomenon where loyal listeners of a given station form an association ostensibly for purposes of getting to know each other and sharing common listening interests, but actually for purposes of audience consolidation in a highly competitive market.

[9] The only exceptions were *Radio Lira* in Northern Uganda (which was visited to back up the visit to Radio Wa which has a mixed commercial and community character), and *Greater Afrika Radio* and *Vision FM* in Western Uganda where it was logistically difficult to organise groups because the stations were still experiencing organisational difficulties.

[2] These are a category of low-cost transporters who use bicycles or motor-bikes to help passengers avoid heavy traffic or access places inaccessible by other public transport. They are regarded as an important source of information because they interact with a wide range of people in the course of their work.

financing, themes, perceived challenges and opportunities as well as views on the impact of various local and global factors on the operation of independent production in Uganda.

1.7.2   Phase two: documenting the language debate

The second phase of the study to a large extent flowed out of the findings of the first phase and sought to highlight and document key issues emerging out of current public debate on policy regarding indigenous language broadcasting in Uganda's media as manifested in the media, public discussions, policy debates in parliament, the cabinet, the Broadcasting Council and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB).

For the second phase, qualitative interviews were conducted in the Central, Eastern, Northern, and Western regions of Uganda. The second phase of the inquiry also sought to relate its outcome to the socio-historical analysis in the first phase. It sought to highlight some political and cultural specificities in the Ugandan situation that appear to have shaped and continue to shape policy with regard to linguistic diversity in the broadcast media. Finally, the second phase of the inquiry sought to place the Ugandan situation in a broader context with regard to the tension between the desire to serve the public interest by providing programming in the indigenous languages on the one hand, and the pressure to minimise linguistic diversity in programming to remain economically viable on the other.

These interviews were conducted between April and August 2005. The interviews focused on documenting the language debate in Uganda in terms of what Ugandans say about the importance of the indigenous languages. The interviews also probed how aware the interviewees were of existing policy on the use of the different languages in the broadcast media, their perception of the main issues arising out of the language debate, their position on different regulatory models and their views on the specific roles of English, Kiswahili and Luganda in the broadcast media. Information thus gathered was to complement the findings of the existing official reports dealing with the subject of language (cf. Chapter 6).

The interviews with individuals aimed to elicit information on the language situation in Uganda from experts in key fields such as policy and regulation, media history and media practice. However the interviews also sought to gauge consensus on how Ugandan listeners see policy on the use of indigenous languages and how they relate this policy to their ability to participate in the broadcast media. This was particularly true of the group interviews with listeners as well as

interviews with local leaders. The interviews further sought to document how Ugandan listeners perceive the commercialisation of the media to be affecting their participation in their local media.

Apart from radio listeners, interviewees in the second phase also included ministers of information (previous and current), technocrats and policy-makers whose brief covers the media,[3] regulators, academics,[4] local leaders,[5] media practitioners, managers and owners[6], and listeners. One technocrat working with the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) was also interviewed, as the NCDC is the implementing body for the Ministry of Education's language policy.

Finally, because of the special role that Buganda and the Luganda language have played in Uganda's history (see Chapter 5), one interview was conducted with the official spokesman of the Buganda government whose portfolio covers the media. This interview aimed to specifically probe the mind of the Buganda government on what they perceive as the role of the indigenous languages both in Buganda and at the national level. The interview also sought to gauge the Buganda government's assessment of the central government's position on the role of the different languages in the media.

In total, between April and August 2005, the researcher conducted 57 interviews, forty-eight with individuals and 9 with groups of radio listeners across the Eastern, Central, Western and Northern regions of Uganda. In terms of themes, the interviews broadly covered the significance of the indigenous languages for participation in and through the broadcast media, the rationale for regulating the use of Uganda's different languages in the broadcast media and the ideal policy for regulating linguistic diversity in Uganda's broadcast media (See Addendum 4. Broad areas of

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[3] The current minister in charge of information, three former ministers of information that served at different political moments in Uganda's history, the Chairman and the Operations Manager of the Broadcasting Council, and two technocrats in the Ministry of Information were interviewed because these were deemed to have a good understanding of the history and the workings of language policy and practice in the broadcast media. Their insights were deemed helpful in illuminating the logic underlying language policy and practice in Uganda's media.

[4] In-depth interviews were conducted with six academics in the areas of History, Media Studies and the languages and Literature. because these were deemed key in providing background insight into as well as analysis of the language debate in Uganda.

[5] Local leaders interviewed constituted those whose brief brings them in contact with matters of language and the media, hence in-depth interviews were conducted with District Information Officers, Education Officers and Secretaries for Education.

[6] For each station visited, interviews were conducted with at least one programme director and where possible a media owner. Hence programme directors and media owners for the state-owned media as well as commercial and community media were interviewed in all the four regions visited. In all 21 interviews with media owners and practitioners were conducted.

inquiry). The interviews served to augment existing literature on the history, structure and operation of the media in Uganda, official documents as well as the researcher's own experience as a journalism trainer and broadcast regulator.

1.7.3 Phase Three: Interpretation, conclusions and recommendations

The third phase of the inquiry consisted of synthesising the findings of the socio-historical analysis and document analysis, together with the documentation and review of the debate on language/media policy, and interpreting them within the framework of critical studies. The thesis makes recommendations for policy on indigenous language programming in Uganda with a view to fostering participation through addressing the question of linguistic diversity in the broadcast media.

1.8   CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the rationale for the selection of a combination of the techniques of archival research, structured interviews and policy analysis in exploring the relationships between indigenous language broadcasting and citizen participation. It has also discussed the organisation of the study and how the different phases of the study fit together. The next two chapters (2 and 3) constitute a review of pertinent literature in the areas of critical political economy, cultural studies and Linguistics relating to diversity and participation in the broadcast media in order to establish a theoretical framework for the thesis. The issues raised by the literature of critical political economy, cultural studies, sociolinguistics and language ideology are examined in a socio-historical analysis (Chapters 4 and 5). Chapter 6 entails an analysis of key policy documents to illumine the structural environment of the broadcast media in Uganda. Chapter 7 is a documentation and analysis of public debate on indigenous language policy in Uganda as manifest in public debate, boardroom discussions and key documents. Chapter 7 aims to bring out the Ugandan public's perceptions of the significance of the indigenous languages for their participation in public debate through the broadcast media as well as the public's perceptions of the appropriateness of existing and proposed policy on language in the broadcast media. Chapter 8 of the thesis draws some conclusions from the overall analysis and makes recommendations for future broadcast policy in specific reference to diversity and participation. This multifaceted approach is aimed at yielding a rich picture of the complex relationship between Uganda's socio-history, the regulatory environment of the broadcast media in Uganda, and the availability of opportunities for Ugandans of diverse backgrounds to participate in public discourse through the media.

CHAPTER 2

2.0   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CRITICAL POLITICAL ECONOMY AND CULTURAL STUDIES PERSPECTIVES ON THE MEDIA, LANGUAGE AND CITIZENSHIP

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Theoretically this thesis is situated within a critical studies' framework. It therefore draws from critical work that relates key concepts such as participation, globalisation, language, representation, identity, ideology, discourse, and power. The study relates the argument that the media can play a key role in democracy but typically operate under many structural constraints, with a central argument of cultural studies, that notwithstanding these constraints, the micro-level of cultural activity (where language plays a key role) remains an important factor in discussing the extent of citizen participation in debates on issues that affect their lives. This chapter reviews literature in the areas of the public sphere, critical political economy and cultural studies with regard to the roles that the broadcast media can play in the democratisation process. The chapter seeks to bring out points of convergence in the different bodies of literature that would be useful in analysing the relationship between indigenous language broadcasting and democratic participation.

2.2   HABERMAS AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE[1]

The notion of the public sphere has remained central to discussions of democracy since Jurgen Habermas wrote his seminal work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere.* This is due to the understanding that a space with a fair degree of autonomy from the state is essential in holding the state accountable to the rest of society, as well as keeping communication flowing between the governors and the governed. How this space is constituted and how it operates, however, remains the subject of intense debate to which Habermas' work has contributed significantly. This thesis addresses, in particular, the possible contribution of policy on linguistic diversity to that space.

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[1] Apart from the texts cited, this section also draws from Sparknotes: historical philosophical and biographical contexts.

The modern media have taken on increasing significance in the process of generating (not just conveying) important information, and according to Habermas, manufacturing public opinion, which was the reason for the existence of the bourgeois public sphere which he examines in detail. Habermas' work is thus central to an understanding of the role of the media in public discourse, participation and democracy. Berger's definition of democracy as 'decision-making power by majority principle exercised by way of a process that is based on equal rights of participants' (2002:21) captures the essence of the term in the context of this study. Habermas' work has been both complemented and challenged by scholars from critical political economy and cultural studies perspectives, and this chapter will review some of their work alongside Habermas'.

Habermas (1989) discusses the potential as well as the challenges of the modern mass media in enabling citizens to influence the direction of their governance through democratic participation in debate on key (mainly political) issues. Habermas' study is situated in a European context, with an emphasis on the specific circumstances of France, Germany and Britain. Three historical moments of concern to Habermas are the emergence of Capitalism, the rise of the interventionist state, and the emergence of the culture industries (particularly the modern media of radio and television and their management along oligopolistic lines).

Habermas' central notion is the public sphere. Dahlgren (2002:195) offers the following generic definition of public sphere as:

> …that realm of social life where the exchange of information and views on questions of common concern can take place so that public opinion can be formed.

Dahlgren adds:

> The public sphere 'takes place' when citizens, exercising their rights of assembly and association gather as public bodies to discuss issues of the day, specifically those of political concern.[2]

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[2] Many critics have rejected this apparent limitation to 'specifically those of political concern,' arguing that it leaves out entertainment programming which constitutes a key aspect of the modern public sphere and is significant for important issues such as identity formation (see Fraser 1992; Goldsmith Media Group 2000 and Berger 2002). Critics have also challenged the accuracy of linking the public sphere necessarily with common concerns (See Thompson 1995:253 and Berger 2002:30).

In tracing the historical origins of the public sphere, Habermas notes that inclusion in the political process for the ordinary person during the feudal era in Britain, France and Germany, was *representative rather than participatory*. The performing of public[3] functions was linked to conspicuous physical representation, usually by the monarch, *before, rather than on behalf of* his subjects. The monarch wielded absolute and unchallenged power over practically every area of life. As a result, there was hardly any demarcation between what was public (pertaining to the state) and what was private (Habermas 1989:7-8). By virtue of his position, aura and descent, the monarch portrayed himself as the embodiment of the common good. The subjects were spectators rather than participants in the business of governance and were obliged to comply with royal ordinances rather than debate legislation. There was little opportunity for influencing the direction of governance outside the conjugal home, where, before the rise of capitalism and its impact on the family authority structures, the father wielded near-absolute power over his household (Habermas 1989:9).

2.2.1 The rise of the bourgeois public sphere and 'civil society'

The bourgeois public sphere, according to Habermas, arose as a consequence of a number of interrelated social, economic and political changes. These included the demise of feudalism in Europe, the rise of the nation-state, the rise of parliamentary systems of governance, the growth of commerce to replace the traditional forms of commodity exchange, the rise of a Middle Class and the modernising of printing technology.

The antagonism that developed between the state and 'the rest of society' (dominated in public discourse by the bourgeoisie) was a major impetus to the rise of this public sphere which emerged out of 'civil society' and almost saw itself as synonymous with it in the European context that Habermas examines. The bourgeois 'public sphere' of the 19th century had its roots in the coffee-houses of Britain, salons in France and literary societies in Germany which thrived in the 17th and 18th centuries as places where private people met to exchange ideas based on their private reading of literature. In their refined form these institutions shared the following characteristics:

- They organised regular debate among ordinary people as long as they were male, educated and owners of property;

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[3] Here 'public' denotes 'pertaining to the common good' or as Berger (2002:31) puts it, and as Habermas uses it later, in terms like 'public opinion,' to 'a collection of politically significant shared common interests-which collection is seen as impacting ideologically upon the exercise of state power.' Public, particularly in the feudal era, did not denote 'open to all.'

- In the course of their discussion, all social difference was bracketed;[4]
- Laws of the market and laws of the state were temporarily suspended in the course of debate; and
- Topics normally out of bounds were open to discussion.

The above also characterised, to a great extent, the bourgeois public sphere of the 19th century (Habermas 1989:37).

While Habermas' account presents the public sphere before it was adulterated by the commercialisation of the media of mass communication as the ideal, he has been criticised for over-idealising a public sphere that was characterised by systematically excluding classes other than the one that was constituted by educated property-owning males (Fraser 1992:521-522; Boyd-Barrett 1995:230-23; Thompson 1995:253; Berger 2002:35 and Dahlgren 2002:195-196). If indeed rational-critical debate was the road to the formation of public opinion, this would imply that the consensus thus reached in the bourgeois 'public sphere' was, in a sense, still only representative of a small section of society rather than of the wider 'public' through more open participation. In later work, Habermas admits to this omission and makes attempts to redress it (cf.1992:164), but he still does not adequately address the issue of the exclusion of women.

2.2.2 The politicisation of the bourgeois public sphere

The French revolution triggered political reforms across the continent which saw the middle and lower classes in Europe securing legal protections for their recognition and inclusion in the political process. With these changes, the lower classes led by the bourgeoisie found their way into positions of political leadership in Britain, France and Germany. The bourgeoisie saw this as a necessary move if they were to continue to safeguard their interests through influencing regulation, ostensibly in 'the public interest.' With the rise of parliamentary democracy, emphasis shifted from representation by virtue of descent and aura, to representation by virtue of trust and ability (Habermas 1989:8). It was important for representatives to be popular, and the public sphere that had emerged was an important forum (along with parliament) for influencing public opinion in favour of particular representatives, and later on, political parties and their programmes. The institutionalisation of parliament as a political public sphere, therefore, according to Habermas, marked the beginning of society's infiltration of the state (1989:142).

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[4] Social differences were recognised in these fora, but they, ideally, were not allowed to come in the way of members' participation in free expression and debate within the public sphere.

In addition, an inevitable consequence of advanced capitalism was the emergence of market distortions that made it difficult for the state to depend on the market to regulate itself in the interests of the majority of citizens. Hence as the 19th century progressed, Habermas observes, the state became more interventionist to safeguard its own stake in the economy as well as to ensure a measure of equity in the distribution of national wealth. The state began to 'cut deals' with powerful private organisations which had arisen, and to assign these some of its 'public' tasks. The distinctions between the political and the economic, and the economic and the cultural became progressively diminished (Habermas 1989:146).

As the Liberal state dissolved into the social welfare state, Habermas saw the state infiltrating the private realm which hitherto had secured its autonomy, dealing with the state on its own terms through the bourgeois public sphere. The combination of society infiltrating the state and the state infiltrating society according to Habermas, amounted to a 're-feudalization' of society. In the same way, the boundaries between the two spheres (public and private), which the bourgeoisie cherished in as far as they guaranteed their autonomy, were blurred (Habermas 1989:141-151).

Historically, Habermas argues, civil society arose as a reaction to a depersonalised state. Just as it was rooted in the market, the development of the public sphere of civil society was also dependent on absolute autonomy from state regulation. Habermas argues that the state's intrusion in the private sphere at this point set the stage for an antagonistic relationship between the private sphere of commodity exchange and the public sphere of the state. Hence 'the zone in which public authority, by way of continuous administrative acts, maintained contact with private people, was rendered problematic' (Habermas 1989:24).

The tension between the state and the private sphere, according to Habermas was exacerbated by the fact that now people outside public authority were able to enlighten themselves through reading. Using this reading and personal reflection, they were then able to engage in rational-critical debate on a variety of topics and to challenge the administrative acts of the state. Habermas notes also that as the rift between public authority and private domain widened, the press began to be more aligned with civil society than with the state.

The rise of civil society was linked to the belief that only private owners of property (who now dominated the literary public sphere and the political sphere of parliament) were motivated to

enact and abide by laws protecting vital economic interests. Hence, in the bourgeois society's understanding,

> …only property owners were in a position to form a public that could legislatively protect the foundations of the existing property order; only they had private interests-each his own-which automatically converged into the common interest in the preservation of a civil society as a private sphere. Only from them therefore was an effective representation of the general interest to be expected, since it was not necessary for them in any way to leave their private existence behind to exercise their public role (Habermas 1989:87).

It is important to note here how a class of educated property owners who constantly articulate their interests in public fora (the public sphere) begin to believe that their interests represent the general interest. The priority for bourgeois society had become to safeguard hard-earned autonomy from state intervention in the private sphere of business because they deemed such interference, unlike the laws of the market, 'unpredictable.' What emerges as 'public opinion' from 'civil society' at this stage therefore is in fact the opinion of individuals with a shared socio-economic background and interests. It is relatively less important whether or not this 'public opinion' matches that of the majority of people that by virtue of descent or 'bad luck' do not qualify to enter the public sphere.

Hence Habermas sees civil society as a section of the population separate from, and antagonistic with the state, and identifying with each other on the basis of common (predominantly bourgeois) interests.

2.2.3 The role of the press in the evolution and eventual collapse of the public sphere

Habermas argues that the press was instrumental in the emergence of the public sphere and thus civil society in Europe. As news, which hitherto had been a service to meet the basic information needs of the bourgeois class, and to carry their subjective opinions, evolved into a commodity,[5] it too became of interest to the state. The state gradually began to address the rest of society through the press, hence constituting them into their 'public' or audience (Habermas 1989:21-22).

As the stakes for the bourgeois property owners/business people in the economy and its regulation rose, however, and government's intrusion increased, the bourgeois strata found it necessary to strike compromises with the state, which also after all had a high stake in the thriving of the

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[5] This shift was occasioned by the growing demands of Capitalism as well as advances in communication technology.

capitalist economic order.6 It is important to note how such state/business alliances tend to impact policy, and indirectly, the plight of other classes in society that may not have the same privileged position with the state. These types of compromises were, according to Habermas, also central to the demise of the bourgeois public sphere.

2.2.4   The media, the public sphere and public opinion

Habermas (1989) recognises that first the press, and then the newer forms of media (like radio and television) played a significant role in the process of public opinion formation in modern Europe. Although the press started off merely as carriers of basic information (mostly about domestic affairs and business), it had evolved to the role of an amplifier for bourgeois economic interests, and finally to originators of public opinion. It should be noted here that Habermas' fundamental assumption about the ideal role of the media is rooted in classical liberal theory. Consequently, he places a high premium on the centrality of rational critical thinking and debate, along the lines of the marketplace of ideas (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm 1956; Habermas 1989:3; 248; Dahlgren 2002:195;**).**

According to the classical liberal logic that underlies Habermas argument on the role of rational critical debate in the democratic process (Siebert et al 1956; cf. Van Cuilenburg 1998:39; Fourie 2001b:269-275), if people have free access to information, and different perspectives are allowed to compete in the 'marketplace of ideas' the best idea will eventually triumph. Citizens will thus prepare themselves to participate in the political process and to make informed political decisions. For Habermas, such critical debate is not only the reason for the existence of the public sphere, but it is also the way public opinion is generated.

Habermas traces the evolution of the concept of public opinion, which to him means the collective will of private people constituted as a public who share a common socio-economic background and interests. Public opinion for Habermas can only be arrived at through rational critical debate made possible by the subjective experiences of individuals arising from private reading of, and reflection on, literature, which the Enlightenment had made publicly accessible. Public opinion thus formed has the capacity to influence policy and state action, and thus the development of society (Habermas 1989:90-102; cf. Dahlgren 2002:195). It is important to note here the importance of *as many citizens as possible* having access to such crucial debate.

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[6] Apart from the state being an active player in the economy, the state had developed a large military and bureaucratic machinery as coping mechanisms which it sustained primarily through taxes.

This perspective on the functioning of the media as channels to enhance participation in the democratic process has been criticised for ignoring structural inequalities in society that make the initial opportunity to participate in the public sphere difficult for the less privileged strata of society.[7] Dahlgren (2002:197) thus argues, 'both the public sphere and the marketplace of ideas can be seen as very normative and very idealised pictures easily contrasted with current realities (cf. Berger 2002:30-35). Such structural inequalities that make it easier for some members to participate actively in the public sphere than others are also a key concern of critical political economy (see section on critical political economy in this chapter for a more detailed treatment).

Habermas argues that although the modern media are well positioned to play a key role in the public sphere, in the formation of public opinion, and in the direction of governance, changes in media structures, as well as in society, make it difficult for the media to play this role optimally. The modern, highly commercialised media, therefore, are reduced to opinion management machines, and the audience to manipulable consumers of entertainment and leisure (Habermas 1989:163-175; cf. Dahlgren 2002:196). Hence,

> [T]he communicative network of a public made up of rationally debating private citizens has collapsed; the public opinion once emergent from it has partly decomposed into the informal opinions of private citizens without a public and partly become concentrated into formal opinions of publistically effective institutions. Caught in the vortex of publicity that is staged for show or manipulation the public of non-organized private people is laid claim to not by public communication but by the communication of publicly manifested opinions (Habermas 1989:247-248).

Thus, according to Habermas, the forum, the content and the output of the media have all changed with the commercialisation of culture and communication. Habermas argues that the purpose of the media is no longer to enable people to share information in pursuit of consensus, but simply to entertain people who have lost the motivation to prepare for and engage in public debate. Rather than provide society with raw material to generate their own ideas, the modern media (and especially radio and television) provide pre-packaged 'infotainment' aimed at manipulation and manufacturing consensus in favour of the special economic interests of a minority (the elite).

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[7] Habermas *does* recognise this constraint, but his argument is that the less privileged classes were left out of the process of public opinion formation because they were too busy with 'the pressure of need and drudgery' to avail themselves for discussion that did not have immediate material benefit, *not* because they do not have the necessary competencies (including language) to participate fully (Habermas 1989:102).

Habermas contends that with the rise of the commercial media, public relations,[8] advertising and entertainment have taken over the place previously occupied by rational critical debate. In the same vein Dahlgren (2002:196) argues, the audience thus 'becomes reduced to a group of spectators whose acclaim is to be periodically mobilized, but whose intrusion in fundamental political questions is to be minimized.'

The media, according to Habermas, are now the channels through which those who seek power represent themselves before the public of voters and consumers (in a manner similar to the feudal spectacle of representation). What the media generate or portray, therefore, is not 'public opinion' any more, but 'mass opinion,' useful only for purposes of providing 'popular acclamation' for pre-determined courses of action (Habermas 1989:249).

While Habermas' theory of the public sphere still represents an important contribution to theories of the role of the media in the democratic process, the details of his conceptualisation of the bourgeois public sphere, as well as the conditions of its 'decline' have received much criticism. Thompson (1995:255-258) raises the following key shortcomings in Habermas' theory (cf. Berger 2002 for a similar critique focusing on the media in an African context):

- Habermas in discussing the bourgeois public sphere ignores other public spheres that existed parallel to it at the time, along with their cultural forms, notably those constituted by the working classes.
- Habermas was insensitive to the exclusion from the bourgeois public sphere, of other classes, and specifically, of women. This may have been linked to stereotypes that linked rational critical debate to males alone. Though in his later work (see Habermas 1992) Habermas admits this omission and the need to address it, feminist scholars still argue that he has still not addressed this concern satisfactorily in his later work. Thompson thus concludes:

> It may be that while Habermas is certainly sympathetic to the issues raised by feminist critics, these issues remain somewhat tangential to the basic assumptions and priorities that shape his way of conceptualizing the social world (Thompson 1995:254).

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[8] According to Habermas, public relations, the political 'cousin' of advertising, is a form of communication whose emphasis is opinion management rather than generating public opinion through a rational process. It is inherently manipulative rather than participatory.

- In his account of the decline of the public sphere, Habermas assumes that audiences are passive consumers of elite ideology. This thesis, though supported by key work within the Frankfurt school (see, for instance Adorno and Horkheimer 1972) to which Habermas subscribed has been challenged especially within cultural studies circles. Thompson argues that a more historically grounded and empirical analysis of reception processes is likely to demonstrate that audiences have more power than they are given credit for to use and interpret media content. Indeed many studies which have come up to challenge this view of the powerful media and manipulable audiences in recent times have insisted on this empirical and historically specific approach (see discussion on cultural studies below for a more detailed treatment).

- In comparing the spectacle of publicity in the feudal era with the 20th century media spectacle, Habermas fails to recognise fundamental differences in social interaction and information diffusion between the two eras. While medieval courtly appearances were limited to a relatively small, physically present audience in a geographically bound location, with very clear power demarcations, television appearances are not bound by space, or, to a large extent, time. Furthermore, unlike medieval court appearances television appearances are not necessarily characterised by face-to-face interaction. The individual (or group) making the television appearance potentially addresses millions of audience members at a time that need not be known to him/her or be accountable to him/her. Communication is mediated by electronic means rather than through public speech. The relationships between the 'addresser' and 'addressee' are less personal and less permanently binding.

- Habermas, perhaps due to his grounding in Enlightenment thought, in both *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* and in his later work (see, for instance Habermas 1992) argues for what Thompson (1995:256) calls 'a discourse-based theory of democracy in which questions of a moral-practical character can be resolved in a rational manner.' Habermas' critics, however, argue that the degree of pluralism of thought that characterises modern society makes this model untenable. With the current structure of most modern-day societies, where centralised autocratic power and linear systems of government no longer exist, consensus on any matter would be difficult to achieve through face-to-face public debate (cf. Berger 2002:31). The decentralised nature of the modern media and their place in opinion-formation only serves to compound this situation. Berger (2002) points out further that in reality, not all political activity is mediated through debate.

- Habermas (1992) in reflecting on his theorisation of the public sphere argues that the state and the economy constitute a system that can no longer be transformed or democratised from within. Thus the way to achieving a participatory democracy lies in developing democratic structures in the *lifeworld*, outside the state and the economy. Habermas argues further that it is developing democratic structures in the *lifeworld* that can keep the state and the economy in check, and prevail over their abuse of political power. Though Habermas here seems to surrender too easily the potential for democratisation within the economy and the state, he does maintain the urgent need to strengthen civil society and equip them to take charge of their governance.

- Thompson (1995:258) argues that Habermas' excessive pessimism toward the democratic role of the modern mass media is because of his attachment to the dialogical model of 'rational' communication that characterised the coffee-houses and salons of the 18th century as the only tenable model for democratic debate. According to Thompson, though,

…we shall not arrive at a satisfactory understanding of the nature of public life in the modern world if we remain wedded to a conception of publicness which is essentially dialogical in character and which obliges us to interpret the ever-growing role of mediated communication as an historical fall from grace… [The modern media] have created a new kind of publicness which cannot be accommodated within the traditional model.

In light of the above critique of Habermas' theorisation of the public sphere, the literature of critical political economy and of cultural studies may be seen to complement the literature of the public sphere. The literature of critical political economy addresses the shortcomings of Habermas' model as they relate to the structure of media institutions, and the way these are linked in complicated ways to both wealth and power. Critical political economy analyses the implications of this for citizen participation in and through the media. Cultural studies on the other hand addresses the way audiences respond to the modern media in their social-cultural milieu, and the implications of this for their participation.

2.3   CRITICAL POLITICAL ECONOMY APPROACHES TO THE MEDIA, CITIZENSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

Critical political economy is an offshoot from mainstream political economy which has gained currency in the last three decades (Murdock & Golding 1989; 1995; Golding 1990; Golding & Murdock 1991; Murdock 2000). Critical political economy holds that people's capacity to participate in public discourse through the media is related to broader changes taking place in the

structure and operation of the media, and that this capacity is curtailed by not only material barriers but also by symbolic ones.[9] Critical political economy further argues that with the market as regulator, the less socially integrated and the poorest sectors of society are likely to be left out by the range of content in mainstream media.

Critical political economy distinguishes itself by claims to being holistic, historical and concerned with the balance between capitalist enterprise and public intervention. Critical political economy thus engages with questions of justice, equity and the common good rather than just the technical aspects of the media's growth in their analysis of the media's role in the democratic process (Golding 1990:84-86; Golding & Murdock 1991:18-21). Critical political economy is concerned with the shift from public to private ownership of the media, and the impact of this on both political and cultural diversity, which are central to participation in public discourse. Critical political economy thus pays particular attention to the phenomenon of concentration of media ownership and its impact on, among other things, media content.

Critical political economy proposes that the media's potential to bring about democracy, sustain or improve it should be examined not just from the perspective of media institutions, but from the broader context in which these media institutions operate. This includes looking at the media in a global context, as well as from a local (as opposed to national) perspective. They maintain that only this way will research unearth sources of inequality in access to information (Goldsmith Media Group 2000:24-25; cf. Murdock & Golding 1989:192-193; Golding 1990:85).

This thesis relates language and language policy to key changes in the regulation as well as the structure and operation of the media. These changes broadly include the globalisation of the media and their commercialisation. Language is thus seen as a possible barrier to people's ability to access and make sense of and through programming in the broadcast media if their socio-economic circumstances place them on the wrong side of language policy. Language policy is examined in a broader context and in relation to other barriers like socio-economic constraints on participation in the media.

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[9] Material resources give one access to hardware and software related to the consumption of media goods and services, and enable one to upgrade or replace these as the need arises. Symbolic resources are those things that enable people to make sense of mediated messages, or to acquire symbolic competencies. The absence of either constitutes a corresponding barrier.

The relevance of critical political economy for this study lies in the fact that critical political economy links issues of the regulation, structure and operation of the media with citizenship and participation. Though critical political economy's arguments exist against the backdrop of Habermas conceptualisation of the public sphere, its conceptualisation of the public sphere assumes more openness, more accessibility and more inclusiveness than Habermas' (Golding & Murdock 1991:21-22; cf. Golding & Murdock 1989; Golding 1990).

The Habermasian conception of the public sphere, notwithstanding its shortcomings, still serves as a useful conceptual umbrella in the study of the phenomena of mediated communication. This is because, as the Goldsmith Media Group (2000:55) have argued, it is the suspicion that the public sphere is not functioning as it should that gives rise to studies of how the media actually operate in specific conditions. Critical political economy proposes improvements to Habermas' conceptualisation of the public sphere to provide a stronger basis for understanding the role of the media in the public sphere.

2.3.1 Critical political economy, language and the public sphere

The literature of critical political economy builds on the notion of the public sphere in its analysis of the structure and functioning of the media in a capitalist environment, and constitutes an important part in the theoretical framework for this thesis. McQuail (2000:79-80) provides a useful summary of the traditional roles of the media in liberal pluralist theory as information, correlation, continuity, entertainment and mobilisation. Some sections of liberal pluralist theory assume that the modern media, being neutral conduits of public opinion and run by objective professionals, have the potential to give the public access to a diversity of values and perspectives, amplify alternative viewpoints from various sectors of society to enable people to listen to each other, pass on a common heritage as well as assist society to realise its goals. The media in this perspective also serve to link different publics, and serve the roles of socialisation and surveillance and act as a watchdog over (especially) state power. However, a number of recent (mostly critical) studies (see for instance Curran 1991:29-30; Goldsmiths media group 2000:22, 53-54; Article XIX 2003:3) have argued that to do this the organisation and operation of the media must be pluralistic and diverse and that the media in most capitalistic contexts fall short of this.

A key contribution of critical theory to the understanding of the media's role in modern democracies has been their critique of the liberal-pluralist view of the media and its underlying

assumptions about the autonomy and efficacy of the capitalistic media in mediating democratic discourse with the market as regulator. Critical theory, and in particular critical political economy, challenges the fundamental assumptions of liberal-pluralist theory about the media's role in the public sphere. Critical theory argues that the above liberal pluralist perspective ascribes too much autonomy to the media and media professionals in a capitalist environment (Murdock & Golding 1989; Golding & Murdock 1991; Goldsmith Media Group 2000:28-29; cf. Hardt 1992:16-17). Critical theory argues that the autonomy of the media, and therefore their capacity to perform their democratising functions is greatly curtailed by political and economic structures integral to capitalism. If the essence of citizenship is not just the enjoyment of rights but also participation in the demarcation of these rights (Ronning 1994:15-16; Berger 2002:34-35), then examining factors which enhance or curtail citizen participation in a specific historical context is important in expanding the debate on this important topic.

Policy on indigenous language programming has a bearing on people's capacity and opportunities to participate in public discourse. Because of what can be accomplished through language, the socially powerful often seek to wield some kind of control over the way different languages are used, especially in the public domain. Thus the inclusion or exclusion, or manipulation of different languages in the media and in policy by the socially powerful may not be accidental. Neither the state nor the market can be expected to be consistent in the action they take on language (Bamgbose 1991:111). This is partly because each is often interested in more than enhancing the ordinary citizen's capacity to participate in the democratic process. It is such complexity that makes policy and the processes surrounding programming in the different languages worthy of investigation.

According to Woolard (1998:17),

> …rankings of language continue to be invoked to regulate access of speech varieties to prestigious institutional uses and of their speakers to domains of power and privilege (cf. Spitulnik 1998 and Barnett 2000 for specific examples of the politics of language policy in an African context).

Such domains of power in modern day society invariably include the media of mass communication which have become an important site for the exercise of citizenship.

In the following section, the study briefly examines the state of the media in the 21st century in the context of globalisation. It relates the concept of citizenship to participation, with public

communication at the centre. It presents the relevant key concerns of critical political economy vis-à-vis the operation of the media in the democratic process. Finally the section relates the arguments of critical political economy to the specific concern of the study, namely, indigenous language policy as it relates to broadcasting, and to citizen participation through the media in Uganda.

2.3.2   The globalisation of the broadcast media

One of the most striking features in the world economy as it has evolved in the last two decades has been the intensification of its globalisation brought about by the process of modernisation and the growth of mercantile capitalism. Most definitions of globalisation allude to the worldwide political, economic and cultural interconnection between societies driven by capitalism. Some of its manifestations include compression of time and space and the loss of national sovereignty. The role of multinational corporations (MNCs) is considered integral to the process of globalisation (see for instance, Giddens 1999 for a detailed treatment of globalisation cf. Strelitz 1999:53). The media have been central in the process of globalisation, being influenced by as well as influencing this process of globalisation.

One aspect of globalisation of concern to this thesis is the liberalisation[10] of economies, and subsequently of the media. The political, economic and cultural consequences of liberalisation have affected the functions and expectations of the media as well as trends in the kind of content that one sees and hears in the local media. As part of the process of globalisation, the world has undergone a transformation that has driven countries, rich and poor, into a singular economic system. The globalised economic system so controls the world economy that many countries especially in the developing world have been forced to completely revamp their domestic policies to fit within the global structure, just to remain viable (Sreberny-Mohammadi 1991:123; Strelitz 1999:53-54).

Globalisation emphasises larger markets for a variety of products including media content. It operates on the principle of economies of scale, so within a globalised economy, content tends to get more homogenised (Article XIX 2003:4; Wilkinson 2003:4-6). There is little emphasis on including a variety of voices and representations in the modern, capitalistic media as this is seen as not economically viable, and sometimes disruptive because it is potentially politically sensitive.

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[10] Liberalisation here refers to allowing competition in previously monopoly areas of operation.

Consequently, according to Murdock and Golding (1989:184) certain categories of people, normally the poor and cultural minorities tend to be left out by the mainstream media.

Critical political economy traces the path of the commercialisation of the media on a global scale, and the influence of this on opportunities for accessible and inclusive public discourse. Murdock and Golding (1989:180) note that market-oriented communication and information systems purport to give people more choices, liberating and empowering them to influence the trend of their lives (cf. Murdock 2000:149; Article XIX 2003:4), but deliver much less than they promise. It is true that the development in recent years of digital technology has made it possible to transmit content for the different sectors of, interalia, print, broadcasting and photojournalism using the same equipment and at incredible speed, and irrespective of geographical borders. Besides there now is a lot of interplay between these sectors, resulting in the convergence of technologies and distribution platforms. This scenario, according to the argument of critical political economy, puts a lot of power in the hands of a few able individuals or corporations, who, with the media they own and control, can supply content in forms amenable to print, broadcasting, photography or hypertext to large 'markets.'

Increased access to information for citizenship such as the liberal pluralist perspective presumes has also been wrongly attributed to the processes of liberalisation, privatisation de-regulation and re-regulation of the media and communication sectors (Golding & Murdock 1989:184; Murdock 2000:149-150). Liberalisation introduces competition in previously monopoly areas. This makes it possible to shift the provision of communication services from the public to the private sector and to make market criteria the measure of success in liberalised sectors of the economy[11] (Murdock & Golding 1989:180; Scannell 2000:129-133; cf. Gurevitch 2000). Liberalisation thus creates a conducive social and ideological environment for the changes occasioned by the tremendous growth in communication technology in the last two centuries. Privatisation on the other hand, in moving the ownership of the media from public to private hands gives private media owners room to manoeuvre in the interest of maximising profit. Privatisation also provides new services and new products and re-arranges the media industry such that the predominant mode of ownership is one of concentration[12] (Murdock 2000:143-144).

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[11] Market criteria in a privatised media environment have been applied uniformly to commercially owned and publicly owned media.

[12] Media concentration is whereby a few media players, through joint co-operation deals, mergers, acquisitions and cross-acquisitions and any other arrangements, establish themselves into powerful cross-holdings with financial or other interests straddling media types, posing a potential threat to diversity of information.

However, liberalisation and privatisation have worked hand in hand with de-nationalisation, and with deregulation[13] to curtail rather than to enhance diversity (Murdock 200:152). With the media concentrated in the hands of a few proprietors who are often inter-connected, the availability of more products does not necessarily translate into diversity. The imperatives of economies of scale and synergy usually dictate sticking to tried and tested formulae in content production, and media practitioners are discouraged from tackling unduly controversial topics. The few major media owners there are tend to have some influence on the smaller media holders. This they do by dictating the rules in the broadcast sector, holding expensive promotional campaigns, offering discounts to major advertisers, and buying up key creative personnel from their competitors (Golding & Murdock 1991:24; Murdock 2000:144; cf. McChesney 2000). In this context, small scale, genuinely pluralistic media are difficult to sustain. The likely consequence of the above scenario is that those who do not have the socio-economic clout to access or express themselves through the mainstream have limited opportunities for participating in public debate through the media.

To complicate this further, the regulatory environment in the so-called global economy is such that those who own the media many times also control the production and distribution of content. Often these are not just dealers in media hardware and content. It is not unusual, for example, in the current global economy, for the same person or 'interests' to have controlling shares in related investments such as media houses, toy companies, breakfast cereal companies and amusement parks. While this makes for good synergy, it may mean that content sometimes has to bend to the interests of the overall interrelated business empire. McChesney (2000:100-109) constitutes a detailed analysis of this phenomenon in an American setting, and its implications for democracy (see also Murdock 2000). Tomaselli captures the essence of the above argument thus:

> Owners of capital…use media organizations to further their own class interests to secure and enhance their personal strategic positions in the socio-economic order. They do this both in terms of the appropriation of profit, and the creation of new products and alliances (Tomaselli 2002:145).

The media under the above circumstances often become vulnerable to pressure to promote the larger economic interests and keep friendly and influential political and regulatory sections of society satisfied. In addition, the motivation for selling content to as wide a market as possible

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[13] A loosening up on key aspects of the media's operation such as ownership and local content to the advantage of private enterprise (Murdock 2000:152).

tends to supersede considerations of cultural relevance. It has been argued that notwithstanding claims to the 'relative autonomy' of media professionals therefore, this kind of control over large volumes of content can and is often shaped to suit the interests of media owners (Goldsmith Media Group 2000:35; Gurevitch 2000:678-682; McChesney 2000:100-109). Because of the power such owners wield, critical political economy argues that media professionals in their employment often stifle their creativity and comply with the owners' wishes in order to keep their jobs (Goldsmith Media Group 2000:32-34). If this is indeed true, then it implies that the modern media wield a considerable amount of control over the volume and variety of knowledge and information that citizens have to enable them to enjoy their citizenship fully (the concept of citizenship is treated in greater detail later in this chapter). Their regulation in specific contexts with regards to diversity therefore remains a subject of concern to researchers.

Critical political economy argues that there is a link between access to communication and media diversity and people's social economic conditions. This thesis further argues that people's linguistic abilities, which are often linked to their socio-economic conditions, are significant for citizen participation in the broadcast media. Critical political economy thus investigates how changes in ownership patterns and the organisation of forces which exercise control over cultural production and distribution affect participation in the public sphere (Golding & Murdock 1991:23; Murdock 2000:144-145, 154; cf. Gurevitch 2000; Wilkinson 2004). In doing this, critical political economy addresses itself not only to the economic but also the political and cultural aspects of life. It is interested in the impact of economic conditions on the range of diversity of cultural goods available to different social groups and how consumer choice is limited not just by market forces, but by broader political and economic factors (Golding 1990:98; Golding & Murdock 1991:18).

Critical political economy thus highlights the interplay between the symbolic and the material dimensions of public communication. This approach seeks to analyse how different funding and ownership arrangements in the media have a bearing on diversity of content and representation in the media (Golding & Murdock 1991:15). What is of particular relevance to this study is the way critical political economy examines how a commercial logic in the operation of the media constrains what the media have to offer, what perspectives, identities and languages are represented in the media and how the nature of public discourse on issues pertaining to democracy may be forced to fit within the boundaries set by this commercial logic.

The impact of globalisation on the diversity of content and therefore on democratic representation and expression in the media has been extensively discussed within current debates on local content. The concept of diversity links media content with democracy. Media content as it relates to diversity has become a major issue especially as the local media have had to respond to global challenges and opportunities (Sreberny-Mohammadi 1991:123; Strelitz 1999:53, Kariithi 2003 171, 174-176; cf. Wilkinson 2004). Debates on the regulation of content in spite of, or because of, the globalisation of the media, typically spring from a recognition that while market forces appear to open the way for variety, the logic of private broadcasting for commercial gain (by far the dominant logic in most liberalised media environments) may differ from the logic of variety aimed at catering for the public interest. The public interest here denotes the notion of how the media ought to operate for the good of all society. It refers, as McQuail (1992:70-71; 2000:142-144) has elaborated, to both the rights and the obligations of the media, and ideally, the aspirations of the majority of a given population. The media have been recognised as different from any other business because of their importance to the preservation of citizens' rights to be informed and to communicate, both these being essential to participatory democracy (Goldsmith Media Group 2000:54). It should be noted though that there is a problem working with such an idealistic definition of the public interest because many media–even public media-in both developing and developed countries, are established to serve some agenda that may not necessary be driven by the best interests of the majority of the population. It is in recognition of this that critical political economy proposes that regulation ought to intervene to rationalise local content with other content for purposes of cultural preservation and identity, as well as creating opportunities for citizens to participate in the democratic process through the media. The indigenous languages (which in many developing countries are the only means by which the majority of citizens can meaningfully participate in the media), can be fundamental to local content, and therefore to diversity.

Critical political economy generally accepts Habermas' idea (1974; 1989; 1992) that the media are a key institution of the public sphere, and indeed provide a space where the common interest can be identified and articulated through debate (see section above on the media and the public sphere). However, critical political economy also argues that this space must be made more inclusive, more open and more accessible. While providing a space for developing a consensus on the (national) common good is valuable, this thesis proposes that it is equally important that the media should cater for particularistic expression and representation, and that the indigenous languages be recognised as vital in enhancing this kind of diversity in the media. It is in this

regard for instance that some scholars talk of 'public interests' instead of the 'public interest' (See for instance, Brants, Hermes & Van Zoonen 1998)

In response to the liberal-pluralist argument that the liberalisation of the media sector expands people's choices and therefore engenders diversity, critical political economy maintains that there is a distinction between access to the media that enhances pluralism, and access that merely enhances consumerism. The priority of people having access to a plurality of views of their own, they argue, cannot be compared to the value of access of producers to markets, or consumers to goods. The latter two kinds of access are often presented in liberal-pluralist theory, as the justification for leaving the market as the sole regulator of communication. In this regard the Goldsmith Media Group (2000:54) argue:

> The media, as forms of communication at a distance, raise issues of participation which are not reducible to questions of consumer choice. It is not normally an issue, let alone an issue of public importance, whether you had the opportunity to participate in the production of the clothes you wear. It is an issue, and one of fundamental public importance, what opportunities you had to participate in the representation to others of your living conditions, your opinions, your forms of cultural expression. The latter are fundamentally issues not merely of choice, but of control; they are issues of freedom, which must be addressed at the social level.

2.3.3 Citizenship and access to public information

The enjoyment of the right of access to information and communication is, for critical political economy, fundamental to the appreciation and enjoyment of especially civil and political rights (Murdock & Golding 1989:183-184; Golding 1990:98-99;). Civil rights include freedom of speech and opinion, the exercise of which is closely linked to the media, while political rights include the right to participate in the exercise of political power, hence holding public office, voting, and participating in the making of the laws by which one consents to be governed.

Access to adequate information and to a diversity of debate is a basic precondition for the effective functioning of a democratic polity and for the full exercise of citizen rights. Thus, communication systems (and therefore the media) should provide people with access to the information, advice and analysis they need to know and pursue their rights and provide the broadest possible range of information, interpretation and debate on areas related to political choice. This would enable them to choose, or to dissent and propose alternatives (Golding & Murdock 1991:21-22; Murdock & Golding 1989:183). The right of all to access communication and information has its roots in the rise of the 20th century welfare state established to secure a

minimum standard of well being for all citizens by the state. This right may be closely linked with the people's abilities to access information and to express themselves in the public domain in their own languages. A recognition of the need to guarantee this right to information and communication ideally underlies the rationale for the establishment of the public broadcaster (public broadcasting is treated in greater detail later in this chapter).

A key observation that critical political economy makes is that the new, market-driven media address audiences primarily through their identity as consumers, not as citizens. This identity as consumer, they argue, is tied to the nature of the information and communication products that people buy as well as the products promoted in the expanded advertising system that finances the communication industries. In the process, people's other identities, such as that of citizen, are marginalised (Murdock & Golding 1989:180). This new concept of public communication thus downplays peoples' sense that they belong to a polity and that their participation or refusal to participate in that polity is significant and could determine the direction of their lives. The resultant apathy among citizens in turn downplays the media as a sphere for communal participation in search of solutions to common problems and formation of a common identity, or 'fetishises' them ascribing more power and authority to them than to other social institutions.

Murdock and Golding (1991) recognise the relevance of Habermas' notion of the public sphere as a space where issues of common interest may be discussed and where public opinion may develop through rational debate and consensus. However, they also take note of the key criticisms of Habermas' idealistic conceptualisation of the bourgeois public sphere. They point out that Habermas (1989) places undue trust in the market as regulator of access to information; that his 'ideal' public sphere was in fact not inclusive enough; and that he failed to recognise the significance of excluding key social classes (like the working class) as well as women from the bourgeois public sphere. The ideal of forging a common identity, is increasingly being replaced by the argument for multiple identities all facilitated by the media functioning as a public sphere or public spheres (Fraser 1993:522-524 cf. Golding & Murdock 1991:21-22; Dahlgren 2000; Goldsmith Media Group 2000).

As long as the public sphere is open, diverse and accessible, Golding and Murdock (1989:182) recognise it as important in the theorisation of the relationship between the media and participation in the democratic process. They therefore measure the performance of the media in enhancing citizen participation against the criteria of openness, inclusiveness and accessibility to

all. Murdock and Golding further challenge earlier conceptualisations of participation and citizenship where participation in the polity was assumed to be an automatic outcome of the guaranteed rights of all citizens to associate and to vote (see, for instance, Marshall 1963:15). They instead emphasise that without social rights, citizens cannot enjoy other rights. They argue that participation is not only just about participation in the political process but also about the conditions that allow people to become full members of the society at every level.

Critical political economy (see for instance Curran 1991) also challenges the notion of the media, including the public media, as a public sphere mediating, among other things, the national consensus, or a national culture. They argue that these notions of a national culture tend to be influenced by a political and cultural elite; those sectors of society that under the current media conditions have what it takes (both symbolic and material) to enjoy the benefits of modern public communication. It is therefore no longer correct to assume, as in the ideal conceptualisation of the public sphere, that all members of a polity are equally free to participate in that sphere. The formation and maintenance of definitions of national culture through public media is necessarily limited and leaves out some identities. They thus argue that a more achievable objective for the public media would be to emphasize diversity, and thus the right of individuals and groups to affirm their identity and be recognised for their particularity, rather than the unifying function of the media under a presumed common heritage. In multilingual situations, this kind of diversity requires the availability of media content in a variety of indigenous languages to be able to include the majority of citizens.

2.3.4   The commercialisation of media content and citizen participation

Critical political economy addresses changes that have affected the nature of content in the media, as well as the capacities of different categories of people to access this content. Apart from changes in media structure and ownership patterns, the research of critical political economy focuses on the political economy of cultural consumption (that is, the relationship between material and cultural inequality and its impact on the functioning of the public sphere). Critical political economy is thus interested in the public sphere and how the commercialisation of the media is affecting it at the level of availability of, and access to, diverse media content (Golding & Murdock 1991:17; Goldsmith Media Group 2000; Murdock 2000:147-148).

Critical political economy's argument is that cultural forms are not neutral texts, but rather, that they are mechanisms for regulating public discourse. Critical political economy further posits that

the limits of modern day public discourse are indirectly set by the rules of form and content that govern cultural forms and these are commercially determined. Critical political economy addresses the question of how economic dynamics of production (that is, what is permitted, when and to what extent) structure public discourse by promoting certain cultural forms over others (Golding & Murdock 1991:27; cf. McChesney 2000:78-90). With increased commercialisation of the media, the inclusion of certain languages in the media is based on whether they are seen as commercially viable or not. Such considerations limit discourse, as well as full and authentic expression. For content to be commercially viable, it is limited to a few tried and tested languages that can be sold to global markets without a need for translation. In a sense, therefore, the more removed from profitability a language is in modern day public communication, the less likely it is to be selected for use in the development of media content for the commercial (or commercialised) media. This has an impact on diversity of expression and representation, and therefore on the extent to which native speakers of certain (indigenous, commercially non-viable) languages can participate in public deliberation through the media.

This thesis further contends that indigenous languages are useful in expanding the limits of public discourse and its accessibility. Indigenous languages have the potential to include in public debate some voices and issues that would otherwise not be considered commercially viable. They also permit levels and forms of expression that would be curtailed by the use of an intermediate language (see Chapter 4 for a detailed treatment of the importance of language in participation).

2.3.5 Critical political economy on poverty and participation

Critical political economy contends that social-economic status affects access to the competencies required to interpret and use media materials in meaningful ways (Murdock & Golding 1989:184; Golding 1990:98-100; Golding & Murdock 1991:20; 28-30). They maintain that a multiplicity of media channels does not necessarily guarantee diversity. According to critical political economy, the global structure and ownership patterns of the media work together with the practices and priorities of content production and distribution to influence not only what is available in the media but also who may participate effectively in public discourse through the media. Basing on this, critical political economy challenges the traditional liberal pluralist assumption that the market is the best regulator of the circulation of all goods including cultural goods, or that in a liberalised environment, the consumer is necessarily sovereign and has a genuine range of goods out of which he/she is able to freely choose what is best for his/her needs (Golding & Murdock

1989:28; Golding and Murdock 1991:19; Herman & McChesney 1997:190-191; Goldsmith Media Group 2000:26-28, 39-44).

Critical political economy further argues that with the technical and commercial sophistication of the media, one requires a range of material and symbolic resources to be able to access what used to be public a public service (Scannell 2000:120-125; McQuail 2000:156-157; Fourie 2003:160). A lack of symbolic resources can deny the full and adequate range of imagery and information necessary for full participation as a citizen in the polity, because communicative competence and action and the resources required to exercise them are pre-requisites for citizenship (Murdock & Golding 1989:183-184; Golding 1990:98-100; Tettey 2001:24). This thesis argues that in multilingual settings, language is a key symbolic resource and can determine whether and to what extent one may participate in public debate essential for citizenship through the media.

2.3.6 Critical political economy on the media, diversity and public broadcasting
In the wake of the commercialisation of the media as well as concerns about spectrum scarcity, public broadcasting has since the establishment of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) been seen by many scholars as a possible solution to the inequalities that critical political economy discusses. Habermas' normative concept of the public sphere underlies most work on public broadcasting (see for instance, Reith 1924; Minnow 1961; Scannell 2000; Fourie 2003). A large section of this literature is in agreement with the position that in spite of (or indeed because of) the liberalisation of the airwaves, there is a place for the state to intervene to ensure a maintenance of public service broadcasting systems that have a universal reach, offer diverse content, provide for minorities, cater for the national culture, language and identity, serve the needs of the political system and maintain a high quality of programming (cf. Fourie 2003:148). This, it is argued, is the only way that the media will be able to play a meaningful role as a space for information, debate and opinion formation in the current commercialised media and communication environment.

However, recent studies indicate that the public media themselves are under internal and external threat. This arises mostly from their vulnerability to state influence, as well as the undue pressure which they have come under to compete with increasingly powerful privately owned commercial media and perform according to market criteria. The public media are still expected to offer quality universal and diverse services and yet are gauged against the same criteria as their more commercialised counterparts whose mandate is much narrower and more focused on profit

maximisation than on diverse participation and representation (Fourie 2003:150-152; Nyamnjoh:2003:131).

Critical political economy acknowledges that the modern state seeks to influence the structure of the media industries, the pricing of commodities and the range of permissible expression though regulation on ownership and content in both the public and privately owned media (cf. Golding & Murdock 1991:24-25). The state in liberal democracies also subsidises cultural concerns and activities to increase cultural diversity, especially in public broadcasting. This often draws complaints of undue state interference. The situation is graver in many developing countries, where the so-called public media have been no more than state mouthpieces (Tettey 2001:21; cf. Mbaine 2003:139-140; Nyamnjoh 2003:124-125).

Critical political economy examines the tension between the autonomy of the media, and state intervention in the media sector through policy, and through continuing to support public broadcasting-a tension largely created by the liberalisation of the media sector. They argue that the public media in trying to survive in an increasingly competitive environment fail to please government or the public enough and have therefore come under pressure from both. Yet under the current circumstances, it does appear that properly functioning public media in a well-regulated environment may still be the most viable balancing factor to commercially driven, privately owned (global) media. The question critical political economy raises, though, is: given the commercial imperatives that drive the private/commercial media and the trend towards concentration of ownership, both of which work against diversity, to what extent can state intervention improve the functioning of the public media as an open, diverse space for public debate accessible to all?

Critical political economy justifies the need for public intervention in the media sector because, the argue, the kind of autonomy from public intervention that Habermas considers essential for a free media is untenable since it is inevitably plagued by inequality. Critical political economy thus posits that the state needs to intervene in order to ensure availability of vital public knowledge and 'wholesome entertainment.' Though the modern media share some features with other industries, it has been argued emphatically that the goods they deal in, that is, information and opinion, are distinct from other goods. This is because these goods, unlike others, play a key role in structuring the 'images' and discourses by means of which people make sense of their world (Golding & Murdock 1991:15; cf. Goldsmith Media Group 2000:54). Such goods, critical political economy

argues, cannot be left entirely to the market to regulate. Even though there is no consensus in critical political economy on the ideal mode or extent of the necessary intervention, the majority of critical political economy scholars do not regard the market as suited to be the sole arbiter in the operations of the media, because, they argue, the market favours the wealthy and the powerful.

Critical political economy thus holds that communication and information systems should provide the maximum possible diversity at the level of production, provide for audience feedback and participation, and guarantee universal access to the services that can ensure the full exercise of citizenship regardless of income or area of residence or language.[14] Murdock and Golding (1990:96-97) argue that the above ideals are elusive in a commercialised media and communication environment. Class-related barriers such as income, educational background or even geographical location limit the capacity of especially the poorer members of society from a full enjoyment of information and communication facilities. The public media have the challenge of measuring up to their ideal expectations for all classes of people. Availing programming in as many indigenous languages as possible, which the public media tend to be well placed to do, may help alleviate this challenge.

2.3.7 Critical political economy, language and participation

It is important to note that in discussing symbolic barriers to access to information, the literature of critical political economy reviewed does not place sufficient emphasis on language as a symbolic barrier. This thesis contends, however, that in multilingual situations, competence in certain languages can constitute a formidable opportunity for participation. Lack of such competence on the other hand can amount to a formidable barrier to participation as citizens in a polity, especially if the media constitute a major forum for participation in public discourse. Often the possession or lack of specific language skills, for instance, is linked to socio-economic structures and circumstances such as income and level of education attained. It is also linked to policies on what roles different languages may play in the public domain (see Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion on the role of language in the democratic process).

The poor and less powerful are less likely than the wealthy and powerful to have the linguistic versatility required to access homogenised media content which tends to be in a Language of

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[14] Murdock and Golding do not single out language as essential to this kind of feedback and participation, but this study argues that language is an important feedback and participation mechanism.

Wider Communication. Language is the medium through which people are able to participate in public discourse, with the assistance of the (mass) media.

The limits on what roles the indigenous languages may play vis-à-vis other languages in the public domain are to a great extent set by policy. Communication policy is often not specific on the roles that different languages may play in the media**.** This has a bearing on which people are able to participate in the political (and cultural) process and with what degree of ease through the media. It is important for people to recognise themselves and their aspirations in the range of representations offered within the major communication sectors as well as to contribute to the development of these representations. Current debates on local content suggest a strong link between cultural representation in the media and diversity. These debates seek to establish a link between market dynamics in media production, distribution, and diversity.

Policy on language use in the public domain tends to reveal tensions between what Wilkinson (2004:19) has termed the 'economic (or politico-economic) forces of homogenisation' and the 'cultural-linguistic tendencies towards heterogeneity.' Language has been crucial in the United States, Australia and the European Union in bringing out these tensions. These have been fuelled by the commercialisation of the media which drives media content further away from either thematic or linguistic diversity. The present examination of policy on language use in the broadcast media in Uganda is important in bringing out what value the Ugandan public attach to the use of indigenous languages in the media in relation to their participation in public discourse. It is also important in relating public reflection on the role of the indigenous languages and related policy to changes in the media with regard to structure and content. Such an examination is also important in highlighting the broader issues of the relationship between language, diversity and participation.

In challenging traditional liberal pluralist views of the media and the efficacy of the market to regulate communication for citizenship critical political economy draws attention to key areas of media regulation, ownership, structure and content that they argue have a bearing on people's capacity for participation as citizens through the modern day media. Critical political economy in particular posits that people's capacity for participation is limited by a combination of material and symbolic barriers. In its analysis of symbolic barriers, though, critical political economy does not appear to lay sufficient emphasis on the aspect of language. This is the gap this study attempts to fill.

In addition, critical political economy still sees state intervention especially through policies that support viable and competitive public broadcasting as important in securing the opportunities for access, participation and representation that would enable the majority of citizens to participate meaningfully in the public sphere. The context of critical political economy is, by and large, Western democracies, and the ideals they espouse derive from the ideal provisions of the social welfare state, as well as the latter's near replacement by late capitalism and its individualistic emphasis.

The present study seeks to apply critical analysis to a Ugandan context. Focusing on Uganda, the current study takes as its point of departure the issue of language as a possible barrier to diversity and consequently participation in the media, and the implications of this for democracy.

In Uganda, there have been various attempts to address the issue of language and access to the broadcast media through laws and policy. The different laws and policies on language in Uganda are examined in detail in Chapter 6. Most of these attempts have focused on the tension between efforts to forge national unity and the desire in some circles to maintain ethnic diversity. While the broadcast media in Uganda have the freedom to operate in any language, most media have chosen to concentrate on one or two languages that they deem commercially viable. This thesis examines the relevance and the priority of indigenous language programming in Uganda's broadcast media, and how this relates to changes in the ownership and operation of the broadcast media. It also examines policy on linguistic diversity. This has relevance for political participation in the democratic process given the central role the broadcast media and the indigenous languages in Uganda play in public discourse. This study thus examines the changing fortunes of 'public' broadcasting in Uganda in the face of fierce competition from commercial media owners.

The literature of critical political economy reviewed in this chapter raises the following research questions for investigation:

- To what extent does current debate on the role of the indigenous languages address the link between language, diversity and political and cultural representation in the broadcast media?
- What rationale underlies current language policies on the role of the indigenous languages in the public domain in Uganda?

- In what ways (if any) is this linked to privatisation and commercialisation trends in the media in Uganda and worldwide?

- Are there any possible links between linguistic representation and political participation?

- How does the Ugandan government address the tension between national unity and ethnic diversity in language policy and why?

- To what extent is current policy on the indigenous languages perceived by the Ugandan public as empowering government to assert and protect its interests, as opposed to empowering people to hold government accountable?

- To what extent is the state's position on the indigenous languages seen as being about the participation of as many Ugandans as possible in public discourse, and to what extent an attempt to homogenise public discourse?

- In what ways has the phenomenon of commercially viable languages influenced what is available on the market in the indigenous languages, and how does this relate to issues of diversity and participation?

2.4 CULTURAL STUDIES PERSPECTIVES ON THE MEDIA, LANGUAGE AND PARTICIPATION

According to Ferguson & Golding (1997:xiv-xvii) cultural studies is a multi-disciplinary field of inquiry, influenced heavily by both structuralism and post-structuralism. The beginnings of cultural studies may be traced back to the work of Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart, and later in its institutionalised form, to the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham which was established in the 1950s. Cultural studies work has since spread to nearly every continent and is characterised by great variation in both theorisation and methodological approach to issues of culture and power.

Cultural studies is concerned with all those practices, institutions and systems of classification through which particular values, beliefs, competencies, routines of life and habitual forms of conduct are inculcated in a population. Cultural studies is centrally concerned with culture as it emerges from meanings and representations that are generated by signifying mechanisms (such as language at one level, or media content at another) in the context of everyday life. Furthermore, cultural studies is concerned with both the framing and consequences of those representations. Cultural studies interest is not so much in how social location constrains access to culture (a key

concern of critical political economy), but rather how people in their specific social locations are able to use the symbolic forms available to them to liberate themselves or assert their uniqueness (Grossberg 1995:73; cf. Kellner & Durham 2001:4).

Cultural studies like political economy is interested in questions of power. It therefore seeks to identify approaches to culture and power that human agents can employ in the pursuit of social change. Public discourse is one of these ways. However, cultural studies approaches do not adopt as easily to a Habermasian view of one unifying public sphere with the media as a component. Rather, they prefer to talk about multiple spheres each representing some cultural peculiarities (See Fraser 1993; Thompson 1995 and Dahlgren 2002 for a comprehensive critique of the Habermasian view of the public sphere). The methodology of cultural studies largely consists in description of experiences in historically specific circumstances. These descriptions in historically specific circumstances could serve as tools for political action, or for influencing policy (Barker 2002:4).

Ferguson and Golding (1997:xv-xvii) add that although both critical political economy and cultural studies are critical approaches, they have theoretical and methodological differences. According to Barker (2002:13; cf. During 1993:10-11) the key issues of contention revolve around notions of agency and determination, the concept of class versus difference, and their different interpretations of ideology. While political economy sees the economic conditions of production and distribution as determining what cultural choices that individuals make at the micro level, cultural studies emphasises agency, which has been described as 'the socially constructed capacity [of individuals] to act.' Barker cautions, that though individuals have this capacity to act and to make choices in specific circumstances to minimise dominance, they are still the product of their communities, and not robots conditioned by their politico-economic conditions of work. Cultural studies criticises political economy for ignoring the specificities of cultural practice and difference and concentrating instead on the economic, and in particular on class difference (During 1993:3, 10-11; Hall 1993a:100). Thus while political economy focuses on the macro level, cultural studies concerns itself more with describing specific experiences with culture at the micro level, and instances not of duping by the media, but more often of resistance to domination

Hall, Gramsci and others in cultural studies have argued that political economy approaches to the study of the media push the position that the media, by conveying (predominantly) the dominant

ideology, necessarily help to sustain the status quo. In this process, cultural studies argues, the political economy approaches typically down-play the complexities of decoding that often yield resistance and alternative readings at the micro level thus placing too much premium on the necessity of state intervention (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1980; During 1993:10-11; Hall 1993a:100-101; cf. Lemon 2001:378-379). There is a fair amount of consensus within cultural studies that audiences can and often do subvert meanings at the point of reception in spite of their material conditions. On the other hand, the proponents of political economy argue that a lot of recent cultural studies work appears to go to the other extreme, placing too much emphasis on the details of consumption or reception, and ignoring the macro issues that influence the form that media texts eventually take, and which the market alone is ill-suited to regulate (see Garnham 1993:496; McQuail 1994:82; Ferguson & Golding 1997:76-77; cf. Fourie 2001a:122-125).

2.4.1 Hall and Gramsci on participation

The work of cultural studies on the subject of ideology plays a key role in linking language and questions of power and representation which are central to the current study. Most cultural studies discussions of the role of language in social interaction have occurred within the context of ideology. The work of Antonio Gramsci in particular constitutes a major turn in critical thinking about the notion of ideology as it makes a clean break with the old Marxian notion of base and superstructure, with the former always assigned the role of determining the latter. Gramsci's alternative notion of hegemony implies that at any one time, the 'audience' is not bound to buy into the dominant ideology and can be organised and empowered to resist the dominant ideology that the mainstream media have been accused of purveying (see, for instance, Gramsci 1971; cf. Grossberg 1995; Woolard 1998; Spitulnik 1998; Spitulnik 2002).

Gramsci (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1980:170) maintains that ideology, contrary to what mainstream political economy and some of its tributaries argue, is not fixed and located in the superstructure, but is contested terrain. He therefore elaborates the related concept of 'hegemony' which he argues is a contested and shifting set of ideas by means of which dominant groups strive to secure the consent of subordinate groups to their leadership rather than as a consistent and functional ideology working in the interests of a ruling class by indoctrinating subordinate groups.[15]

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[15] It is important to note that the relevance of Gramsci's notion of 'hegemony' for developing nations where the distinction between 'the state' and 'civil society' are not necessarily clear has been challenged (See, for instance Hall in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1980:36; Berger 2002: 25-30).

Gramsci admits that there is such a thing as an ideological 'front' with media as a key part of it. However, he adds that this is not such a front as cannot be challenged by ordinary people, hence the need to understand how this front is organised. While Gramsci acknowledges the role of the press in the formation of public opinion, however, he does not see the press as working alone, but rather in collaboration with other forces which work directly or indirectly to influence public opinion (Gramsci 1971:46).

While critical political economy attempts to explain the impact of structural changes on media structure, ownership and content, cultural studies argues that political economy approaches have been weak with regards to explaining issues at the micro level of social action and in historic specificity. Furthermore, they argue that although the work of political economy has been instrumental in pointing out the power of texts and structures in curtailing individual choice and action, it has underplayed the role of human agency.

The above differences notwithstanding, the essence of democracy for both cultural studies and critical political economy rotates around the capacity of individuals or communities to cope with or to resist domination, although the two perspectives may differ in the finer details of analysing and interpreting how this is done. This thesis posits that language is an important element in analysing diversity and participation because language is what enables different voices to speak and be heard in their own words and in their own right**.** In modern days this is often is mediated through the media of mass communication where language plays a key role. As such there is need to ensure that their views and experiences are represented in an authentic way in the public sphere through the media.

In a multilingual context in the developing world, the indigenous languages appear to be central in the process of mobilising communities to represent their experiences, voice their concerns and make sense of the increasing amount of public information that is only accessible through the (broadcast) media. Such participation makes a difference in the extent to which ordinary citizens can, for instance, influence policy. Gramsci posits that enabling people to participate in this way does not consist merely in the presence of an elite (as in the Habermasian model) who purport to know what the rest of the community does not know, and to pass the information on to the majority of citizens. Rather, Gramsci argues, it consists in identifying organised ways to channel issues and represent local realities in a way that enables the majority of citizens to play an active

part in the democratic process. This study argues that in such a situation, it is important not just that such information is available, but also that it is available in a variety of the indigenous languages of the people to secure their meaningful and diverse participation. Because the market is inadequate to ensure such diversity, it becomes important to analyse the role of policy and regulation as an alternative in enhancing such diversity in the broadcast media in specific historical circumstances.

Stuart Hall's work draws heavily on Gramsci's, but it also affirms some of the key arguments of political economy approaches. For instance, Hall (1993b:509-510, 516-517) admits that even though every text potentially has multiple meanings, hence the notion of polysemy, there are limiting factors at each stage from production to reception. As a result the 'audience' has autonomy only to the extent that these factors permit. This is a significant departure from a large section of cultural studies work that prioritises audience autonomy and seems to downplay the role of structural factors (such as the ownership and operation of media institutions and policy) in the way audiences receive and use media content.

Unlike political economy approaches that have paid limited specific attention to language, cultural studies' link to structuralism and later post-structuralism places language in a key position in their analysis of culture. Structuralism and post-structuralism highlight the importance of language in creating, illumining or obscuring meaning in texts. They recognise that any given text typically has more than one meaning embedded in it, and that meaning is assigned in the process of reception. They also recognise culture and representation as sites of power, and language and the symbolic as sources not just of meaning but also identity. The work of Michel Foucault (1969) in particular draws attention to the link between discourse and power. Cultural studies builds on these pillars, and postcolonial studies (a tributary of cultural studies) take this a step further, arguing that in postcolonial situations, language is important not merely because it is linked to identity, but also to cultural and political survival (Bhaba 1993:189). Examining possible links between language and participation in the public sphere therefore is important in making sense of the role of the modern media in the democratic process in specific situations, since the media play a key role in mediating public discourse.

While critical political economy pays little attention to the details of language as a symbolic resource with the potential to enhance or curtail participation, cultural studies sees language as important in as far as it is both the means and the medium through which people form knowledge

about themselves and the social world (Hall 1993a:105-106; Barker 2002:14;). Cultural studies thus sees language as intervening between the individual and the socio-cultural fields that construct his or her positions (During 1993:10-11). This makes language extremely important for participation in public discourse. This is particularly relevant today when different cultural, economic and political forces threaten to limit the extent to which participation of a variety of voices in public discourse may influence the process of governance through the media.

The work of critical political economy reviewed earlier in this chapter argues that people's economic conditions are a key determinant in people's opportunities for access to participation in public discourse through the media. Critical political economy further posits that state intervention is what is needed to ensure equity and justice in situations where certain sectors of the population are marginalised. The work of cultural studies on the other hand discounts the argument that economic conditions such as poverty necessarily give people a common experience or agenda, or that a central agency can preside over the equitable redistribution of wealth (or access) in a capitalist environment whether this agency be the state or the market. Cultural studies instead posits that it is possible for people in similar material circumstances to have totally different experiences and agenda, and therefore be incapable of, or disinterested in mobilising behind a common cause. Language, therefore, being attached to culture, provides an alternative way for people to view their common interest from their own particularistic identities, as well as articulate it through the media.

While critical political economy has often accused cultural studies of losing its analytical edge and becoming celebratory of instances of cultural consumption (Garnham 1995a; Garnham 1995b; Meehan 1999), cultural studies maintains that critical political economy has been fixated in the economic reductionism of early interpretations of Marx (Hall 1993a; Grossberg 1995). Cultural studies thus portrays the political economy approach as maintaining an unrealistic dichotomy between the economic base and ideological superstructure. This accusation is based on the fact that political economy has in the past argued that questions of culture and ideology belong to the superstructure and are determined by the base.

2.5   TOWARDS A HYBRID APPROACH

The differences in analytical focus between political economy and cultural studies approaches are increasingly seen as complementary. Recent work from both critical political economy and cultural studies has moved towards a reconciliation of the two perspectives, arguing that this

seems to yield a more complete analysis. Ferguson and Golding (1997) and Durham & Kellner (2001) are typical of such works that aim at a more wholesome analysis of cultural phenomena incorporating both political economy and cultural studies perspectives of the media and culture. Such an approach is essential to a full appreciation of the significance of language in the construction of meaning and identity and in enhancing participation. The hybrid approach recognises that while language competence and access may sometimes be structurally conditioned, there are language choices that individuals or communities make at the micro level in spite of policy that should not be ignored. Such choices can work hand in hand with policy to enhance the kind of participation that could bring about social change.

To understand how the average Ugandan sees policy on the use of the indigenous languages in the media influencing their opportunities for participation in public discourse, it is important to look at both the macro level of media ownership, structure and policy as well as the micro level of consumption of media content (often influenced by socio-historical factors), where, according to cultural studies, important choices are made. Thus Kellner and Durham (2001:4) argue:

> …[V]iewing culture from political economy, from the perspective of the system of production and distribution may disclose how the culture industries reproduce the dominant corporate and commercial culture, excluding discourses and images that contest the established social system….Conjoining production/text/audience perspectives can thus help provide a more complex sense of how culture and media actually operate in everyday life.

Thus some scholars from a cultural studies perspective like Appadurai (1993), and Sansone (2003) continue to deal with issues of economics and dominance at the macro level as well as reception and resistance at the micro level.

2.6   CONCLUSION

This thesis seeks to address two broad questions: What forces influence the availability of content in the indigenous languages in Uganda, how is this related to the parameters of public discourse in Uganda, and with what implications for diversity in the participation of Ugandans in the democratic process? And, To what extent do Ugandans see themselves as able to surmount obstacles related to language and participate in the democratic process through the broadcast media? This chapter establishes a broad theoretical framework within which the significance of language for citizen participation through the broadcast media in Uganda could be analysed using

work in the areas of critical political economy and cultural studies, against the backdrop of the notion of the public sphere. Chapter 3 constitutes a further review of pertinent literature in these areas as well as in the area of Linguistics focusing on the significance of language for diversity and participation in the media.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE AND PARTICIPATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to augment the theoretical framework established in Chapter 2 by discussing language as it relates to power both at the micro and macro levels. Language, which can be an important factor in enhancing diverse participation in the broadcast media, here refers to the codified way in which human beings communicate. Even though the relationship between speech (and media) and power may be questioned (see for instance Daloz & Verrier-Frechette 2000; Berger 2002:22-24) the mass media are of special significance in this discussion in as far as they are highly visible and play a specific amplifying or publicising role, and to the extent that political participation today is characterised by a publicity that is to a great extent mediated through the mass media. In this respect, it may be argued that the language resources which people have at their disposal make it more possible for people to access opportunities that make them productive participants in public debate and in decision making. Language thus has the potential to bring people into the arena of public debate and the broadcast media today play a key role in constituting this arena. Once in this arena, people are (at least potentially) better placed to have a say on issues that relate to their governance and their general well-being. Language policy assigns different roles that different languages may play in various domains. It is important to note, though, that in this process, roles are sometimes assigned to particular languages that limit the utility of these languages.

This thesis concerns itself with examining public debate on how different languages in Uganda are assigned different roles and how their roles in society may be proscribed through policy as well as other processes. Thus the thesis examines on the one hand, the response of the Ugandan government to the language situation, and on the other hand, the response of Ugandans to the language policy. In particular the focus is on the roles assigned to the indigenous Ugandan languages in the broadcast media, and the response of audiences to these roles as assigned. The thesis places the roles that different languages in Uganda have come to play in Uganda's socio-

historical context. In particular, it explores the power questions that underlie the roles of the different languages in Uganda's broadcast media with a focus on radio.

Two main bodies of literature are reviewed in this chapter: sociolinguistics, and critical studies. Emphasis is placed on critical political economy, cultural studies and language ideology. One notes that there is a degree of overlap in these bodies of literature. However, the earlier literature of sociolinguistics proceeded from a positivistic approach, largely assuming that language, is a neutral medium, and that its planning and policy are also neutral, disinterested exercises. More recent literature on the other hand tends to challenge this, pointing out the relationships between language and power. Thus while critical political economy focuses in its analysis on the macro level, and cultural studies on the micro level, language ideology seems to bring together the two levels (macro and micro), concluding that power is not limited to any one site, but is in fact, diffuse (cf. Gramsci 1971).

3.2   THE LANGUAGE SITUATION IN UGANDA

According to Wanyeki (2000), there are three broad linguistic groups in Uganda. These are the Bantu, Nilotic and Sudanic (cf. Ladefoged, Glick & Criper 1971:16, 31, 83; Walusimbi 1973:26; Mukama 1986:49;). There is limited mutual intelligibility within languages in each group, and virtually none across the three groups. Linguists have put the number of languages spoken in Uganda between 30 and 40, although 30 seems to be the consensus, with the others considered dialects. Uganda's constitution (Uganda 1995) names 56 ethnic groups, concurring with the most recent population census (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2005). However, recent debates relating to a revision of the constitution now put the number of distinct ethnic groups in Uganda at 65. Problems have arisen with regards to distinguishing languages from dialects (Mukama 1986:49; cf. Ladefoged et al 1971; Muthwii 2000:19).

Uganda has two official languages, English and Kiswahili. In addition, Kiswahili is used as a *lingua franca* in urban areas, and as language of the police and the military, and is increasingly promoted as advantageous for regional integration, but remains unpopular among large sections of the population due to past associations with violent military regimes. Uganda does not have a national language (the search for a national language is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 7).

According to the most recent population census (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2005) and Ethnologue (2005), Luganda is the language spoken by the largest number of people in Uganda,

and the most widely spoken second language although it is unintelligible to many of the non-Bantu population. In some parts of Uganda, Luganda also carries with it the baggage of political oppression from the colonial era (see Chapters 4 and 7 for a fuller discussion of the connection between Luganda and Indirect Rule in Uganda).[1]

There is no explicit separate policy for language use in the media in Uganda. This is consistent with Bamgbose's observation (1991:110; cf. Noss 1971:25) that education policy in most sub-Saharan nations falls within three categories. Official language policy usually addresses the languages recognised by government for different purposes (for instance official languages); educational language policy relates to language recognised by education authorities as media of instructions and subjects of study at various levels and general language policy covers 'unofficial government recognition or tolerance' of languages used in the media, in business and in contact with foreigners. The use of the different languages in Uganda's media is currently guided mostly by expediency (for commercial broadcasters) as well as the policy on language use in education for the state broadcaster. The majority of stations consequently broadcast in one or two commercially viable languages while the government broadcaster attempts to represent as many linguistic interests as possible, currently broadcasting in over 24 languages.

3.3   APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE AND POWER

The following section reviews key approaches to the relationship between language and power emerging from sociolinguistics, critical political economy, cultural studies and language ideology.

3.3.1   Sociolinguistics

The literature of sociolinguistics dates back to the 1960s, and focuses on the related issues of language attitudes, language planning and language policy. It also addresses the role of language in defining ethnic and national identity (Scotton 1972:2-3; cf. Bamgbose 1991). Most studies on language status,[2] language policy[3] and language planning carried out in the 1960s and 1970s were done under the umbrella of sociolinguistics. Joshua Fishman, one of the most prolific writers in sociolinguistics defines sociolinguistics as '…the study of the complex interaction between

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[1] It should be noted though that some accounts argue that when combined, the mutually intelligible languages of Runyoro/Rotooro/Runyankore/Rukiga are numerically at least as powerful if not more powerful than Luganda. This is rarely reflected in public discourse or official records.
[2] Language status refers to the role of a language in a country at any level.
[3] Language policy refers to any planning with regard to the status of various languages in a given society.

language, its range, and the roles it plays within or across speech communities (Fishman1968a:5).'

Sociolinguistics addresses the parameters that society or sectors of society assign to languages, as well as attitudes towards those languages and their roles (Fasold 1984:1-2). For purposes of the current discussion, sociolinguistics will denote the interrelation between language, the attitudes and interests of different members of a given society and the resultant selection of particular languages for communication in specific situations such as administration, education, the media, the courts of law etc.

The literature of sociolinguistics is considered seminal to scholarship on the subject of language in multilingual nations even though recent scholarship in the field of Languages has differed from earlier sociolinguistics work in fundamental ways. The literature of sociolinguistics typically addresses two central issues: the utility of language in various spheres (e.g. education, the media, courts of law etc.), and the role of language in the formation of identities (hence ethnicity and nationalism) (cf. Bamgbose 1991). The relevance of sociolinguistics for the current discussion is in the fact that sociolinguistics also deals with the role that language plays in the media as a key domain for public discourse (Bamgbose 1991:36-61, 111; cf. Noss 1971:25). As Curran (1991:23) argues in relation to the democratic role of the media:

> A basic requirement of a democratic media system should be that it represents all significant interests in society. It should facilitate their participation in the public domain, enable them to contribute to public debate and have an input in the framing of public policy. The media should also represent the functioning of representative organisations and expose their internal processes to public scrutiny and the play of public opinion. In short a central role of the media should be defined as assisting the equitable negotiation or arbitration of competing interests through democratic processes.

Language tends to be crucial in this negotiation process. The attitudes towards the indigenous languages and what roles they are assigned in the public domain, therefore are important issues in discussions of democracy, especially in a country like Uganda where due to historical factors (See Chapter 4), the majority of people can only access public information via the broadcast media in their mother-tongue or the language of a related ethnic group (Ladefoged, Glick and Criper 1971:16).

Ricento (2000) constitutes a current and comprehensive summary of the history of sociolinguistics scholarship. He refers to that body of literature focusing on language policy and planning as

Language Policy and Planning research (LPP) (Ricento 2000:6). Ricento categorises the literature according to key factors shaping the research as well as the phases through which it has developed since the 1960s. He argues that the work of LPP has been shaped by three central factors: the macro socio-political, the epistemological and the strategic (Ricento 2000:9). By macro socio-political factors Ricento means happenings at the national or supranational level like state formation, wars, regional agreements and globalisation. The epistemological factors include changes in knowledge paradigms, such as the move from structuralism to post-structuralism in the Social Sciences and Humanities. The strategic factors influencing research on language policy and planning according to Ricento include the motives underlying the particular research in question (Ricento 2000:9).

The first phase of LPP research, according to Ricento, covers work that was done within the paradigm of structuralism, influenced by pragmatism and decolonisation. Ricento argues that work in this phase was influenced by the discourse of decolonisation and state formation at the macro socio-political level, the predominance of structuralism at the epistemological, and the belief that language 'problems' could be solved through public sector planning at the strategic level (Ricento 2000:10)

Some of the key works relevant to the current discussion in the first phase of LPP research include Fishman (1968a) and Rubin and Jernudd (1971). The prevalent thinking in this period was that the developing world was lagging behind in linguistic development and that interventions from the West in language status and corpus planning would bring them 'up to speed' with their Western counterparts and perchance also influence trends in identity formation and nation building (Ricento 2000:11). Language status planning generally concerns itself with the standardisation of languages, the range these languages cover, the revival of dying languages or the introduction of artificial ones. Language corpus planning on the other hand concerns ensuring that a selected language is modified to conform to the demands of its assigned function. It may therefore deal with vocabulary, orthography, registers, pronunciation, and production of language materials. There may be some overlaps between the two types of planning (Bamgbose 1991:109). It is during this phase that the roles of the Languages of Wider Communication, like English (as a language for use in limited, formal and specialised domains) and the indigenous languages (for more general purposes) evolved. It was widely held in sociolinguistics research during this phase that linguistic homogeneity was more appropriate for furthering the goals of modernisation and Westernisation than linguistic diversity, which was seen as an obstacle. Nation building therefore

entailed cultural/ethnic unity within defined geographical boundaries. A common linguistic identity was considered essential to the modern nation state (Ricento 2000:11; see also Fasold 1984:4; Bamgbose 1991:11-13).

The notion of designating as national languages only such languages as were deemed developed or 'develop-able' was also prevalent in this phase. Underlying this was the notion that it was important in nation formation, to have one 'unifying' language (cf. Mukama 1986:49; Bamgbose 1991:1-36).

One of the myths perpetuated by this phase of research was that language planning was a technical and politically neutral exercise. The primary concern of key language planners in the 1960s and 1970s, therefore, was to so integrate the newly developing independent countries as to enable them to participate more meaningfully in the world economy.

> If citizens could speak the same language, it was argued, both unity (by virtue of having a national language) and economic development, keyed to Western technology, financing and expertise, were more likely (Ricento2000:12).

Underlying the above logic however, were attitudes that linked this seemingly developmental project of modernisation to Western national interests. Such attitudes were to be explored in more depth in later phases of LPP research, within the context of the new world order, postmodernist thought, and linguistic human rights (Ricento 2000:12).

It should be noted that during this first phase of LPP research, it was not seen as important to view languages in their socio-historical context. Languages were viewed from a purely utilitarian perspective because language planners perceived (or at least portrayed) it as neutral.

Ricento identifies the second phase of LPP research as one primarily influenced by the failure of the modernisation project, and the emergence of critical sociolinguistics. He dates it from the early 1970s to the late 1980s. Works in this phase include Mateene & Kalema (1980); Fasold (1984); Mukama (1986). This phase of the research was, according to Ricento, informed by the realisation in many developing countries that the anticipated economic breakthrough expected after many African countries attained independence in the 1960s had not materialised. Thus while some themes from the first phase were brought forward in this phase, new concerns, like developing hierarchies of societies and stratifying populations also emerged. Language and

culture were seen as central in this ranking. There was a growing realisation in this phase that language policy and planning were not neutral academic exercises, but that they were informed by political and economic motives related to the interests of key Western nations. Scholars also began to point out that the theories of language planning so far advanced by people like Fishman and Jernudd, though useful in offering descriptions of specific language planning situations, were not adequate to explain the structural inequalities in the context in which much language planning activity took place because they eschewed analysis of the roots of prevailing language situations (Ricento 2000:14). In other words, the first phase of LPP research appeared to have ignored the relationship between language and power. The emphasis of the second phase of LPP research therefore shifted from the more technical aspects of language to the social, political and economic effects of language contact. Research now emphasised not languages, their structures and their roles in society but the status and relations of linguistic communities (Ricento 2000:15-16). Furthermore, linguistic scholars began to acknowledge that the selection of language for one function or another in society did not in itself neutralise historical inequalities. On the contrary, it had the potential to exacerbate socio-economic inequalities based, for instance, on education. Access to education in many developing countries tends to be controlled by dominant groups within the area, together with global economic interests abroad (Ricento 2000:16).[4]

Research in this phase demonstrated that the favouring of the colonial languages like English, French and Portuguese as neutral media to aid the development process in developing countries had been informed by the need to further the economic interests of countries in the Metropolis and not by any inherent superiority of the languages themselves. Privileging certain languages over others in language planning tended to limit the utility and the influence of particular languages and their users in national (re)construction. The second phase of LPP research also revealed that linguistic choices were closely linked to the linguistic communities that made those choices, as well as to broader political and economic forces (Ricento 2000:16).

The current (third) phase of LPP research, is, according to Ricento, related to the new world order at the macro socio-political level, postmodernism at the epistemological level, and the push for linguistic human rights at the strategic level. Ricento dates this phase of LPP research back to the mid 1980s. He notes, however, that this phase is still in formation. At the macro socio-political level, this phase of research, Ricento argues, has been influenced by events such as massive

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[4] Access to education in many developing countries tends to be controlled by dominant groups at home, and regional and global economic interests abroad.

population migrations, the re-emergence of nationalist identities and languages, and the formation of supranational coalitions (such as the European Union, the Green Movement) where global and local languages compete for significance. Also vital in this phase is the globalisation of capital, which has greatly influenced the structure and the agenda of the mass media. It is also in this phase that the argument of linguistic imperialism (an offshoot of cultural imperialism) has been most prevalent (though not without challenge). Critical examinations of policy on, and attitudes towards, the use of different languages in public domains like the media and education feature prominently in this phase.

In the third phase of LPP research, particularly with reference to the developing nations, language has been frequently discussed in relation to education and development. In much of this literature, language is seen as a vital tool for the 'empowerment' of individuals and societies. Those studies in the third phase of LPP research that focus on language in education and in development typically analyse the manner in which certain categories of people get marginalised through language, and the implications of this for their access to opportunities for advancement (See PRAESA 2000; Mberia 2001; Prah 2002; Kembo-Sure 2002; Owino 2002 for a more detailed treatment of the link between language and 'empowerment' or 'disempowerment' of peoples).

A number of scholars in the last two decades have underlined the centrality of the indigenous African languages to any discussion of development, particularly in Africa. Mberia (2001) defines the concept 'indigenous language' as the language spoken by indigenous ethnic communities. Focusing on Kenya, he elaborates the importance of indigenous languages in economic development arguing that indigenous languages handle the bulk of communication. Mberia explains that indigenous languages are reservoirs of vital information and knowledge. They are key to the understanding of the thinking of a people. They also enhance adult literacy, extension work and public education. He adds that indigenous languages can boost self-esteem and confidence thus increasing participation and subsequently, productivity. Finally, indigenous languages according to Mberia are important in the cognitive development of children and therefore influence the kind of citizens a nation raises. Indigenous languages are thus central in including in public discourse those identities that would otherwise be excluded (2001:3-10).

In the same vein, Prah (2002:10) has argued that Africa will achieve its educational goals better if its education system is linguistically indigenised. The way to do this is by giving children a chance to learn in their mother   tongue in the formal education system starting as early as

possible, and going as far up the system as possible. Prah's explanation for this is that the mother tongue is the language in which the child first learns to form concepts. As such, a sudden break from this way of learning to thinking in another language can cause serious learning problems (See also Letsie 2002:197-198; Ndoleriire 2004:20).

Obanya (1996) examines a number of myths about the use of African languages in education which, he argues, have hindered the formulation and implementation of pro-African language policies. These include the multiplicity of languages within the borders of most African countries, the multi-ethnicity of urban populations, the low level of technological development of most African languages, the lack of official status of the indigenous languages in their own countries, the hostility of Africans to the study of their own languages, the lack of personnel and appropriate teaching materials to handle education in the African languages, the high cost of educating in these languages, and the possible long term ill-effects on the learner of educating them in the local languages. Such myths have found their way into language policy, negating the value of indigenous African languages and condemning them to marginal roles (cf. Mukama 1986:49-50; Ndoleriire, 2004)

Wolff (2002:130) also dispels as mere myth the notion perpetuated by LPP studies in the 1960s that the African languages are not developed enough to handle contemporary information in science and technology. Wolff further points out a dilemma with regards to the notion of developed and undeveloped languages, namely that for a language to be considered developed, one expects it to have a viable orthography, substantial literature, and to be used in domains such as education, the mass media, administration and courts of law. Conversely, for a language to be considered undeveloped, it lacks an orthography, has an inadequate vocabulary and lacks reading and teaching materials (Wolff 2002:141). The irony for Wolff is that a language cannot be used in wider domains unless it is developed, yet it cannot develop unless there is a need to use it in wider domains. It should be noted here that the status of 'developed' is often conferred by someone other than the speakers of the respective language. Wolff therefore concludes:

> There is only one effective bottom-up strategy for language promotion that can possibly hope to break this vicious circle, and that is language use for all topics and domains, by all and consistently. Without this, all implementation measures will fail (Wolff 2002: 141).

Prah adds that if Africa is to make progress, then her indigenous cultures need to be brought on board in the process of development.

> Education and the mass media must reach the urban and rural millions in ways which speak to them culturally, in forms which do not dismiss their historical and cultural heritage, but rather, recognizing these, construct education, knowledge and the use of the media on the basis of what the people already know and the cultural institutions to which they primarily respond (2002:10).

The broadcast media in Uganda in particular have been crucial in availing vital information to the majority of Ugandans as well as providing an opportunity to participate in debate on important issues pertaining to their governance and general well being. The issue of what roles are assigned to which language in the media, however, remains unresolved as the logic of political and administrative convenience often clashes with the logic of linguistic diversity in language policy. Robinson (1996:4) thus posits that meaningful development is untenable without linguistic diversity. He says there is a need for an African genius to inspire the continent's development. Robinson further posits that apart from the macro considerations of national integration, policy should bear in mind the needs of the diverse communities that constitute the nation, instead of seeing these as merely an obstacle to national unity.

An important strand of research in the third phase of LPP research has been characterised by arguments that point out a perceived rapid death of minority languages that had been occasioned by the recent global changes discussed above. Advocates of language maintenance see a correlation between linguistic diversity and bio-diversity[5] (Ricento 2000:17). Related to this perspective are arguments that unequal socio-economic relations between the North and South often manifest at the linguistic level where a few languages seek to dominate the majority of other languages, simply because the patrons of these 'dominant languages' control large amounts of capital thus wielding undue power over the majority of the world's languages and populations (Ricento 2000:18). These scholars argue that there are linguistic rights just as there are other human rights. They further argue that there should be advocacy for the acceptance of language as a basic human right at both national and international levels (UNESCO 1953; Phillipson 1992:95; Kembo-Sure 2002:21-24).

Thus in the last three or so decades, sociolinguistics has gone from perceiving language as a neutral conduit of meaning, to recognising its relationship with power, to advocating for the rationalising of language policies to ensure equity in the power and resources that accrue from the

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[5] Proponents of language maintenance argue that linguistic diversity might enhance biodiversity because of the loyalties that people share to specific cultural practices and biological species.

possession, acquisition or use of different languages. Critical studies (discussed in the following section) have gone further to analyse in detail the power relations inherent in language situations as well as how individuals negotiate their way through these to be able to function as citizens. The next section therefore briefly examines critical studies work in this regard and with specific reference to the broadcast media

3.3.2   Critical studies' perceptions of the democratic significance of language

Critical political economy

Critical political economy examines the interrelationships between the distribution of material and symbolic resources (Murdock & Golding, 1989; Garnham 1995). While not discounting the importance of local contexts, it still remains important to critical political economy to establish the relative role micro and macro factors play in the process of defining reality (Murdock & Golding 1977:17). Because of the global changes dictated by the rapid growth of capitalism in the last three decades, both the state and the private sector have increased their propensity and capacity for controlling public discourse. If meaning is indeed mediated through language, then language is central in this equation, as it points to symbolic power. In the logic of critical political economy (see Chapter 2 for an elaboration of this logic), defining what meanings are in circulation constitutes an important part of one group exercising power over others.

The electronic media have taken centre-stage in political discourse in the last two decades. The structure of the global media is now such that the priority with regards to language is not so much to enhance diversity as to increase efficiency in the spread of the ideology of consumerism. The media are seen primarily not as channels for citizens to participate meaningfully in their own governance, but as means for generating income on a large scale. Efficiency and maximisation of profit for multinational corporations are of paramount importance. The languages used in the media therefore are no longer dictated by the imperatives of unifying diverse ethnic peoples and creating a sense of nation, or giving air to diverse ethnic groups to allow them maximum self expression and participation. Rather, the focus is on limiting and normalising the variety of languages in the media to enhance efficiency and the consumption of particular goods, services and ideas. The underlying priorities of this trend are increasingly reflected in communication policy (Herman & McChesney 1997:1; cf. McChesney 2000).

The literature of critical political economy addresses the close relationship between those who control cultural policies and those who wield political (and economic) power. The globalised media are implicated in this relationship. Driven by the motive of profit maximisation, the machinery of the global media has, according to McChesney (2000:100-109) established a network of 'stakeholders' that will infiltrate any process of governance (including policy-making) to ensure that the global political and economic environment remain conducive to the free movement of cultural commodities to secure the largest possible audience for cheap, homogenous cultural products (cf. Chapter 2 for a more detailed analysis of the logic of critical political economy). The English language has gained a key position in this trade in cultural commodities, and particularly for commercial media owners in the current global cultural economy, the less complicated the language equation, the better. Media owners, through networking and lobbying, ensure that favourable policies are in place to take care of their business needs, usually at the expense of the linguistic needs of the majority of the local people (cf. Herman & McChesney 1997:50-52; see Garnham 1995; Murdock & Golding 1995; Van Cuilenburg 1998; McChesney 2000; Murdock 2000).

Cultural studies perspectives on language and power

The work of cultural studies approaches questions of language from a different perspective from critical political economy in that rather than seeing language as a mere tool in the hands of the powerful to exercise power from a macro level over the relatively powerless individuals and societies, language is also seen as subject to manipulation at the micro level. Because of human agency, cultural studies argue, individuals can make choices that subvert the purposes of official language policy (Hall 1993a).

Unlike critical political economy, cultural studies treatments of language have focused more on how and why different languages are used in more specific cultural contexts, *apart from* the influence of macro forces (cf. Ricento 2000:18). Pennycook (2000:116-117) for instance, challenges the traditional totalising approach that underlies cultural imperialism arguments. He acknowledges the importance of viewing the issue of language from the point of view of the threat to local diversities, and the need to emphasise linguistic human rights. However, Ricento argues that while political-economic structures may have an impact on the roles that different languages may play, the role that a language actually plays needs to be understood in its local sociological context (cf. Spitulnik 1998:163-165). Thus, Pennycook says, 'while never losing sight of the very

real forces of global capital and media, we need at the very least, to understand the response to cultural spread and not assume its instant effects (2000:117).

Pennycook explains that this is because issues of language, language policy and people's response to language policy are complex. Apart from structural factors like policy, the element of human agency plays a major role in the choices that people make with regards to the use of the Languages of Wider Communication, like English, as well as in the use of their own languages. Thus Pennycook argues:

> …we need to understand how postcolonial subjects are not mere reflexes of colonialism and neo-colonialism but rather are resistant, hybrid beings using aspects of indigenous languages and cultures as well as colonial aspects such as English for multiple purposes (Pennycook 2000:117).

In this sense, Pennycook and other postmodernist scholars dealing with issues of language policy, planning and use attempt to move the discussion from merely seeing local peoples as victims of the hegemony of English, to seeing them as actors with the freedom to choose what to make of English and of their indigenous languages (cf. Hall 1993a; Hall 1993b; Grossberg 1995; Barker 2002). Regardless of the specific languages in question here, it is the dynamics of how languages become dominant or subservient (through policy or human agency) and the impact of this on participation in the democratic process through the media that is of interest to the current inquiry.

Language Ideology

Perhaps the most productive body of literature with regards to discussion of the relationship between language and power in the last decade has been language ideology. Schieffelin, Woolard and Kroskrity have edited a volume (1998) on language ideologies in institutions of power. This work explains that language ideology as an approach to the study of the phenomenon of language attempts to bring together the work of sociolinguistics, and that of social theory. Language ideologies are ideas about languages and their speakers, along with all the moral and political nuances underlying these ideas. As seen earlier in this chapter, the focus in researching the phenomenon of language from the 1990s to the present has expanded beyond discussions of language policy and planning as neutral, apolitical exercises, to teasing out the relationship between language and power.

The literature of language ideology, an approach that dates back to the early 1990s, sees language not as a neutral medium of meaning acting autonomously, but as being linked with power and

social inequality. Language ideology seeks to investigate what factors at the macro level constrain language practice at the micro level (Woolard 1998:17). In this literature therefore, the significance of language with regards to the media's democratic role arises not just in discussions of language attitudes, planning and development but also in discussions of power.

The earlier literature of LPP which was reviewed in this chapter suggests that for several decades, the languages of African nations were presumed to be weak. They therefore became the subject of planning, policy, standardisation and harmonisation all in an effort to make them more suitable to participate in the project of modernisation (Ricento 2000:12-13). [6]

According to Spitulnik (1998:17), underlying attitudes about which languages are inferior and which ones are superior manifest in policies that favoured or disadvantaged different linguistic groups, or, put differently, 'rankings of language continue to be invoked to regulate access of speech varieties to prestigious institutional uses and of their speakers to domains of power and privilege.' Such domains of power in modern society invariably include the media. Language use in the media constitutes one of the most commonly regulated areas of language use in many developing nations. Determining what languages may be used in the media and how can be a powerful tool of control and a way to enhance the participation of some members of society while limiting that of others. Because of how central language is to the thinking and expression of a people, it has become important for the socially powerful to dominate the arena of language. This has become even more important in the information age, where control of the production and distribution of culture is as important as political control.

Spitulnik thus asserts that the distribution of power often influences the distribution of roles for various languages. In her words:

> As mass media build the communicative space of the nation-state, all of a nation's languages, dialects, language varieties, and speech communities associated with them are automatically drawn into relations of power with one another (1998:165).

It is not unusual in multilingual settings, therefore, for some languages to have token representation in the media, or to be totally absent (Bamgbose 1991: 56, 111-112). It is important to note also how through language policy, some languages may be more closely associated with,

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[6] Some criteria for ranking languages include whether or not the language is written, whether or not it has a grammar and how developed this is by some external standard, how pure or creolised (again by some external standard) etc.

interalia, intellectual ability, rural-ness, illiteracy and sophistication in the roles they are allocated (Spitulnik 1998:166). Policy on the use of different languages in the media can thus legitimise the existence and agenda of certain groups over the existence and agenda of other groups. In Uganda, this kind of token representation is most likely to be felt in terms of how much significance English (the official language and main Language of Wider Communication) is given in the media compared to the other languages even though it is not the language of a numeric majority. Even more important for this discussion is to probe the motivation behind the policy on the use of indigenous languages specifically in the broadcast media, as well as the practical responses of Ugandans to the policy at the local level.

Spitulnik (1998:164-165) uses the phrase language 'valuations and evaluations' to refer to the process of judging the worth of different languages and assigning them roles accordingly. She says these involve processes through which different social values and referents come to be associated with language, forms and styles of speaking. Language 'valuations and evaluations' Spitulnik argues, 'obscure the historically contingent nature of language values as well as the relations of power and interest underlying them' (1998:163).

According to Spitulnik, while policies on the use of different languages may appear neutral or fair, they are often indicative of the power relations within which they arise. Spitulnik therefore concludes that the use or non-use of a specific language in a particular context is never value-free. Spitulnik's analysis of language ideologies thus makes a direct link between language, identity and power. As she puts it,

> [L]anguage ideologies are, among other things, about the construction and delimitation of power, the production of social relations of sameness and difference, and the creation of cultural stereotypes about types of speakers and social groups (Spitulnik 1998:164).

According to Spitulnik, certain types of power relations are maintained through managing language in the public domain. She acknowledges in particular the role of the media, law and education in the construction and maintenance of what she calls 'linguistic hegemonies' (Spitulnik 1998:164-165). Spitulnik acknowledges, however, that the link between language and power may not be obvious.

> As with other kinds of ideologies, language ideologies tend to be naturalising and universalising, disguising the conditions of their own production and their intimate and often strategic ties to power, interest and the creation of cultural value (1998:164).

The current inquiry explores the relationships between language and power at both the micro and macro levels. In subsequent chapters, language ideologies that underlie policy on indigenous language broadcasting in Uganda are explored. Of particular interest is the inclination of the policy on language use in education towards an emphasis on minimising 'linguistic divisiveness', and maximising 'national unity' through language (The policy on language in education is discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of this thesis).

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter, a continuation of Chapter 2, has reviewed literature relating language to power. The early literature of sociolinguistics throws some light on key language problems arising especially in multilingual nations. Later, the literature of LPP emerging especially from developing nations points out the dangers of marginalising the local languages, and the impact of this on sectors like education. This literature however has been challenged for ignoring the aspect of power in official and non-official language activity. Later work in the area of LPP, especially from the perspective of critical studies brings out the relationship between language and power. Critical political economy in particular discusses language as a key resource for participation, which has been subjected to the manipulations of capitalist expansion. In the process of this manipulation, particularly through policy, critical political economy sees a link with the systematic legitimisation and de-legitimisation of the existence and agendas of different sectors of society. The media become important in this discussion because just as they can be important vehicles of democracy, they are also arenas for the politics of language. The rampant commercialisation of the media is increasingly seen as the driving force behind cultural policy. The emphasis of cultural policy therefore tends to be whatever will most enhance the success of the global capitalist media system. Linguistic diversity easily becomes one of the casualties of this trend.

Cultural studies takes a slightly different approach from traditional sociolinguistics, arguing that although macro structures may play a role in the legitimisation and de-legitimisation of different sectors of society, questions of language are best examined in their specific socio-historical contexts. It is here that the finer details of how individuals respond to attempts to use language in the interests of power can be seen, as people create their own sites and forms of resistance to this power. The central argument of cultural studies has therefore been that human agency is what determines the effect of the machinations of power (even symbolic power), notwithstanding macro level politics and people's socio-economic conditions.

The literature of language ideology seeks to analyse the ways in which different languages are given or denied power in apparently neutral or benevolent environments, and the impact of this on communities. The literature of language ideology therefore is key in bringing together aspects of the older versions of sociolinguistics with both critical political economy and cultural studies perspectives on language and power.

In most of the literature reviewed in this chapter, what does emerge clearly is that language is not a neutral medium but is prone to different types of manipulation to satisfy different interests. What goes on in the process of policy-making in the area of language, how these goings on are perceived by different sectors of society, and the implications of this for understanding the relationship between the broadcast media, indigenous languages and democracy in Uganda is the concern of the rest of this discussion. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 consist of an examination of the context for citizen participation in Uganda's broadcast media.

CHAPTER 4

4.0   THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN UGANDA'S BROADCAST MEDIA

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The first three chapters have given an overview of the thesis and laid out the theoretical and methodological framework within which this thesis was conceived. The current chapter (Chapter 4) outlines elements in Uganda's history that have influenced the ordinary person's opportunities for participation in democratic debate and in the democratic process. A fundamental argument of the chapter is that the availability of indigenous language programming on the broadcast media has the potential to enhance meaningful participation in public debate, and thus the development of a public sphere or 'public spheres' within which issues of governance may be debated and policies shaped. For this potential to be realised, though, not only is there a need for constitutionally protected political freedoms, especially the right of association, but also for the media environment to be free and diverse in key aspects such as ownership and content. The chapter thus presents a synopsis of Uganda's political history and analyses the political, economic and cultural context within which the broadcast media in Uganda operate. The key question the chapter sets out to address is: What are the key political, economic and cultural factors in Uganda's history that have had a bearing on the ordinary person's capacity to participate in public debate through the broadcast media? The next two chapters (Chapters 5 and 6) address the history, structure and operation of the broadcast media in Uganda (with a focus on radio) as well as the regulatory environment for participation in Uganda's broadcast media.

4.2   THE BROADCAST MEDIA, LANGUAGE AND PARTICIPATION PARTNERSHIP

The opportunities of Ugandans to participate in their governance through critiquing and making an input in government policy have been limited by a number of factors. These include poverty, low levels of education, and lack of basic access to the means of participation. They have also

been limited by governments which have proscribed freedom of expression and association by varying means and to different degrees since the early twentieth century.

The essence of citizen participation lies in involving citizens in activities which enable them to communicate their preferences, demands, interests, needs, collective problems and aspirations and to seek redress from those in charge of public policy. As Mwesige argues, the ultimate goal of participation is democratisation (Mwesige 2004:7, 22). Mwesige points out though that in investigating participation, scholars in the social sciences have focused on electoral and associational participation, often leaving out an important aspect: mediated participation. Mwesige proposes that the two should be examined side-by-side.

In underlining the importance of participation for the process of democratisation, Mwesige argues that participation was traditionally seen as limited to instrumental action performed with a view to obtaining a specific personal or policy outcome (cf. Conway 1985:10). He however adds that though people sometimes participate for its own sake, they in the process gain the skills to participate for instrumental purposes (Mwesige 2004:23; cf. UNDP 2002:52). This is often the case with participation in the broadcast media, which is why opportunities for participation in and through the broadcast media should be seen as part of a wider democratisation agenda.

According to Mwesige (2004:23), participation is important because through participating in the political process, citizens can decide who forms government and how they are governed. They can have their voice heard and their interests can be represented in public life. Participation facilitates accountability as well as communication between the governors and the governed. Finally, participation is important as an end in itself. However, Mwesige cautions that citizen participation can be manipulated unless there is also genuine political competition; and that participation without competition may not enhance democratisation. Thus, depending on the factors in the socio-political environment, there can be 'actual' or 'illusory' participation. According to Pateman (1970:71) participation is only genuine if it takes place in the context of other political freedoms, notably freedom of expression and association. Actual participation is linked to upward flow of influence to shape public policy. Indeed, Pateman goes further to argue that real participation is always linked to equal power for all participants to determine the outcome of decisions, though the practicability of Pateman's suggestion remains questionable.

The availability of programming in the indigenous languages has a bearing on the chances of genuine citizen participation through the media. However, the efficacy of this participation is closely related to the environment within which the media operate. Therefore if policy, like law, rewards the vigilant, exclusion based on language (or grounded in language policy) may have real consequences in denying this capacity (cf. Bucy & Gregson 2001). In a situation where there is no unifying language and the official language is the preserve of a limited group with the benefit of formal education, the indigenous languages are crucial in ensuring that information about public policy is two-way (top to bottom and bottom to top). Media that reach the average citizen, are affordable to them and operate in languages that they can relate to are crucial in enhancing the capacity for actual participation.

Looking at the Ugandan context, Anderson and Kibenge (2004:4-5) put it this way:

> In development, the media can potentially become a platform through which the true stakeholders of development (ordinary Ugandans) can influence the development process. Misconceptions of development can be highlighted and potentially addressed and views can be understood and possibly accommodated. Public debate in the media, if done effectively, reaches mass audiences, provides a voice for the ordinary Ugandans and in effect contributes to democratizing development. This role is particularly important in Development [sic], which is often misunderstood by the beneficiaries and the wider public and requires public involvement and support to be truly effective.

However, Kirevu and Ngabirano (2005:22) observe that the issue of languages used in the media is perhaps the biggest problem to the Ugandan media industry mostly because Uganda does not have any common language. Though Kirevu and Ngabirano's conclusion may appear a little simplistic, it is true that the issue of a 'unifying' language has pre-occupied the Ugandan people since colonial times and pervades debate on the use of the various languages of Uganda in the public domain. In the discourse on language, opinion has been divided. There is a section of Ugandans who see Uganda's greatest language priority as the identification of a common (national) language. Then there is another section which advocates for the development of some or all of the local languages with equal emphasis. The latters' argument is that selecting any one indigenous national language would unnecessarily polarise the multi-ethnic Ugandan population. Then there is another section which holds that selecting a regional language like Kiswahili, which

has been proposed several times in Uganda's history,[1] would be detrimental to local cultures and unacceptable to those Ugandans who associate Kiswahili with Islamisation or military oppression (see Chapter 6 for a detailed analysis of the language policy debate in Uganda).

4.3   A HISTORY OF PARTICIPATION IN UGANDA[2]

For purposes of this discussion, the political history of Uganda will be discussed using the following periodisation:

- Participation in pre-colonial Ugandan societies (up to 1894)
- Colonialism, indirect rule and participation (1894-1962)
- Early post-independence and the foundation for participatory democracy at the national level (1962-1967)
- From participatory politics to dictatorship (1967-1986)
- The re-birth of participatory politics and its mixed fortunes (1986-present)

4.3.1   Participation in pre-colonial Ugandan societies (up to 1894)

Many histories of postcolonial societies tend to paint a rosy picture of pre-colonial times, and Karugire (1980) falls into this trap. Both Karugire (1980:15) and Kabwegyere (1995:20-45) agree that many societies in present day Uganda had relatively simple political organisational set-ups. The ruling ethos was communal rather than individualistic. Political leaders were expected to ensure the welfare of all subjects at all times, and especially difficult times. Even landlords were magnanimous rather than exploitative. Up to the coming of colonial rule, the clan continued to be the most effective unit of political and economic association.

Most societies that were later brought together under colonial rule to constitute Uganda were segmentary. They had limited political goals and relatively simple political structures. Personal relations were central to political structures. Hence, as Karugire states, 'the clan head knew his

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[1] Kiswahili was proposed as the lingua franca for the East African Federation in the 1930s. Amin declared Kiswahili the national language in 1973 but never followed the policy up. The Ugandan parliament recently passed Kiswahili as a second official language alongside English.

[2] This section relies heavily on four major works on the history of Uganda, as they were deemed to cover the most pertinent issues relating to participation and together provide an accurate and balanced picture. These are Karugire, SR. 1980. *A political history of Uganda*. Nairobi: Heinemann; Karugire, SR. 1988. *Roots of Instability in Uganda*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.; Kabwegyere, TB. 1995. *The politics of state formation and destruction in Uganda*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers and Mamdani, M. 1997. *Citizen and subject: decentralized despotism and the legacy of late colonialism*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

clansmen and he was related to them…. There was no need to develop institutions against the abuse of political power' (Karugire 1980:16).

Kabwegyere (1995:19-20) however adds that the pre-colonial period was characterised by diversity in social scale and organisation. The powerful kingdoms such as Buganda and Bunyoro had standing armies and were involved in military exploits against their neighbours. Then there were other kingdoms that were amalgamated to form Nkore and the principalities that came to form Busoga. Finally, there was the Kingdom of Tooro which had seceded from Bunyoro around 1830 (cf. Karugire 1980:42). The rest of Uganda's societies were organised in small, segmentary communities.

At this point, contact between 'distant' communities was limited because communication systems were relatively undeveloped. These segmentary societies therefore found identity in a common culture and language and built their communal identity around these. Hence the Langi, Lugbara, Karimojong, Bakiga, Iteso, Bagisu, Sebei and so on (see Addendum 1a. Ethnic map of Uganda) each had their own form of political organisation and a sense of belonging together. According to Karugire, the clan was the largest political unit and there were no sophisticated bureaucratic arrangements. What obtained in most of these societies was a decentralised democracy, run by elders (Karugire 1980:17).

By the advent of colonialism, Buganda was the largest and strongest kingdom in Uganda. Buganda had a strong culture of patronage based on land. Conquest gave the king a free hand in appointments, and, together with the chiefs he appointed, controlled all land in the kingdom (Karugire 1980:21-23; Kabwegyere 1995:21-22; cf. Mamdani 1997). Typically, the population in Buganda was agrarian and land holding and usage were intimately linked to the holding of political office. Hence there were clear links between economic interest and political authority and this gave the society political and social cohesion (Karugire 1980:24).

The political organisation in the rest of Uganda was diverse. Bunyoro's organisation was similar to Buganda's and they were, in many ways, political rivals. The kingdom of Nkore in Western Uganda, on the other hand, was typified by a loose system of administration. Whereas land was the currency of patronage in Buganda, in Ankole it was cattle. One's ability to become a leader

was tied to how many head of cattle he/she owned. There was thus a clear link between wealth and power in Buganda and in Nkore.

In Acholi in Northern Uganda, the political arrangement was dominated by the role of elders. Consensus was central to the politics of Acholi and neighbouring communities in Northern Uganda. Similarly, Karamoja whose population was nomadic was also ruled by a council of elders (Karugire 1980:23-24).

In the southern part of present-day Uganda, particularly Kigezi, the societies there had different, and less organised power structures, and were dogged by power struggle and conflict. Nkore also experienced constant class conflict based on the Bahima (pastoralist) and Bairu (agriculturalist) differentiation. It is important to note that Buganda took advantage of all this and eventually rose to be the most powerful society in Uganda (Karugire 1980, 1988; Kabwegyere 1995; Mamdani 1997).

While we note the variety in political organisation among these societies, it is significant to observe also that each community was bound by a common language and culture on the whole and that kinship and dialogue played a key role in the politics of pre-colonial Ugandan communities. Most communities were self-sufficient and there was little interaction with other communities. There were also few opportunities for commodity exchange until the advent of Arabic and European traders and the introduction of a cash economy in the late nineteenth century. For most pre-colonial Ugandan societies, the system of governance revolved around elders and chiefs and was essentially top-down in character. The ordinary people had little say in their governance (Mamdani 1997:42).

4.3.2   Colonialism, indirect rule and participation (1894-1962)

Prior to British colonisation of Uganda, Ugandans had had interactions with outsiders. The Arabs had been involved in slave trade in East African coast as early as the 18th century. As the strategic importance of Uganda to the super-powers became more evident, however, it became increasingly necessary for European powers to demarcate spheres of influence. This decision was characterised by growing conflict in the region that made it difficult for the imperial powers to operate.

Karugire argues that British imperialism was extended over Uganda in three phases spanning the period 1860 to 1900. The first phase involved explorers, like John Hannigton Speke and James

Grant who came in search of the source of the Nile in 1862. The second phase involved the early missionaries. These arrived starting 1887, and consisted of Protestant missionaries backed by the British government, and Catholic missionaries backed by the French. The third phase involved the colonial administrators.

The reasons for Britain's occupation of Uganda were not philanthropic but strategic (Karugire 1980:52-53). They needed access to the coast and ultimately to India from neighbouring Congo and the Sudan where they had developed significant economic interests. This motivation had a bearing on the political systems that the British established in Uganda (Karugire 1988:7-18; Kabwegyere 1995:49-67; Mamdani 1997:37-39).

Karugire (1980:62, 1988:8-13) and Kabwegyere (1995:49-50) are agreed that the arrival of Catholic and Protestant missionaries between 1887 and 1879 marked the start of the colonisation of Uganda. Missionaries were central to the transition from traditional life to colonialism. Once the missionaries came in, a new set of dynamics involving trade, religion and power came into play. The Baganda kings in particular became valuable allies both in terms of increasing the number of converts for the various religious denominations and for the lucrative trade in arms that was taking place in the Eastern Africa region at the time.[3] The period between 1860 and 1900 was therefore characterised by religious wars and shifts in the balance of power particularly between the Catholics and the Protestants. By the 1880s, for instance, there had been several armed conflicts between Muslims and Christians as well as, among Christians, between Catholics and Protestants.

The first Christian converts in Buganda were chiefs and pages and these were to eventually become bargaining chips in the unfolding of indirect rule. Furthermore, the tensions among the colonial powers (the French and the British) abroad played themselves out in local politics as the French backed the Catholics and the British the Protestants, and each tried to win as many converts as possible and secure their place in key administrative posts.

So the political battle lines in colonial Uganda were drawn at three levels: British against French; European against Arab world and Christian against Muslim. As these complex tensions intensified, local leaders, feeling a loss of control resorted to desperate measures such as

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[3] It is important to note also that from the outset Buganda, being large, internally organised, cohesive, and culturally homogenous, was in a better bargaining position than neighbouring communities vis-a-vis the foreigners.

assassinating missionaries and their agents. Hence Bishop Hannington and the Uganda martyrs were assassinated on the orders of Kabaka[4] Mwanga of Buganda in 1886. Following the massacres, missionaries decided to establish a political base, and internally reform Buganda to make their future work more acceptable. They in particular aimed at influencing appointments to key political positions. As this happened, it tipped the balance of powers as converts felt more accountable to missionaries and to God than to the King (Karugire 1980:66-67).

It is important to note that the indigenous languages were a crucial tool for the missionaries in communicating their message at this point in Uganda's history and that they embarked on an aggressive campaign to translate the Bible into the local languages to better reach their target groups, the majority of whom were illiterate. Through religious conversion, it was easy to secure the local people's political allegiance. The Christian missionaries shunned Kiswahili which, though it was taking root as the *lingua franca* in Kenya and Tanzania, was closely associated with the rival Islamic faith as it was said to have strong roots in Arabic (Kabwegyere 1995:188-197).

According to Karugire (1980:68-69) the religious wars of the 1880s and 1890s had pitted Muslims against Christians, and used local leaders as pawns. The wars were not aimed at merely preserving the Catholic or the Christian faith, but gaining political control of Buganda, a view which is confirmed by Kabwegyere (1995:67). The effect of these wars was in particular to weaken Buganda and render her vulnerable to manipulation by the colonial interests. Thus these religious wars that saw kings deposed and puppets installed demonstrated that religious affiliation would be foundational to political organisation in Uganda (Karugire 1980:70; Kabwegyere 1995: 67-68).

During this period the Christians and Muslims sometimes forged a union to fight a common enemy only to revert to their original adversarial position. On this point, Karugire opines,

> It is from this period that one can date the preponderance of opportunism over principle in the management of public affairs in Uganda – a preponderance that is still with us today (Karugire 1980:71; cf. Mamdani 1997:56-57).

The Berlin Conference and the colonisation of Uganda

By the beginning of the 19th century, interest in Africa had grown among the imperial powers and the potential for conflict over territory was increasing. Against this background, the major

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[4] The Luganda word for 'King.'

imperial powers of the time, namely, Britain, France and Germany held the Berlin Conference in Germany in 1884-1885 to demarcate for themselves spheres of influence. At this conference, Britain, France and Germany apportioned themselves spheres of influence based more on their politico-economic interests than on the ethno-cultural make-up of the peoples whose land they sought to share out. The conference was followed by the establishment of British rule through a combination of economic manoeuvres via the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) headed by William Mackinnon, and a series of mostly manipulative agreements signed with local leaders who barely understood the content of the agreements which were typically drafted in English (Karugire 1980:72; Kabwegyere 1995:59-61).

When the Anglo-German Heligoland Treaty that declared Uganda a British 'protectorate' was signed in 1890, Captain Lugard was sent to Uganda as the first fully accredited representative of the IBEAC. He was charged with securing a treaty with Buganda, one of the most powerful politico-cultural units in the region at the time (Karugire 1980:76). The British signed a treaty with Kabaka Mwanga on 29th May, 1893, with the latter accepting British 'protection' over the people of Buganda and surrendering their right to levy and spend taxes. Uganda was officially declared a protectorate in 1894. After the decision to make Uganda a colony of the British, the annexation of other parts falling within the boundaries of Uganda demarcated at the Berlin Conference (see Addendum 1b. Districts of Uganda before independence) proceeded swiftly, with responses from the locals ranging from passivity (as in the case of Busoga) to stiff resistance (as in the case of Bunyoro). In any case, the British succeeded in signing 'agreements' with the leaderships of all parts of Uganda by a variety of tactics. Tactics employed included negotiation, propping up embattled leaders against local adversaries and then extracting concessions from them (Tooro), and protracted battles (Bunyoro) (Karugire 1980:76; Mutibwa 1992:2-5).

The advent of the British in Uganda and the establishment of British rule had a far-reaching impact on the structure and functioning of Ugandan governance structures. Starting in 1892, five years after the first missionaries set foot in Uganda, Ugandan societies had been polarised along religio-political lines, notably between the French Catholics and the British Protestants. Buganda in particular had become a pawn in this game as chiefs were appointed and sacked, and kings deposed and re-instated to achieve political ends on the pretext of their religious beliefs. For instance, on 24th January, 1892 there had been an outbreak of fighting between the Protestants and Catholics in Buganda with the British colonial rulers siding with the Protestants. The Catholics had fled *en masse* to Buddu and Bulingugwe (both counties of Buganda). The political vacuum

that had ensued in Mengo had given the British an excuse to lure back Kabaka Mwanga (the King of Buganda who they had earlier sent into exile for non-cooperation), from exile. The British had thus signed an agreement with Mwanga that essentially ceded away any claims that Buganda had to independence. Mwanga's power had in this same stroke, significantly been reduced (Karugire 1980:81; Kabwegyere 1995:67). This form of manipulation was replayed in Toro, Nkore, Kigezi and other parts of Uganda as the British consolidated their position in Buganda. Of significance here is the fact that many of the deals cut between the British and the Ugandan people did not involve any participation from the ordinary Ugandan. They were settled between the British agents and cooperative local leaders.

It is important to note that at the time the British concretised their control of Buganda, all religious converts belonged not just to a faith, but an accompanying political conviction. However, Karugire argues that deep down, the basis for political association remained the clan, and religion was just the 'official excuse' (Karugire 1980:101). It is also important to note that while the British downplayed the ethnic factor and sought to link political affiliation to religious affiliation, ethnicity was at least as prominent as religion in the period leading up to Uganda's independence. This became evident towards 1961 as people like Ignatius Musaazi[5] were shunned by their fellow Baganda for trying to establish a national rather than ethnic-based party (Karugire 1980:195).

The character of indirect rule and implications for participation

Perhaps the most significant pre-independence agreement in the history of Uganda was the Buganda Agreement of 1900. This agreement, signed between the British and Buganda's Kabaka Chwa who was four years old at the time contained four broad categories of provisions: provisions to define Buganda's subordination; provisions to define new administrative arrangements; financial provisions; and general provisions. The gist of the Buganda Agreement of 1900 was to reduce the power of the locals over their own affairs to a minimum, and maximize the power of the British. It is instructive to note that the English version of the agreement, not the Luganda one, would be binding on both parties (even though none of the Baganda signatories to the agreement understood English) (Karugire 1980:102-105; Kabwegyere 1995:75-79; Mamdani 1997:141-142).

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[5] The founder of the Uganda National Congress, Uganda's first national party.

The British proceeded to establish their administrative system, known as indirect rule, over the rest of Eastern, Western and eventually Northern Uganda with the aid of some local collaborators, notably Chief Semei Kakungulu (from Buganda). Where there was resistance, as in the Kingdom of Bunyoro in Western Uganda, the British used their Baganda allies to fight it and applied brute force to suppress such resistance (Karugire 1980:109-116; Kabwegyere 1995:61-67).

In 1919 the Native Authority Ordinance came into force with the purpose of demarcating powers, duties and privileges of African chiefs in all areas of the colony except Buganda, thus legitimising indirect rule (cf. Mamdani 1997:109-137 for a comprehensive treatment of the establishment of indirect rule in Uganda). The British appointed Baganda chiefs to administer parts of Uganda outside Buganda territory, largely under the supervision of Chief Semei Kakungulu. This was contrary to tradition as chiefs were normally natives of the areas which they administered and were appointed by local authorities. It is important to note here that wherever Baganda agents went, they not only introduced the centralised Ganda model of administration which the British considered expedient, but they also launched a vigorous campaign to sell the Luganda language through the school system.

The chiefs engaged in various means of extortion to supplement their income. They were given wide-ranging powers in maintaining law and order, preventing commission of crimes, arresting of offenders, prohibiting the carrying of arms by Africans and conscripting free labour for public projects. African chiefs were answerable not to their people, but directly to the colonial government. It has been argued that the British went overboard in the powers they gave to African chiefs. On the whole, the local chiefs imposed by the British ruled with an iron hand yet politics at the grassroots at this time in Uganda's history was all but participatory. With time, resentment developed among the locals both for the administrative system and the Luganda language which they were forced to learn. All the above as well as the fused power of the chiefs gave rise to resistance (Karugire 1980:124-125; Mamdani 1997:59-61). Many times the centralised Ganda model of administration was in direct contradiction with existing segmentary models. This made it difficult for Baganda agents to collect taxes and to administer (Mamdani 1997:59-61). The Ganda system of administration based on authoritarian 'foreign' chiefs was also difficult to sell to areas like Karamoja. These were pastoralists who were used to a nomadic life and rule by local elders. Karamoja rebelled against the Baganda chiefs and in 1923, Sir Geoffrey Archer set up a new policy on governance of Karamoja that was to open the way for the administration of other parts of the country. Attempts were made to rectify the situation in Karamoja, which included involving

local elders in the appointment of chiefs. The British thus woke up to the need to be culturally sensitive in imposing their administration, and allowing for some degree of participation in people's governance (Karugire 1980:26; 1988:40-42; Mamdani 1997:165-168).

British rule and the ethnic factor in Uganda's political history

The notion of participation under British rule was complicated by the ethnic dynamics in Uganda's history. By 1918 the Uganda 'protectorate' had taken shape and by 1921, all areas of Uganda were under colonial administration. However, as Karugire puts it,

> Uganda had finally been given definite territorial boundaries but not a national identity…The societies which made up Uganda were nowhere near becoming homogenous (Karugire 1980:121; cf. Kabwegyere 1995:86).

Kabwegyere (1995:144-145) observes that the British established an administrative system which engendered competition rather than cooperation among the different parts of Uganda. Because of the different ways in which the British had negotiated or forced their way into the different parts of Uganda, they failed to establish a common policy for administering the different districts that they created as administrative units. There were, for instance, major disparities in access to social services such as education, where the Northern region was as severely marginalised as the Central (Buganda) region was privileged. This, according to Kabwegyere (1995:190-197), gave rise to mutual suspicion, uneven development and a tendency for the different districts to defend a separate autonomy. The emphasis was placed on each district's vertical relationship with the centre rather than with horizontal relationships with other districts. This phenomenon is at the heart of the role of the ethnic factor in Uganda's political history, and has featured prominently in what is known as the 'language debate' in Uganda where one of the recurrent arguments has been that many of Uganda's political problems may be attributed to her lack of a 'unifying language' and to the tendency for each ethnic group to see itself as a separate entity rather than an integral part of Uganda (cf. Chapter 7 for a full discussion of the language debate).

Kabwegyere identifies a further problem with the manner in which Uganda was 'put together' by the British. The British, in their effort to divide and rule privileged Buganda which later made the administration of all areas of Uganda on equitable terms difficult. Apart from the fact that Buganda was already well endowed with fertile land at the time of British occupation, scholars have argued that the position of Buganda as agents of British administration enabled them to acquire wealth which they re-invested in Buganda. Social services and the physical infrastructure

in Buganda were superior to those of all other regions. Entebbe, the seat of the colonial government and Kampala which rapidly developed into a city were both located in Buganda. Buganda's privileged position has come up in the language debate as Luganda has been proposed as a possible national language or *lingua franca* but has repeatedly been rejected by non-Baganda as symbolic of the Baganda's 'superiority complex'. An extension of this debate has been that Uganda's failure to coalesce around a strong unit such as Buganda in spite of (or because of) the special role accorded to it by the British due to its collaboration with British colonialism has made the local (and therefore ethnic rather than national) level the legitimate forum for political expression and identity. This loyalty to the District (the local administrative unit), which often coincided with the ethnic group, has been enhanced by a number of other factors namely:

- The tax system that pitted one district against another based on their revenue collections, which created rivals rather than partners among the districts;

- The colonial government's construction of district leaders and chiefs as custodians of custom and tradition, which the British preferred to distance themselves from;

- The localisation of social service provision[6] which intensified feelings of 'them' against 'us', rooted in what Mamdani has called 'politically enforced ethnic pluralism' (1997:7). This ensured that each ethnic group in the colony developed as a separate unit; and

- The different ethnic units' pre-occupation with what the Baganda have termed '*ebyaffe*' (our things).[7]

It is instructive to note that the issue of separate development versus developing together as a nation has surfaced each time the national language has been debated in the public domain in Uganda. Whereas indirect rule was ideally supposed to allow local institutions to evolve along their inherited traditions, the reality was that it uprooted the very foundation of these societies. For instance, as Karugire (1980:117-118) argues, in establishing a deliberative *Lukiiko* in Buganda, and a class of land owners not dependent on the Kabaka, indirect rule ate away at the Kabaka's traditional powers. But as Karugire notes, in order for colonial rule to be effective, it had to subvert the existing indigenous centres of authority and governance rather than enhance them.

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[6] During the colonial times, education certificates bore the name of one's home district, and ethnicity was an issue when one sought employment outside their home district. In addition, migrant workers from the same district were deliberately housed together.

[7] 'Ebyaffe' in Luganda means 'our things', and connotes those aspects of their politics, culture and economy that the Baganda cherish, that distinguish them from other Ugandans, and that they see no reason for sharing with the rest of Uganda.

The Second World War (1939-1945) constituted a turning point in the character of colonialism in Uganda. After the Second World War, returning servicemen who had shared their experiences of oppression with other servicemen from Africa and Asia were seen as potential agitators. The Resident Administrative Officer of Buganda, recommended that returning Ugandan servicemen be re-settled in their areas of ethnic origin rather than be allowed to settle in the capital city (Karugire 1980:151-168; Kabwegyere 1995:184). The point was that if these people were kept apart in their separate areas of ethnic origin, there was less likelihood that they would become agitators. This notwithstanding, demand for self-rule began to take shape in Uganda after the Second World War. Ugandans began to agitate for self government, greater control of the economy, the right to choose their own leaders and more racial equality.

Anticipating the wave of change that was likely to follow both locally and on the international scene after the war, the British took some pre-emptive moves towards loosening their grip on the politics of their colony. These included the promulgation of the 1949 Local Government Ordinance. The new policy gave corporate powers and responsibilities to the district councils of those areas where no agreements had been signed with the British. It also empowered the British Governor to establish a district council in any part of the colony by proclamation and delimit their powers and functions. In addition, the governor could set up provincial councils to consider matters affecting their provinces. However, these were to be consultative bodies. They could not pass laws or bylaws.

According to Karugire (1980:127) this marked the beginning of tribally based administration in Uganda. Care had been taken in drawing boundaries to limit the population in each district to one tribe. This was successful in most districts except West-Nile, Bukedi and Kigezi which were already ethnically heterogeneous. District councils were also tribally based. Each district functioned independently and mostly oblivious of other units. As Karugire (1980:28) observes,

> [T]his reluctance to foster the growth of territorial or national organs of government and the promotion of parochial ones does not seem to have been wholly accidental on the part of the colonial administration (cf. Kabwegyere 1995:139-169; Mamdani 1997:7,16-18).

Separation of the African communities was integral to the consolidation of British rule. Efforts of district leaders to meet with fellow district leaders from other areas were squelched (Ibingira 1973:27; Karugire 1980:128; Mamdani 1996:16-18). The differentiation sometimes took subtle forms. A case in point is the language policy that the British put in place. English was made the official language and it served to unify the emerging elite and the colonialists in addition to

serving administrative purposes. It should be noted that none of the indigenous languages was accorded any special status. Rather, all the languages were left to continue serving their respective ethnic communities. It could be argued that this arrangement has in fact also contributed to the growth of insular nationalism. This raises some important questions: If language is crucial to the development of a public sphere, and the media are important channels as well as sites for deliberation, is it possible that having a 'policy' that accords the English language official status and leaves the indigenous languages to develop spontaneously and individually (as is the case in Uganda today) leaves little room for the development of an indigenous Ugandan public sphere? Does such a 'policy' instead pave the way for the development of several ethnically based public spheres? And is it likely that this could be reinforced by the existing media and regulatory regime? These questions are addressed in chapters 5, 6 and 7 of this thesis.

Economic constraints on participation under British rule

Economic considerations were fundamental to the colonial project. The British territories abroad were key sources of raw materials for industries at home. It was policy that at the very least they had to raise enough resources to support their administration. While ostensibly this was the reason for the introduction of cash crops like coffee and cotton on a compulsive basis, the underlying drive was for the production of raw materials for European industries. Cotton was first planted in Buganda in 1903. Cotton growing was given much needed force by Buganda's capacity for conscripting free labour. According to Karugire (1980:130), by the financial year 1915/1916, high exports in cotton had made grants in aid unnecessary. Cotton growing spread to Northern Uganda (where it was especially successful) and was superintended over mostly by Baganda chiefs. Other cash crops introduced included tea and coffee.

Karugire (1980:128-130) contends that the success of cotton proved that agriculture could succeed without European ownership, supervision or coercion. An important development after the introduction of cash crops and the development of a cash economy was the creation of migrant wage labour in Kigezi and West Nile. Migrants went to areas that had mines and other vibrant economic activity (such as Buganda). This led to a highly multilingual Buganda, a situation that still obtains today. Opportunities for interaction through trade were limited as manufactured goods made available by the British to Asian businessmen reduced the need for this kind of contact. This further promoted the growth of insular nationalism. This was because for nearly sixty years no Ugandan ethnic group needed its neighbour for anything. Furthermore, British colonial policy had removed the African traders from the market and replaced them with Asians. Besides, the cash

economy intensified pluralism at another level. While the Africans were compelled to produce cash crops, they were denied the opportunity to own processing plants. The Africans were instead linked to the eventual buyers of their produce, middlemen who were largely Asian (Karugire 1980:146-147; Karugire 1988:28-29; Kabwegyere 1995:94-98). On the whole the involvement of the average Ugandan in determining their political or economic destiny was not only greatly eroded by indirect rule, but also often confined to their ethnic groupings. This confined Ugandans' consciousness and practice.

In Ankole in Western Uganda, the cattle keepers (Bahima) and the agriculturalists (Bairu) had co-existed and had developed internal mechanisms of upward/downward social mobility to take care of the needs of both groups. The colonial administration and imposition of a foreign system of governance disrupted this. The British picked on the Bahima to favour with education opportunities which were linked to employment in the much coveted civil service, and to promotions. By the 1940s, the Bairu were uneasy with their marginalisation (Karugire 1980:139)

The British administration marginalised other sections of the population outside Buganda in terms of economic and social benefits. For instance, the people of Acholi and Lango had been encouraged to grow cotton but they were not facilitated with its transportation. As such, they gradually gave this up and concentrated on exporting labour. There was hardly any provision for education in Northern Uganda, because the British had decided that the Northerners were too backward to benefit from schools (Kabwegyere 1995:157-159; Mutibwa 1992:9; Karugire 1980:140-141). Hence throughout the colonial period, Northern Uganda remained a source of wage labour and recruitment for the army. Having been turned into a labour reservoir like Kigezi and West Nile, the region was thus denied schools and other social services.

Some people were able to participate in their governance through their local councils in their languages but deliberation at national level was in English, which left out the majority. It is significant to note, therefore, that even as opportunities began to open up for Ugandans to participate in their governance, the majority of Ugandans who did not possess a Western education were relegated to the position of spectators rather than active participants (Karugire 1980:144; Kabwegyere 1995:157-159).

With time, several groups in the country began to feel that they were denied access to economic and political power by the colonialists (Karugire 1980:134; Mutibwa 1992:12-13). Apart from the

lower classes in the various ethnic groups, others included the Catholics, the Muslims, and the *Bataka* (traditional Baganda chiefs who had lost land rights and the accompanying influence to new colonial chiefs). Whereas most training for leadership was in Protestant schools, Catholic and Muslim children had limited opportunities for being enrolled there. This educational system largely determined who was most likely to be appointed to key positions in local government. Many Muslims, for instance, became butchers and taxi drivers for lack of alternatives. To date some of these inequalities have not been fully redressed.

The impact of Western cultural values on participation

British rule introduced some cultural changes that upset the political equilibrium in the period leading up to Uganda's independence. The introduction of formal education, for instance, created a gap between those who were able to access it and those who were not. At the political level, the impact of this gap is described thus by Karugire (1980:144),

> The introduction of Western education and values had effectively disenfranchised those who, for one reason or another, did not get that education so that for the uneducated populace-something in the region of 80% or so of the population-were largely spectators rather than active participants in the events leading to the granting of independence.

Karugire goes on to say that all leaders of the political parties which were formed in the 1950s in preparation for the first national elections were people with a Western education. A number of traditionalists were also unhappy about the way new religions seemed to be luring young people away from their traditional beliefs and ways of life. Often conversion was accompanied by what 'elders' perceived as a lack of regard for traditional authority (the traditional chiefs were portrayed as pagans by the missionaries, converts and administrators). Relatedly, the Buganda parliament (*Lukiiko*), which hitherto had no room for challenging the authority of the Kabaka, became peopled by Christian converts. Conversion often came with opportunities for formal Western education, which lent the converts even more courage to challenge traditional authority.

Other causes of political unrest in Buganda were the loss of traditional burial grounds in the British re-distribution of land which dispossessed traditional chiefs (Bataka) and endowed a small group of Baganda with square miles of land (Karugire 1980:137, 138, 222). The disgruntlement of different sections of Ugandan society played itself out in repeated cases of civil disturbance between the 1940s and the 1960s.

The role of ethnicity in pre-independence political organisation

Ethnicity was a key ingredient in the political dynamics of the period leading up to Uganda's independence, and it defined who could participate in important political discourse and at what level. Talk of an East African federation had begun as early as the 1930s and language was at the centre of this talk. At that time, there was a move to promote Kiswahili as the East African *lingua franca* for economic and administrative expediency. According to Kabwegyere (1995:190-191) such a high premium was placed on knowledge of Kiswahili that it was made one of the subjects one had to pass to be recruited into the civil service and passing the Kiswahili examination was linked to promotion and pay rises in the key sectors such as education and nursing. The other such languages were English and Luganda.

In the meantime, the *Mau Mau* movement[8] in Kenya was gaining ground and while the Ugandans supported their Kenyan neighbours' struggle, availing their territory as training ground, the British were weary of the possibility of the *Mau Mau* spirit spreading to other territories and saw language as a possible way for the Kenyans and their Ugandan counterparts to forge 'subversive' links (Kabwegyere 1995:189-191).

In 1928 the Education Departments policy on teaching language stated that children in the first four years of school should be taught in their mother–tongue with Kiswahili as a subject. Kiswahili would later take over as the medium of instruction. It should be noted though that the Department of Education exempted Buganda and Bunyoro, the most cohesive and well organised kingdoms in Uganda, from compliance to this policy. These two were given the liberty to evolve their own language policy. Efforts were made to have a uniform Kiswahili orthography throughout East Africa. However this policy was opposed by Christian clergy who saw Kiswahili as the language of Islam.

In 1933, a meeting of governors for Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika agreed that Kiswahili should continue to be promoted and that publication in standard Kiswahili should be enforced throughout East Africa. The idea was to make Kiswahili 'an adequate medium for the expression of thoughts' (Kabwegyere 1995:191). Hence until 1934, Kiswahili was the medium of instruction in the lower primary classes and it appeared as if the position of Kiswahili as *lingua franca* for all of East Africa was secure.

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[8] The most prominent pro-independence movement in Kenya.

A memorandum was sent to Britain in 1943 seeking advice on language policy in the East African territories. In an unexpected turnaround, the response from London was that it was difficult to define a language policy with too much precision and that the general policy should be 'the subordination of the vernaculars to English' which would facilitate commercial and administrative intercourse between Africans and Europeans and the spread of European cultural values. Consensus among British circles at this time was that Kiswahili should not be allowed to overshadow English in the East African colonies. Apart from fears of political agitation spurred by rebellion in Kenya, this abrupt change in policy was tied to a fear that Kiswahili, which was associated with Islam, would stand in the way of the Anglicisation of the colonies. The British needed to assert the position of English as the language of the conquerors. They were also not inclined to allowing the colonised to use one of their languages as this could have far-reaching unifying consequences that could endanger the colonialism project. The colonialists thus argued that the development of a *lingua franca* has very little connection with immediate expediency. Rather, a *lingua franca* aimed at imparting enduring values and penetrating the whole country. From a strategic point of view, it was not desirable or conceivable that that *lingua franca* be Swahili, Luganda, or any of the vernaculars (Kabwegyere 1995:191).

A ten year programme (1944-1954) was put in place that involved training of English teachers as Kiswahili was downplayed. The stated purpose of this language policy was to enhance communication with ethnically divided Ugandans who were separated by language barriers from the European community much of whose culture they were destined to adopt. The priority of the British at this point therefore was not to have a common language to unite Ugandans, but to have a language that would enhance penetration and transmission of the British culture. Hence while the majority of the different peoples at the grassroots remained separated by the language barrier, there was intense Anglicisation at the elite level (cf. Kabwegyere 1995:192). This was bound to have ramifications on the nature of participation at important moments, such as during the struggle for independence. It was also likely to reflect on how participatory and representative the post-independence agenda was.

Because of the colonial language policy and the general policy of separate development, every ethnic grouping in the period immediately preceding Uganda's independence deliberated alone, addressing its own narrow needs. Communication flowed vertically from the District Councils to the colonial government and to the Colonial Office in London. (Karugire 1980:145) notes that

there was more communication between the colonial administrators of Uganda and their counterparts in London and in other colonies than there was between one district and another in Uganda. In this context, there was little chance for the formation of political parties with a national character (cf. Mutibwa 1992:11). This has made the realisation of a Ugandan public sphere difficult. People in their separate ethnic groupings were contented with this kind of power arrangement at the district level, and the absence of an external national threat. Little wonder that the first parties that were formed in the run up to the first national elections in 1961, such as the Bataka Party (BP), the Uganda African Farmers' Union (UAFU), The Democratic Party (DP) and the Kabaka Yekka (meaning the King Alone) (KY) were characterised by a parochial outlook based on ethnic origin, religion or a combination of these.

The Buganda factor and citizen participation in the pre-independence period

Buganda continued to be a key factor in Uganda's political history in the period leading up to the first national elections of 1961. In 1953, for instance, Buganda objected strongly to the establishment of an East African Federation, which she saw as a further loss of autonomy. The Kabaka (Mutesa II) supported this objection and this led to his being exiled to Britain. This triggered a combination of violent protests, boycotts and heated negotiations for the Kabaka's return and for the fortification of Buganda's political position in Uganda. Notable among Buganda's demands was that Luganda (the language of the Baganda ethnic group) be elevated to the same level as English (as official language) (Karugire 1980:154). Buganda refused to participate in any further plans for Uganda's independence until its conditions were met.

While all Ugandans condemned the Kabaka's exile, the conditions that the Baganda gave Britain in negotiating the Kabaka's return did not endear Buganda to its neighbours who were beginning to look at independence for the whole of Uganda rather than their separate parts of the country. This notwithstanding, the Kabaka was finally returned in 1955 but his powers had been severely reduced. Among other things, the British demanded more participation in the constitution of the *Lukiiko*.

As the rest of Uganda prepared for independence from the British, Mengo saw two threats to the essence of Buganda: a Legislative Council (Legco) which had a national rather than Ganda character, and any national political party. Buganda thus vowed to fight both. In 1957 Buganda withdrew all her representatives from the Legco. They also made it difficult for the now growing national parties to campaign in Buganda on a countrywide ticket. Given that all independent local

papers were based in Buganda, Buganda was able to block candidates from using the media as their political platform unless they toed the Mengo line (Karugire 1980:165). Meanwhile, there was a growing distrust of Buganda's dominance in the other districts.

Hence pre-independence politics in Buganda was dominated by the need to sabotage the development of national political consciousness and association while securing a superior place for Buganda in Uganda's politics. The results of the direct elections which were held in October 1958 in other parts of Uganda to choose representatives to the Legco reflected deep seated inter-ethnic tensions and the absence of a firm sense of national identity. The Legco that emerged was simply a loose coalition of insular regional interests. It should be noted that by the 1950s, the height of Uganda's quest for independence, the independent media did not only play a key role, but most of them published in Luganda. Ownership was a key determinant of the language of publication. In addition, the only radio station in existence was geographically based in Buganda and broadcast in English and Luganda only.

A Constitutional Committee was set up in 1959 to plan for general elections in 1961 which were to usher Uganda into independence. While the rest of Uganda welcomed the Committee's report, which indicated Britain's desire to let Ugandans take over their own governance, Buganda rejected the committee's report and demanded separate independence. It continued the politics of blackmail, notably resorting to a trade boycott of non-African goods which was enforced by violent means. This was followed by an election boycott. At this point in Uganda's history, government resorted not to dialogue but to banning any political organisation which it considered disruptive to the public peace. This period also saw some opportunistic mergers among political parties. For instance in March 1960, leaders of the Uganda Peoples' Union (UPU) which had been established to check the growing power of Buganda merged with the National Peoples Congress (NPC) led by Apollo Milton Obote to form the Uganda Peoples' Congress (UPC). Obote, a Northerner from Lango, became president general of the UPC. The UPC was composed of the majority of African representatives to the Legco who were also leaders in their respective districts.

When in June 1960 the Colonial Secretary announced that there would be direct elections to the Legco in 1961, which would precede self government, the British government was forced to make some concessions to accommodate Buganda which had declared her own independence in 1960. This declaration of separate independence was never actualised. Concessions to Buganda included

the freedom for Buganda to decide on whether its representatives to the National Assembly (the new parliament) would be directly elected or not. In the latter case, the *Lukiiko* would act as an electoral college in the event that Buganda chose indirect elections. (This was included in the constitution on Buganda's insistence). Buganda was allowed to control her local civil service without interference from the central government. Buganda was also given control over its police force. Hence, in the wheeling and dealing that led to the formation of the first national government in Uganda, Buganda once again occupied a dominant position both in the national parliament and in the constitution. This, one could argue, laid the foundations for persistent tensions between the Buganda government and the central government after independence. It was clear that Buganda was reluctant to sacrifice its autonomy and identity for the sake of national unity. Karugire explains that as Uganda approached independence in 1962, it was 'a house divided against itself' (1980:169).

It is difficult to establish to what extent the colonial government, in Mwesige's words 'succeeded in inhibiting the formation of organised interest groups and engagement in activities through which citizens could exercise some upward flow of influence and opposition to the (colonial) regime …' (2004:49), and to what extent such formation was inhibited by Ugandans themselves. Suffice it to say here that the forces of traditional political organisation and indirect rule combined advertently or inadvertently, to create room for ordinary citizens in Uganda to begin participating actively in debating their governance. However, because of the way the colonial administrative machinery was organised, ethnicity (and therefore language) was poised to be an important factor in any future debate about the ordinary Ugandans' participation in their governance.

4.4 EARLY POST-INDEPENDENCE AND THE FOUNDATION FOR PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY (1962-1967)

At the time of independence, Uganda was not merely a country of great diversity; but rather, one that was polarised 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. The period between 1962 and 1967 was characterised by frantic but futile attempts to mobilise Ugandans into one nation. Karugire (1985, 1988) and Kabwegyere (1995) argue that the absence of a common language was basic to Uganda' national integration problems after independence. One could add that the inability of ordinary Ugandans to discuss their future together because of this lack of a unifying language and a common platform may have hampered the development of a

public sphere with a national character and outlook. It could be also be argued that it is the complex dynamics of Uganda's socio-political history that have made the rise of any of the indigenous languages to official or national status difficult. Karugire (1988:49, 52), has this to say on this state of affairs and its ramifications for Uganda's politics:

> …. Uganda was an artificial country in more than one sense. Possessing no common language, the people of Uganda also possessed nothing in common since even their history throughout the colonial period did not appear to be a shared one… Parliament (after independence) was no more than a gathering of local government delegations to bargain for their respective regions (cf. Kabwegyere 1995:139-153; Mutibwa 1992:11; Mamdani 1997:7).

The first alliance between the Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC) and Kabaka Yekka (KY) collapsed within two years of its formation. By 1964, the UPC had enough of a majority to be able to discard the KY party who they had allied with to win the 1962 elections and form a majority in the first parliament. Two years later, the KY was banned through recourse to the Penal Code Act. Between 1964 and 1967 tension dogged Uganda's national politics. Not only did politics continue to be played along ethnic lines, but the army, which became an increasingly key player in politics was similarly polarised.

Buganda continued to consolidate its position within the independent Uganda. Tensions between the national government and the Mengo government came to a climax in 1966 when the national army besieged the Kabaka's palace. The Buganda forces were defeated militarily and the Kabaka went to exile in London. Obote, who had become Prime Minister at independence, suspended and then abrogated the constitution. In its place he drafted another one, the 'pigeon-hole' constitution. The latter is said to have been passed with minimum input from parliament and none from ordinary Ugandans outside parliament.[9] This constitution is significant for abolishing kingdoms as politico-cultural institutions and declaring Uganda a republic. Obote, who until 1967 was Prime Minister, declared himself President with executive powers, replacing the Kabaka. (Karugire 1988:58; Kabwegyere 1995:210-214).

Obote picked on the phenomenon of the Kingdoms (which he termed 'feudalism') as one of the major causes of the 1966 crisis. Parliament passed the Preventive Detention Act to handle dissenting 'feudalists'. Government divided Buganda into four districts. None of them bore the

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[9] The 1967 constitution is said to have been drafted by the Prime Minister and a handful of advisors and placed in the pigeon-holes of the members of parliament on the day they were supposed to debate and pass it.

name 'Buganda.' The state turned the *Lubiri* (Buganda's palace) into army barracks and transformed *Bulange* (the Buganda Parliament's home) into the Ministry of Defence headquarters.

In the rhetoric that followed these political developments, Obote repeatedly condemned Kingdoms (read Buganda) as an unacceptable form of 'feudalism' that undermined Uganda's national unification efforts. He proceeded to purge local administration of all Kingdom loyalists, replacing them mostly with UPC fanatics and youth wingers. These were generally less educated and they governed basing on fear rather than respect. To express loyalty to one's ethnic origin gradually came to be viewed in a negative light in official circles.

These changes were accompanied by a drastic reduction in the civil rights enshrined in the independence constitution of 1962. For instance, the 'state of emergency', which was declared in Buganda in 1966 opened the way for arbitrary arrests and imprisonment without trial in the 'national interest'. Obote declared Uganda a one-party state in 1967. The independence of key institutions like the public service, the judiciary, the police and the army was systematically eroded. Many experienced functionaries left the civil service to serve in less sensitive sectors, such as business. Nepotism dominated appointments at the local government level.

Because of the government's growing dictatorial stance, the level of participation in the political process that had characterised the pre-independence period waned as people became fearful for their safety. Karugire (1988:68) explains that the electoral system became 'a meaningless charade in which nobody had any confidence whatsoever , and it ceased to be the basis of selecting popular government at all levels.' A large number of Ugandans became apathetic about the value of participation as this was obviously not a priority of the 'nation-builders'. There was little room for ordinary Ugandans to participate in their governance in a political environment such as this. This was worsened by the fact that Ugandan's did not have much of a political history of democracy or participation to draw on.

4.5   FROM PARTICIPATORY POLITICS TO DICTATORSHIP (1967-1986)

The period between 1967 and 1986 in Uganda saw the rapid waning of any hopes of a culture of participation in public debate to influence governance. When a section of Ugandans attempted to assassinate Obote in 1969, he was forced to make a radical shift in the domestic and foreign

policies of the county. In 1969, Obote introduced the Common Man's Charter, code named 'The Move the Left.' This move towards socialist ideals was intended to speed up national integration and development. The Charter was accompanied by four implementing documents. Kabwegyere (1995:211) observes that Uganda had inherited separatism, inequality and major disparities between the elite and the ordinary people. The charter set out to address these problems through refocusing people's attention from the parochial to the national. The charter also promised a more equitable re-distribution of national resources. Implied in the latter was an end to the privileged position of areas such as Buganda which had benefited from a special status bestowed upon them by the British in return for their collaboration in the subjugating of the rest of Uganda. In the spirit of 'consolidating national unity', Obote instituted a national consolidation campaign which required all contestants for national office to win support not just in their home area but also in three other regions of Uganda. This 'three plus one' strategy as it was known was aimed at 'de-tribalising' Uganda's politics[10] (Karugire 1985:58-59; cf. Kabwegyere 1995:212-14).

4.5.1 Futile nation-building attempts

In the second of the four implementing documents for the Common Man's Charter, 'The Proposal for National Service,' the motto 'one country and one people' was adopted soon after the Charter was introduced. The goal expressed in this document was to foster a national outlook and distribute national resources equitably. Factional loyalties were to be de-emphasised and a unifying language was seen as a key tool in this effort. To this end, camps were established in which courses in English, Luganda, Kiswahili and Lingala (a *lingua franca* in neighbouring Congo where Uganda had strategic interests) would be taught (Kabwegyere 1995:213-215).

While Uganda's leaders once again looked to language as a possible means to forging national unity, the role Buganda had played as an agent of indirect rule made it difficult for Luganda to emerge as a unifying language. Kiswahili's history and its association with Islamisation and militarisation also made it difficult for it to take root as the *lingua franca*, or as the official or national language. Worse still, the majority of the middle class did not know Kiswahili. The indigenous languages on the other hand had fallen victim to the colonial philosophy of separate development and, apart from Luganda, had a minimal role to play outside their individual ethnic confines. The implications of this for public debate on issues of governance was that there was

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[10] Logistics alone rendered the 3 +1 strategy untenable except for allies of Obote with access to state resources, thus defeating its purpose of de-tribalising politics.

little connection between political conversation at the grassroots where the indigenous languages dominated, and the national level where English, the language of the colonisers, and to a limited extent Luganda dominated.

While the period following immediately after Uganda's independence may have brought to the attention of ordinary Ugandans a number of national problems that needed to be addressed, it did not succeed in fostering the forging of a nation or significantly increasing the opportunities for the ordinary person to participate in debate to influence their governance. The colonial policy of divide and rule had significantly eroded the chances of the development of a collective consciousness among Ugandans (Kabwegyere 1995:218). National leaders thus remained pre-occupied with fighting factionalism and containing Buganda.

Uganda's first parliament, which should have provided the forum for a national conversation about the future of Uganda was, for historical reasons, weak. As Karugire succinctly puts it,

> …[A]side from a handful of secondary school teachers and, to a far less extent, a few professionals like lawyers and doctors, Uganda's first parliament was full of people who were barely literate, possessing little understanding of the management of complex public affairs (Karugire 1988:53).

Meanwhile, the de-politicisation of civil society (particularly trade unions and co-operatives) that had began in the colonial times to contain dissent continued because post-independence leaders lacked the mandate to feel secure in their positions (see Bazaara 2000:17-18; cf. Okoth 1996; Oloka-Onyango & Barya 1997; Bazaara & Barya 1999) for a detailed discussion of the de-politicisation of civil society in Uganda**.** Thus national leadership gradually became dominated by rejects who had little impact on solving post-colonial political problems since they barely understood them. Most of the representatives of the people were vulnerable to manipulation. Politics of opportunism, conspiracy and intrigue set in as members of the opposition continued to cross over to the government side. In-fighting ensued within the ranks of the ruling party as the UPC split into two main factions under Obote and Ibingira. The faction that Ibingira headed was actually Baganda KY members masquerading as UPC.

The tension-filled post-independence atmosphere caused an exodus from the civil service to international organisations and private business. Morale suffered for those who stayed, and many in government service resorted to sycophancy to survive. In the regions, conflicts in local

government intensified (Karugire 1988:61). These may be attributed to the fact that Government had tampered with the independence of appointment boards. Corruption and nepotism became institutionalised. Following the storming of Mengo in 1966, there had also been a summary dismissal of Ganda chiefs who were typically replaced with UPC loyalists. These were on the whole less educated, and less influential than the Baganda chiefs. They included taxi and lorry drivers, and hawkers. The more educated shunned any form of public office. As a result, chiefs became inept, and lacked the respect derived from their traditional institutions (Karugire 1988:63; cf. Golooba-Mutebi 2004[11]). With political parties having been banned in 1967 and all other forms of association being closely monitored, it became difficult for a strong civil society to develop. Consequently, it was difficult for any sphere for public debate on issues of governance to emerge.

As part of the post-independence's effort to contain dissent, the Law was brought in line with the new, dictatorial stance following the abrogation of the constitution in 1966. Hence the Penal Code (Amendment) Bill (1966 sec. 29) provided for a life sentence for incitement against chiefs. There was more and more police and army involvement in day-to-day administration. District councils were expanded with blatant manipulation of representation in favour of the ruling UPC. The president was mandated by the new constitution to take over any local UPC branch if the situation warranted so. Urban authorities were no longer elected but appointed by the Minister. In light of these developments, public confidence in these institutions was greatly undermined. Given that the avenues for participation in governance had for the most part been closed, apathy set in. Most public bodies were characterised by in-fighting and they began to collapse one by one (Karugire 1988:64).

As part of the colonial legacy in Uganda, the military was dominated by people from one region (the North). The majority of army personnel were illiterate as their region had been denied educational opportunities. This made the army easy to manipulate to prop up an increasingly unpopular regime (Karugire 1988:67). This worked in favour of the UPC leadership which largely came from Northern Uganda. To consolidate his control of the army, Obote had also tampered with the military, purging it of all educated people who hailed from outside his home area. He had introduced the Special Force, a para-military wing of the army controlled by the president's office. This group was favoured over the regular army in resource allocation, and this caused

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[11] Golooba-Mutebi 2004 discusses a similar phenomenon with the advent of Museveni's Local Council system which, he argues, overshadowed the traditional institution of the chief.

discomfort in the regular army. Hence, under Obote, the army became a key factor in Uganda's politics.

It was a build up of all the above tensions and Obote's desire to consolidate power over all areas of Uganda's government that eventually cost him his job when Major General Idi Amin, the army commander he had groomed, overthrew him in a military coup on 25ᵗʰ January, 1971. Thus Karugire observes,

> …[T]he government of Uganda had in a very short space of time made the problem of governing Uganda much worse than did the colonialists in seventy years. And in the process, national unity had receded even beyond the political rhetoric of [our] rulers (1988:74).

The military under Amin introduced turbulent politics in Uganda. There were no pretences towards democracy in Amin's dictatorial regime. Though Amin attempted to make amends for the military coup by bringing intellectuals on board, and placating all offended constituencies during the firs year of his rule, this did not last (Karugire 1988:76). Besides Amin systematically purged Obote's supporters and soon started killing wantonly to secure his position. Amin used the army to track down and kill opponents and to extract information from 'suspects' by violence. Hence he instituted different bodies within the army including the Public Safety Unit, State Research Bureau and Defence Council.

Political activity was curtailed even further under Amin. The Suspension of Political Activities Act (1971) summarises the extent to which participation in any form of political debate was proscribed during Amin's reign. The Act prohibited the organisation or participation in any public meeting or procession for propagating or imparting political ideas or information, formation of political parties, wearing, uttering or displaying any party name, symbols or other paraphernalia. According to Mwesige (2004:51), citizen participation during this period was reduced to attending meetings called by government representatives. *Radio Uganda* and its sister the *Uganda Television* (the state media) were the only two players in the broadcast sector. All independent print media were banned. At the worst moments of this military regime, even being caught listening to a foreign radio station like the BBC was criminalised.

While there were some unwritten rules against engaging in public debate, these remained unofficial until 1972. However, following an attempt to oust him in a military take-over in 1972,

Amin abolished parliament as well as district and urban councils, two bodies through which ordinary Ugandans were still able to participate in their governance–albeit through representatives. Thenceforth, Amin made himself the executive, legislature and judiciary. He re-organised local government and, at the regional level, appointed Governors who were mostly military men. Chiefs were mostly chosen from military ranks.

Tensions developed between the police and the army arising from the fact that the police had more educated people than the army, and that it had not been purged of people from 'the wrong tribes' (Karugire 1985:81). Subsequently, many senior police officers were killed or they fled to exile. Nubian/Sudanese mercenaries who were ethnically close to Amin were recruited to replace them. In addition, many members of the civil service were dismissed in the public interest, murdered or sent into exile. Notably, the Chief Justice, Benedicto Kiwanuka, was murdered by state operatives in 1973. Judges who were deemed un-co-operative were dismissed and replaced with Pakistani judges and magistrates. Security organisations like the State Research Bureau and Public Safety Unit whose members paid direct allegiance to Amin routinely attended court proceedings. Through this process, the integrity of the judiciary too was eroded.

In 1972 Amin expelled the Asians from Uganda. Though this category of people had been the life-blood of Uganda's economy, they had never really been integrated as citizens of Uganda. He handed over many of their properties and businesses to select army officers and other cronies with little experience in managing businesses. These included select army officers, relatives, people of from his ethnic group (the Kakwa) and those who were loyal to his government. As the economy continued to decline and factions in the army increased, Amin invaded Tanzania through the Kagera province in 1978 with a view to territorial expansion. This compelled Tanzania to ally with Ugandans in exile to topple Amin's government. With the help of the Tanzanian People's Defence Forces (TPDF), Amin was finally overthrown in 1979 and fled to exile leaving a shattered nation.

4.6   PARTICIPATION IN A COLLAPSED STATE (1979-1986)

Between 1979 and 1986 Uganda had five governments. Each change of government was effected through some form of a military takeover. The period between 1971 and 1986 marked the systematic erosion of rights in Uganda. The insecurity that pervaded the air ruled out any

possibility of consistent public debate on any issue. It would not be inaccurate to say that by 1986 the state of Uganda had collapsed.

All institutions of government fell with Amin's exit. Soon the system started to self-destruct and in the years that followed, chaos reigned. Karugire (1985:86-95) provides a compelling account of this period in Uganda's history. Amin's government had badly shattered the economy and due to the political instability that prevailed, economic hardship continued after he was gone. Amin was succeeded by Yusuf Kironde Lule who was forcefully ousted and succeeded by Godfrey Lukongwa Binaisa after 68 days. Binaisa's government lasted nine months and was succeeded by a Military Commission, an organ of the Ugandan National Liberation (UNLF)[12] which ostensibly worked under a Presidential Commission of three eminent civilians. The Military Commission was headed by Paulo Muwanga. The Military Commission organised an election in 1980 which is widely believed to have engineered the return of Obote to power. Obote's second attempt at the presidency (known as 'Obote II'), however, was constrained by guerrilla movements which, due to widespread dissatisfaction with the status quo, had started operating around Kampala. His rule lasted until 1985 when he was overthrown by a section of his army headed by General Tito Okello Lutwa. Lutwa's military junta fell to the National Resistance Army/Movement[13] (NRM/NRA) on 26th January, 1986.

The period between 1975 and 1986 saw Uganda's economy steadily decline as did the security situation in the country. As sections of Ugandans formed rebel groups to fight the different governments, the governments in power intensified terror against the population. There was a proliferation of spy networks. It was considered risky to engage in any political party activity. The NRM/A mostly operated in the Buganda and Western regions, and constituted a major threat to the sitting governments between 1981 and 1986. To contain these activities, government unleashed state terror on areas where rebels were suspected to be operating. Again, this violence was targeted at specific ethnic groups that were associated with the guerrilla movement. The Baganda suffered most for agreeing to harbour the rebels in Luweero (a part of Buganda) and the Bahima for being Museveni's ethnic group (Karugire 1985:90-91). All official armed groups were given a free reign in suppressing bandits. This intensified the chaos, cruelty, looting, rape and murder as these armed groups sometimes victimised people to settle personal scores or in order to

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[12] The Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) was the political wing of the group that, with the help of the Tanzanian Peoples' Defence Forces (TPDF) drove Amin out of power in 1979.
[13] The National Resistance Movement (NRM) was the political wing of the National Resistance Army (NRA). The NRM is still in power today.

loot their property. Many civilians joined these armed groups sometimes for their own safety or to revenge. In the midst of this, the economy continued to deteriorate and there was a complete breakdown of social services. There was a severe weakening of central administrative control and a decimation of civil society, which was plagued by fears of spying, and counter-spying and which had been rendered 'nomadic' by constant raids from rebel forces. So insecure was the central government that all organs of local government were made appointive rather than elective. The independence of the judiciary too was tampered with. Disillusioned, many ordinary Ugandans began to abandon their town jobs, homes and property for the safety of the rural areas (Karugire 1985:93; Mutibwa 1992:110-114).

The guerrilla activities and incursions weighed heavily on the army. It began to split due to, among other things, the proliferation of armed opposition groups. It was dogged by desertions and crime. Internally, Obote who is from Lango made the mistake of deploying troops from Acholi, a neighbouring ethnic group, at the frontline to fight the growing number of unassailable rebel forces. He spared troops from his own nationality (the Langi) from going to the frontline. The Acholi army officers were irked by this. Worse still, Obote decided to bypass the army Generals and promote his cousin, Smith Opon Acak, to replace Brigadier Oyite Ojok as army commander. This intensified animosities between the Acholi and the Langi and culminated in Acholi army officers led by Tito Okello Lutwa toppling the Obote II[14] government in July 1985. Okello's government presided over a year of chaos as numerous rebel groups terrorised the population in their attempt to take over power. This was the situation when Museveni's NRA/NRM took over from Tito Okello Lutwa's government in January 1986.

Thus between 1971 and 1986, the capacity of Ugandans to participate in public debate on their governance was eroded by the absence of protections not just of freedom of expression and association, but more fundamentally of life. There were few avenues for initiating a conversation about governance at the national level, and even less motivation. As had been the case in the past, the only option left for the majority of Ugandans was to associate at as local a level as possible, that is, within the individual's ethnic group. Except for the urban areas where less than 30% of the population lived, this often meant that the ethnic group remained the locus of political discourse because there, one was assured of a relative level of trust and commonality of experience. This still did not rule out infiltration from within by state agents. On its part, the media, being highly

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[14] It is called the Obote II government to distinguish it from the first post-independence government that Obote presided over.

proscribed as will be discussed in Chapter 5, could no longer be depended upon as a site for the exercise of free public deliberation either.

4.7 THE RE-BIRTH OF PARTICIPATORY POLITICS AND ITS MIXED FORTUNES (1986 - PRESENT)

In his autobiography, Museveni (1997:76) writes that his government 'owes it to the people of Uganda to restore to them some level of democratic participation, of which they had been deprived since the early 1960s.' Thus when the NRM government took over power in 1986, it proceeded to make sweeping reforms in the area of participation. Under a unique brand of 'no-party democracy' known as the Movement System, the NRM introduced popular participation as a key part of all its policies (Mamdani1997:215-217; cf. Golooba-Mutebi 2004). It further introduced a system of popularly elected local councils (initially called Resistance Councils (RCs)). These allowed all adults to participate in their governance. The NRM made special provisions to include marginalised groups like women, the youth and the disabled. These are groups which had been historically disenfranchised at all levels of government. The system consisted of five tiers (from RC1 to RC5). For the first time in Uganda's history, communities at village level were given powers to recall their representatives if the latter did not perform to their satisfaction (Mamdani 1997:216; Mwesige 2004:54; cf. Bazaara & Barya 1999, Kasfir 1999; Golooba-Mutebi 2004).

However, as Mamdani (1997:216-217) observes, the RC system was not without its problems. For instance, he notes, it did not take due cognisance of entrenched socio-economic differences in its organisation. Eligibility for public office was based on individual merit and residence, but not on differentiated working conditions. The system thus tended not to build capacity among those classes that were genuinely interested in reform but rather to give opportunity to the socially well-placed to consolidate their positions through dominating these positions of leadership. In particular the system came to be dominated by the more prosperous members of rural communities.

The NRM government, to placate the multiple political forces at play both at the grassroots and the national level, established a broad-based government at the national level.[15] In addition, being fearful of endangering the NRM's hold on power by allowing politicians at the national level to access potential voters at the village level, the NRM limited direct elections to the RC1 (the lowest level). All subsequent elections up to the District level were by Electoral College. This, in a way, diluted the participatory nature of the RC system. Thus, in Mamdani's words,

> The RC system increasingly came to reflect two tiers: one local, the other central; one on the ground, the other at the apex. The higher one went up the RC pyramid, the more watered down was the democratic content of the system (1997:216).

In the meantime pressure mounted both from local politicians and the international community for the NRM to restore 'real' participation. Mamdani (1997:216-217) argues that it is the growing danger of elite multi-party oriented politicians breaking through to Museveni's rural constituency[16] that pushed Museveni to restore traditional kingdoms which Obote had abolished in 1967. This in particular was aimed at placating the powerful Baganda constituency who constitute the largest block of the voting population, on whose soil and with whose support the NRA war had been fought, and for whom the institution of the kingdoms remained of supreme importance. According to Mamdani, in restoring the kingdoms, the NRM made a pact with the Mengo establishment to keep political parties out of their territory. The Kabaka was to be a cultural head but not to engage in political mobilisation. This pact, however, did not last as the Baganda wanted more than a ceremonial monarch. They wanted real power to appoint local chiefs, a role that had now been usurped by central government through the RC system, to collect taxes, control their social institutions and to influence their local governance. Failure to agree on these issues has been the source of continual tension between Mengo and the central government under the NRM leadership.

Whatever criticism there has been of the NRM government, many admit that it has permitted more participation in political debate than any of its predecessors. Since 2004, the NRM government has opened up the political space, allowing parties to register and to operate. At first this was limited to the national level. The parties then pressurised the NRM government to widen the political space. The NRM government gave in and allowed rival political actors to also

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[15] This included people who were members of the NRM but also people who had previously belonged to the different political parties but were now willing to embrace the new, 'no-party democracy' philosophy espoused by the NRM.
[16] Having come to power through a protracted guerilla war, Museveni's government put a high premium on popular support at the grassroots.

mobilise at the grassroots. The NRM government also in 1993 liberalised the media. That parties were until 2004 proscribed under the NRM government system, however, remains for many a blight on an otherwise good record. Furthermore, it threatens to blur the distinction between the Museveni regime and previous ones with regard to allowing real as opposed to illusory participation. Moreover, lately, the judiciary and the legislature have both come under the direct influence of the executive. One of the most recent 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. 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 had to re-invent itself as a party (rather than a 'movement') and publicly embrace multi-party politics, which it did in 2005, a few months before the 2006 multi-party elections.

It could be argued that given Uganda's turbulent history, it is understandable that the NRM leadership would hesitate to open up a fully participatory democratic space involving different political parties. Yet, 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.

4.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented a synopsis of the major political, economic and cultural forces that have influenced the capacity of the ordinary Ugandan to participate in their governance through public debate. It has focused on opportunities for freedom of association, and opportunities for political competition. This study argues that given that the majority of Ugandans are poor and live in the rural areas, the broadcast media play a special role in enabling such people to represent their views on important issues pertaining to their governance. Furthermore, given the fact that the formation of a public sphere with a national character has been rendered difficult first by the nature and philosophy of indirect rule, and later by the factionalism and chaos of post-independence regimes, the ethnic community remains an important unit and has provided a safe haven for political debate in Uganda. However, it has been difficult for post-independence Ugandan leaderships to feel secure enough to open up a fully participatory democratic space. Free and diverse media have the potential to play a key role in enabling people to participate in how

they are governed. It becomes important therefore for the broadcast media to provide opportunities for the different 'public spheres' in Uganda to participate in pubic debate in languages which they understand, as the broadcast media sometimes serve as surrogates for participation in public debate in the absence of freely functioning political parties. This role must be exercised responsibly, otherwise the media deteriorate into instruments of state terror and mayhem. Access to the media using the indigenous languages can go a long way in enhancing this role of the media.

The next chapter gives a synopsis of the history, structure and operation of the media in Uganda with a focus on radio. It describes in more detail the conditions under which the broadcast media in Uganda today operate, and more particularly as these relate to indigenous language programming, diversity and participation in public debate.

CHAPTER 5

5.0   THE HISTORY, STRUCTURE AND OPERATION OF THE MEDIA IN UGANDA

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters have established the theoretical foundations for this thesis and placed it in a historical context. This chapter constitutes a brief history of the media in Uganda as well as a description of their structure and operation with specific reference to indigenous language programming, diversity and participation. Together with the preceding chapters, this chapter lays the foundation for the analysis of the regulatory environment in Chapter 6 and the language debate in Chapter 7, and finally the conclusions and policy recommendations in Chapter 8.

5.2   A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PRINT MEDIA IN UGANDA

5.2.1 The Ugandan press before independence

The history of the broadcast media in Uganda was grounded in the colonial government's desire to communicate to, especially, the powerful Baganda nationality and counter pro-independence demands that had been growing since the Second World War. These had begun with workers' strikes in 1945, followed by more strikes in 1949, and the formation of the Ugandan National Congress (UNC) in 1952 (See Mamdani 1976). To understand the history of the broadcast media in Uganda, however, it is important to appreciate the history of the independent, local language print media which pre-dates the broadcast media by half a century. This section therefore, briefly examines the history of the print media in Uganda between 1901 and the present before discussing the history of the broadcast media. Due to a paucity of published literature on the history of the media in Uganda, this chapter relies heavily on the work of Zie Gariyo (1992; 1993), Nyangabyaaki Bazaara (2000) and Richard Baguma (2004). Gariyo's work constitutes the most comprehensive account of the history of Uganda's media from colonial times to the present, it addresses in more detail the print media than the broadcast media. Bazaara's work is useful in offering a critical perspective to the development of Uganda's media while relating it to relevant political developments. Baguma (2004) brings together specifically the history, structure and operation of the state broadcaster (1954-2004).

Motivation for the establishment of the earliest language newspapers was a combination of religious and political factors. The churches in particular saw the indigenous language media and the education system as crucial in shaping political thought. The Catholic Church in particular used the publications that the church leadership controlled or had influence over to mobilise followers (Gariyo 1992:51).

The early press addressed class issues to do with land privileges and the role of Europeans and Asians in the local economy (Gariyo 1992:2). In the 1930s, Ugandans' escalating demands for participation in the economy and in the political affairs of their country were channelled through newspapers like *Gambuuze, Baana ba Kintu, Uganda Voice, Tuula Nkunnyonyole, Buganda Nnyaffe* and *Matalisi*, most of which were in Luganda. These can be said to have contributed to the political consciousness and action of the 1940s and 1950s that culminated in the formation of the first national party (the Uganda National Congress (UNC)) and finally Uganda's independence on 9[th]October, 1962. As tensions between the British and the locals grew, the local press continued to publicise the views of their political backers and to highlight perceived colonial injustices using the indigenous languages. This consciousness was further catalysed by the exposure of thousands of Ugandans to the outside world during their participation in the Second World War in defence of their British colonial masters.

According to Gariyo (1993:18) the political disturbances of the 1940s, and in particular the workers' strikes of 1945 and 1949 (see Chapter 4), resulting from widespread disgruntlement with both the British and local administration, had led to a clamping down on the critical local press. The British colonial administration banned publications including *Mugobansongaa, Munnyonyozi* and *Uganda Star* and jailed their editors. A new breed of less critical and more opportunistic newspapers came up. In addition the colonial government moved fast to establish and promote its own vernacular publications such as *Kodheyo*, (*Lusog*a), *Apupeta* (Ateso), A*gafa e* Bukedi (Luganda), *Amut* (Langi), *Lok Awinja* (Lwo), *Lok Mutime* (Lwo), *Busesire* (Runyankore), and *Wamanya* (Runyankore). These were established under the central government's supervision with the objective of countering the independent indigenous language press. This move reflected the colonial government's recognition of the potential power of communicating with the local people in their own languages through the media and in de-politicising them.

The British tendency to play one group of people off against the other using patronage mostly based on land and education to advance the colonial project (Mamdani 1997:109-137) drove a

wedge between the 'haves' and 'have nots' sowing seeds of discord. Furthermore, the British education system had systematically privileged the Central and Western regions while marginalising the Northern region (cf. Chapter 4 for a detailed treatment of these inequalities; cf. Mamdani 1976:147-188).

The British preferential treatment of the Baganda created a superiority complex among them. It correspondingly created animosity, rivalry and hatred for the Baganda among the non-Baganda. Ironically, because of the situation of the capital city Kampala within Buganda, as well as the role of Baganda chiefs in other parts of Uganda during the colonial era, the hegemony of the Luganda language in most parts of Buganda is still evident. According to Ethnologue (2005), Luganda is the language spoken by the largest number of Ugandans, both Baganda and non-Baganda (cf. Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2005:viii). Baganda as well as non-Ugandans have found it necessary or beneficial to learn Luganda. This is because it is the language of the capital city and it is linked to what used to be one of the most powerful and organised kingdoms in the country, coupled with the fact that it is the language of the region with the largest amount of economic activity. Furthermore, the hegemonic character of Luganda has dictated that each time the President sees a need to translate something from English during his national addresses he automatically resorts to Luganda even though there are about 30 other languages spoken in the country. Thus even though it is not accorded any special status in policy, Luganda is used as the 'language of the masses' in a lot of government communication and political campaigns, particularly in the central and Eastern regions. Perhaps for this reason, Luganda has occupied a dominant place in debate on the role of the different languages of Uganda (see Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion of this debate).

Gariyo (1992:35) observes that since most business with the British during the colonial era was written and communicated in English, having a critical mass of educated, English-speaking Africans was crucial for the Ugandans to be able to push a pro-independence agenda. The British thus sought to increase the privileges of the English-speaking elite. The aim of the British was to drive a wedge between them and other Ugandans and weaken the radical pro-independence front. They did this at two levels, namely, Baganda elite against the ordinary people in Buganda, and Baganda against the rest of the Ugandans.

In the late 1950s, as the educated demanded more and more privileges, including the Africanisation of key administrative posts and self-government, there was a corresponding increase in motivation to attain a Western education which ordinarily came with proficiency in

English. This was seen as a passport to participation in the political process. At this point the English media's role in articulating issues of national rather than parochial significance increased, but they targeted the elite who had competence in the English language and who were therefore able to participate in public debate using this channel (Gariyo 1992: 39).

Reforms introduced by the British in the 1950s to quell the growing unrest caused by the increasing social inequalities and political contradictions of British rule gave the Bataka some new land privileges. However, they left the majority of Baganda in the same impoverished state. The majority of people in Buganda who became mere tenants and squatters on chiefs' land were compelled to undertake the production of cotton and coffee, and to provide *luwalo* (free) and *kasanvu* (cheap) labour on local and public works projects (Karugire 1980:124; Gariyo 1992:6; Mamdani 1997:141-142). As discontent among these tenants and squatters grew, the vernacular media increasingly became an important outlet for their grievances. Thus the English media and the indigenous language media appeared to be working at cross-purposes at a time when Ugandans needed to put up a united front against British rule. In any case, the print media served a minority, as the majority of Ugandans were illiterate. Little wonder that the 1950s in Uganda's politics were characterised by break-ups and alliances as Ugandans with different backgrounds and political priorities sought to drive the pro-independence agenda (cf. Karugire 1980:144-168; 1988:37-48; Kabwegyere 1995:199-210). All sides tried to harness the power of the press in a bid to further their political goals (Gariyo 1992:46-53).

As a matter of policy, the British continued to privilege a small intelligentsia. Through this discriminatory process, they distanced the intelligentsia from the majority of Ugandans. Thus, though the intelligentsia remained keen on agitating to be included in the administration of the country, they did not have significant economic reforms of a broader nature to push for. Their conceptual problem stemmed from the fact that their own class interests (such as access to social amenities previously reserved for the British and Asians) had been taken care of by the British system of patronage. Thus there developed a disjuncture between the demands for economic reforms involving the majority of the people in the 1940s and the demands for political reforms driven by a minority elite in the 1950s (Mamdani 1976:222-223; Gariyo 1992:40).

What needs to be noted here is that by the 1950s the indigenous language press was still largely concentrated in Buganda and that it had not succeeded in adopting a national outlook. In seeking to become more relevant, *Uganda Time*, a sister paper to *Uganda Eyogera* (Uganda Speaks) was

born in 1956. The goal of *Uganda Time* was to include non-Luganda speakers in the independence debate (Gariyo 1992:43). Many, however, did not emulate this gesture. Consequently most of the papers continued to publish only in Luganda.

When in 1958 Buganda rebelled against the provisions of the 1955 agreement (signed by the British and the Baganda upon the return of the Kabaka from exile),[1] this once again pitted them, and especially the Mengo establishment, against the nationalists from within and outside Buganda (Karugire 1980:165; Gariyo 1992:58).

According to Gariyo (1992:49-50, 71-76), the consumer boycott of 1959 which was aimed at breaking the hold of Asians on the local economy, and was also linked to demands for independence, was more disturbing to the British shortly before independence than previous intances of unrest. This is because the boycott seems to have succeeded in mobilising across ethnic groups and social classes. It became clear to the British that the local press wielded increasing amounts of power and influence on local and largely anti-British public opinion. The British therefore responded by tightening their grip on the African media. Thus some editors such as those of the *Uganda Mirror* and *Ddoboozi lya Uganda* were arrested on the basis of trumped up criminal charges, sentenced to 12 months with hard labour and their printing equipment confiscated. Within this hostile environment characterised by government persecution and coupled with a non-contributing readership, more papers failed to sustain themselves and collapsed on the eve of Uganda's independence. These included *The Post* and *The Express,* which ceased publication by 1959 and the *Uganda Post* by 1961.[2] This clamping down significantly weakened the local press. The weakening was exacerbated by the fact that once the independence struggle was over, many local papers no longer saw a reason for their existence.

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 and local media in informing and influencing people in the whole country. It should be noted that the weakening of the local print media around the time of independence created a *lacuna* which post-independence governments in Uganda took full

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[1] In particular the Baganda rejected universal adult suffrage and a weakened *Katikkiro* (Prime Minister) and wanted a Buganda separate from the rest of Uganda.
[2] It is important to note that government is the biggest advertiser in Uganda and a media organisation challenging government does so to their peril.

advantage of using the state broadcaster. The state broadcaster was used to limit ordinary Ugandans' participation in debate on issues of governance to only those who toed the government line.

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 (Gariyo 1993:29-32). According to Gariyo, the turning point for state-media relations in Uganda came with the 1966/1967 constitutional crisis also known as the 'Buganda crisis' when the central government under Obote overthrew the Buganda Kingdom and the Kabaka went into exile. This was followed by more restrictions on the media. As Obote, then prime minister, took advantage of the circumstances to abrogate the constitution, he was able to declare a state of emergency under which fundamental freedoms like freedom of the press and freedom of debate were suspended. Through this process, parliament was rendered docile and many opposition members crossed over to the ruling UPC. Publications like *Transition* magazine which carried heavy criticism of the 1967 constitution for giving the president (Obote by then) too many powers and rendering the separation of powers meaningless paid a high price as the dissenting voices were detained.[3]

The media thus operated under strict state supervision from 1966 to 1971 when Obote was deposed by Idi Amin in a military *coup détat*. In the meantime, government put the *Uganda Broadcasting Service* (later to become *Radio Uganda* and *Uganda Television*, and then the *Uganda Broadcasting Corporation* (*UBC*) to maximum use as government mouthpieces during this period. By 1971 there was no discernible culture of ordinary Ugandans participating in debate relating to governance through the media as the private print media were severely constrained and the state broadcast media were dominated by elite pro-UPC government functionaries.

5.2.2. The Ugandan press under the control of the state

In 1972, one year after taking over power, Amin's government enacted the infamous Newspapers and Publications Decree of 1972 (Uganda. Newspapers and Publications Act (Amendment) Decree 1972) (Gariyo 1993:33-34). This gave the minister in charge of information sweeping powers to prohibit the publication of a newspaper for a specified or indefinite period. This Act, plus the increasing state-inspired insecurity in the country compelled the 'independent' press to do public relations on behalf of the state rather than journalism. Most media were rendered inactive

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3 A correspondent, Abu Mayanja, and the editor, Rajat Neogy, were detained.

except for the government broadcaster and a few innocuous magazines covering mostly sports. The only programmes remaining on the state broadcaster where the ordinary person was able to participate were agriculture, sports and music programmes, because these were considered politically neutral.

When Idi Amin was overthrown in 1979 there was a brief recovery in the media sector. However, government clamped down on the media again after the hotly disputed 1980 elections which brought Obote and his UPC back to power. The opposition parties alleged that the UPC had rigged the election in connivance with the interim Military Commission, the army and with the support of the Tanzania Peoples Defence Forces (TPDF). Paulo Muwanga who chaired the Military Commission had controlled the entire electoral process including the announcing of the electoral results. Muwanga became Vice-President and Minister of Defence in the Obote II government. He used his new position to ban many publications that the government considered hostile. These included *Citizen*, *The Economy* and *Ngabo*. Like its predecessors, the Obote II government did not tolerate any critical voice whether political, economic or social issues. State policies and corrupt state functionaries, politicians and party members could not be publicly questioned. Thus during the UPC regime of 1980 to 1985, any vestiges of press freedom were simply discarded (Gariyo 1993:35-36).

5.2.3   The Ugandan press under the National Resistance Movement (1986-2005)

Following the capture of state power by the National Resistance Movement (NRM) of Yoweri Museveni on 26th January, 1986, there was a clear change in policy towards the media. Private newspapers like *Mulengera, Ngabo, Weekly Topic, The Economy, The Star, Saba Saba* and *the Champion* all of which had been banned by the previous government resumed publication. For a while, these were able to critique and challenge the actions and policies of the new government with apparent impunity. The NRM government promulgated the 1995 constitution (Uganda 1995) which, among other things, guarantees freedom of speech and the press (Uganda 1995 sec 29) and passed the Press and Journalists Statute which implicitly outlaws the banning of newspapers (Uganda 2000b sec 2.2). These actions secured some guarantees for freedom of expression. These are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

It is important to note that in spite of the NRM Government's new relatively liberal stance towards the media, the print media in Uganda have been dominated by two or three publications at any one time since 1986: *The New Vision* and *The Weekly Topic* until 1992, and currently *The*

New Vision and *The Daily Monitor*. The total circulation of both papers currently stands at 65,000, the highest it has ever been. There are other publications but most of them have a very limited circulation. Most publications in Uganda are urban-based.

While no newspaper has been banned since the enactment of the Press and Journalists Statute, relations between the state and the print media have been tense. There have been instances of editors being imprisoned and the operations of newspapers being suspended for days or weeks pending 'investigations' because they were seen to pose a threat to national security. Government in 1993 slapped an advertising ban on the critical *The Monitor* newspaper which it did not lift until 1997 on account of perceived 'negative reporting' about government. Government has also on several occasions threatened to close down *The Monitor* newspaper for critical reporting about the actions of the state (cf. Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ 2005). Journalists have been dragged to court on charges ranging from sedition to 'incitement of sectarian tendencies'.

In the light of the above facts, there have been contradictory evaluations of how genuine the democratisation of the print media has been since the NRM government came into power. While many hail the change as the long awaited break for Uganda's media, others dispute the sincerity of this liberal attitude towards the media**.** Gariyo (1993:36), for instance, argues,

> … the NRM knows that these numerous publications do not circulate beyond certain areas and that both their significance as a forum for public debate (and) influence on matters of national significance remains limited.

Indeed, some have contended that this apparent liberal attitude towards the media has been used by the NRM government as a safety valve by a government which has been anything but liberal with regard to broader political freedoms, like the freedom of association.

Furthermore, it is important to note the socio-economic constraints to the print media's playing a significant role in enhancing participation in the democratic press even under the NRM government, because, as Bazaara (2000:29) has aptly observed,

> [T]he ability of journalists to raise the awareness of the public on issues of democracy or human rights is circumscribed by the fact that most papers are published in English and also have limited circulation. This means that the bulk of Ugandan society does not have the chance to read the papers either because they are illiterate or they cannot afford to buy the newspapers.

The above account of the print media in Uganda reveals that the indigenous language print media in Uganda played a key role in the independence struggle. However, the account also reveals that the period between 1962 and the present has seen freedom of the press suffer to varying degrees depending on the prevailing political atmosphere. The account demonstrates that the role of Uganda's print media in the democratic process has been constrained not only by restrictions on their operation imposed by both colonial and post-independence governments, but also by structural factors such as poverty, illiteracy, the logistical inaccessibility of newspapers for people in the rural areas and language barriers.

5.3   A HISTORY OF UGANDA'S BROADCAST MEDIA

5.3.1   Uganda's broadcast media (1954-1971)

Unlike the print media, the broadcast media in Uganda did not begin operating until 1954[4] for a number of reasons, some logistical and others political. The history of the broadcast media also differs from that of the print media in that while the latter were mostly driven by civil society, broadcasting in Uganda was initiated by the state and remained funded, controlled and monopolised by the state until 1993 when the NRM government embraced liberalisation policies.

A committee set up by the British Colonial Office in 1937 and chaired by the Earl of Plymouth (United Kingdom. Colonial Office 1937) was charged with investigating the role of broadcasting in the colonies. The Committee found that radio broadcasting held great of potential especially in enabling the Colonial Office to communicate on issues like agriculture and health in the colonies. After the insurgencies of the 1940s, the colonial state realised the necessity of setting up a communication infrastructure through which it could reach the colonised people all over the country. This way the colonial government could explain its policies, plans, actions, programmes and intentions. It was by now clear that the print media could not carry out these roles. On the recommendations of the Plymouth report, the *Uganda Broadcasting Service* (*UBS*) was set up to cater for the interests of the colonial officials. The UBS was mostly expected to carry BBC re-broadcasts of news and other programmes on radio, and to stem the rising tide of pro-independence propaganda that the British believed was perpetuated by the local language papers (Gariyo 1993:42). In 1957, the British government set up another committee, chaired by Gervase Huxley to evaluate the viability of broadcast services specifically in Uganda. This committee's

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[4] The UBS started testing its signal in 1953 but was officially opened on 1st March, 1954.

report (Uganda. Committee of Inquiry 1958:21) affirmed the importance of the broadcast services for, among other things, countering growing pro-independence propaganda. It is important to note here the colonial government's tacit recognition of the role of both the broadcast media and the indigenous languages in influencing public opinion and political consciousness.

5.3.2   The evolution of language policy in Uganda's state media

Initially, there was very little of an indigenous nature in the radio programmes on the UBS The majority of the broadcast and engineering staff were British. The few Africans employed in broadcasting transcribed programmes from English into the local languages. This however changed with more Africans being employed and more indigenous languages brought on board after independence in 1962. By 1957, there were eight languages on air (English Luganda, the mutually intelligible Runyoro/Rutooro/Runyankore/Rukiga, Ateso, Lwo, Lugbara and Hindustani) on the state broadcaster (Turyamwijuka 2004:2). According to Ejalu (2005), when the British Colonial government set up the UBS in 1954, the goals were 'to educate Ugandans on British colonial policy, to relay news from the UK, to entertain British citizens living in Uganda and to discourage what the British called harmful (pagan) practices.' The Broadcasting service, was also put in place to 'combat harmful pro-independence propaganda' as well as encourage the growth of cash crops.

There was limited participation of the ordinary Ugandan in the broadcast media and using the local languages was seen as crucial mostly in as far as it enhanced the diffusion of the colonial government's goals. Ejalu notes that the British attack on African culture in Uganda, unlike, for instance in Kenya and Tanzania, was 'benign and subtle.' The British in Uganda were, therefore, willing to let the indigenous languages co-exist with English. Thus colonial language policy, though unwritten, was inclined towards linguistic heterogeneity in order to reach the majority of Ugandans with the colonial agenda without encouraging them to mobilise around a common language. In other words, linguistic diversity was encouraged as a safeguard against collective integration. According to Ejalu (2005), therefore, as demands for independence intensified, the colonial policy of permitting as many local languages as possible on the broadcast media became 'a crusade' as the colonial government sought to counter independence rhetoric by any means available.

The attitude of the British towards the Africans' independence struggle changed when Sir Andrew Cohen became Provincial Governor in 1952. Cohen is credited with making the British aware that

their stay in Uganda was temporary since this was a 'protectorate' rather than a colony. This according to Ejalu (2005), explains why linguistic heterogeneity was allowed to thrive in Uganda in sharp contrast with Kenya where the British never expected to leave, and had a need to promote linguistic homogeneity as a means of consolidation. It should be noted here that while the British had driven Kenyans off most of their land and established settler farms, they had opted to let Uganda's develop as a peasant economy. It has been argued that under Cohen, the British colonial government promoted the local languages even in writing (hence encouraging the local language press and the missionaries' efforts at Bible translation, for instance). In addition, Cohen presided over a change towards a more positive tone towards Ugandans' self-determination in the government media.

At the time Uganda's got independence on 9th October, 1962, the British colonial government did not have a written policy on language use in the media. The local languages that got adopted by the state broadcaster came on board one by one, first basing on demographic considerations, and later through political pressure. This does not appear to have changed. According to Byekwaso (2005), Controller of Programmes at the state broadcaster who is in charge of ensuring a balance between the languages on the state broadcaster's schedule, most languages have come on board in an *ad hoc* manner. He attributes this to a weak regulatory framework. Even the new Draft National Broadcasting Policy (Uganda. Directorate of Information 2004) is silent on language except for requiring all stations to be linguistically relevant in their areas of broadcast (cf. Chapter 6 for a more detailed discussion of language in the Draft National Broadcasting Policy). Even though it is understood that Uganda's state radio has the mandate to reach as many Ugandans as possible in their indigenous languages, neither the Minister of State for Information nor any government official interviewed could put their finger on a concrete, written language policy for the broadcast media. Okullu-Mura, Acting Director, Broadcasting until January 2006 who was in charge of the development of policy at *Radio Uganda* for more than two decades puts it this way:

> We do not have a language policy. Languages in *Radio Uganda* have just evolved. The Ministry of Education has tried to develop a policy and so has the Ministry of Culture, but the Department of Information has been left out. Languages just come on board, and once a language is on, it is difficult to drop (Okullu-Mura, 2005).

Ejalu (2005) adds:

> No government in Uganda has consciously developed a policy on language in public information. Language and culture have always been treated casually. No one seems to understand the importance of culture. Ugandan governments have taken a neutral stance on language and culture. People who have bothered about language have been those who

have wanted to use it for political advantage. The local languages have therefore been invoked out of political convenience.

One of the achievements of independence was the steady increase in the number of languages used on state radio. English, Kiswahili, Luganda, Runyoro/Rutooro/Runyankore/Rukiga and Lwo came on board basing on demographic factors, being the most widely spoken languages in the different regions. However, at some point this system broke down. All *Radio Uganda* staff interviewed for this study stated that most of the remaining 16 languages have come on board through various forms of political pressure from members of parliament, ministers or pressure groups from different parts of the country. According to Mbabazi Gunura (2005), a senior poducer with the Western section of *Radio Uganda* (now the *Uganda Broadcasting Corporation* (*UBC*)),

> [P]eople pressure their MPs through their cultural leaders, and the MPs make the inclusion of their language an issue in parliament. Often the issue is resolved by the Minister before it gets to parliament…. At the bottom of this is the need for politicians to talk directly to their people, says one senior producer (Mbabazi-Gunura, 2005).

The state radio currently broadcasts in 24 languages. These include English, Swahili, Luganda, Runyankore/Rukiga/Runyoro/Rutooro, Lusoga, Lumasaba, Lwo, Ateso, Ngakarimojong, Lunyole/Lusamia/Lugwe, Lugwere, Lumasaba, Lugbara, Alur, Madi, Kakwa, Luruuli, Leb-thur, Kupsabiny, Kumam, Lukonzo, Rwamba and Urufumbira (cf. Turyamwijuka 2004:4). Programmes include news, announcements, political debate, the environment, health, agriculture, education, sports, music and other entertainment. The state radio is still also obliged to cover in detail the activities and programmes of government and some government officials and their families have personalised the state media to the point of having detailed coverage of family weddings or graduation ceremonies.

During the period following Uganda's independence, government invested heavily in the infrastructure of state radio with the object of extending the signal to as much of the country as possible. On the other hand, state television has remained an elite, urban phenomenon, focusing more on entertainment than information and education as well as acting as the public relations arm of government among the urban elite. Whereas it may be argued that the levels of freedom of expression in the state media corresponded with the prevailing political atmosphere, these deteriorated considerably after the 1966/1967 constitutional crisis. By 1985, the state media had

degenerated to being a government mouthpiece and there was little room in *Radio Uganda* or *UTV* for free debate on issues of governance.

5.3.3   Uganda's broadcast media under the NRM (1986-2005)

The NRM government came into power on 26th January, 1986, at a time when the IMF and World Bank were encouraging African governments to liberalise their economies. According to Ogundimu (1996:165-166), although the history of the liberalisation of the broadcast media in Uganda is sketchy, the impetus seems to have come from a combination of 'private demand' and 'patrimonous connections'. In 1993 the NRM government opened up the airwaves. This allowed private entrepreneurs to establish stations and compete with the state broadcaster. Between 1993 and 2006, there have been 129 radio stations licensed, of which 99 are on air. A number of the larger stations have boosters covering different parts of the country (see Addendum 2. Radio and television stations).[5] 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 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 liberalisation of the media sector, therefore, has given more Ugandans (at least potentially) an opportunity to participate in and through radio.

5.3.4   The advent of Uganda's 'public broadcaster'

In 2005, the parliament of Uganda passed a Bill for the establishment of the *Uganda Broadcasting Corporation* (*UBC*) as Uganda's first 'public broadcaster'. Notwithstanding the rhetoric, though, the Bill appear to have succeeded only in making way for the merging of *Radio Uganda* and *Uganda Television* and transforming them into a more powerful state broadcaster on the eve of Uganda's 2006 presidential elections. It should be noted that the Uganda Broadcasting

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[5] The regulator's statistics on the number of stations are constantly being updated, so it is difficult to say with accuracy how many stations have been licensed or are in operation. One has to depend on the latest list available from the regulator and the Uganda Communications Communication in collaboration with whom the regulator issues licenses.

Corporation Act (Uganda 2005) falls far short of the provisions that the African Charter on Broadcasting (2005) considers basic to the conversion of a state broadcaster to a public broadcaster. These include the establishment of an independent board, sound financial provisions and insulation from arbitrary interference with budgets and guarantees of editorial independence. While expected to operate as the public broadcaster, the *UBC* is at the same time to remain fully owned by government, be expected to compete on equal terms with the commercial broadcasters and be financially self-sustaining (see Chapter 7 for a fuller analysis of the *UBC* Act). In many ways therefore, Uganda's public broadcaster is in fact still a state broadcaster.

5.4 THE STRUCTURE AND OPERATION OF UGANDA'S STATE BROADCASTER

The state broadcaster which started as the *Uganda Broadcasting Service* (*UBS*) in 1954 is now the *Uganda Broadcasting Corporation* (*UBC*), a merger between what was *Radio Uganda* and *Uganda Television* (*UTV*). *UBC* however is still in transition and in terms of programming, operations and staff has remained unchanged. Most Ugandans still perceive *Radio Uganda* and *UTV* as separate entities, so they still refer to them as '*Radio Uganda*' and '*UTV*' rather than as '*UBC*'. To overcome this limitation in this chapter, we refer to *Radio Uganda* and *UTV* rather than *UBC* except when we specifically refer to the new, merged entity.

This analysis focuses on the radio aspect of the state broadcaster because of the relatively peripheral role that state television has played as an avenue for debate for the average Ugandan. According to the Minister of State for Information[6], *UTV*, unlike *Radio Uganda* was established primarily as an entertainment medium for the urban elite.[7] At the time of interviewing the staff of *Radio Uganda* and *UTV* (August 2005), *UTV* had one thirty-minute news bulletin each in Luganda and Kiswahili and an occasional thirty-minute drama in Luganda that runs once a week. They broadcast for six hours a day as opposed to *Radio Uganda*'s 18 hours. There was only one interactive programme on *UTV* that ran once a week. *UTV* broadcast predominantly in English

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[6] This minister has since the beginning of June 2006 been transferred to the Ministry of Ethics and Integrity and the Department of Information has been re-named the Ministry of Information and National Guidance.
[7] When TV was set up in Uganda in 1963, most of the country did not have access to electricity. Currently 8% have access to electricity and 6% own television sets as opposed to 48% who own radio sets (Uganda Uganda Bureau of Statistics Y 2005).

and German.[8] Most people interviewed outside Kampala either said they did not watch *UTV* at all or watched it rarely because there was no signal in their area, the signal was unreliable, they did not have access to electricity or they did not own a television set.

The senior staff of *Radio Uganda* on the other hand said they saw radio as playing the traditional roles of information, education and entertainment, but they all agreed that radio in Uganda also plays a political mobilisation role. Despite the many challenges it faces, *Radio Uganda* was portrayed by its own staff as a more powerful station than its commercial counterparts. Staff interviewed argued that *Radio Uganda*, in spite of severe financial limitations still reached the majority of Ugandans in their languages with programmes which had a direct bearing on people's health, production, education and general knowledge. However, it should be noted that even though *Radio Uganda* seemed to reach more people, most of its loyal listeners were rural and often poor and without much formal education. It emerged in the interviews with *Radio Uganda* listeners outside Kampala that often their perception of participation was limited to being able to listen to a programme as the majority of them did not own mobile telephone sets. On a number of occasions, listeners said when they wanted to give their views, they requested a savvy member (usually the coordinator of the listeners' group who often has a telephone) to call the station on their behalf.

To date the state broadcaster broadcasts to the different regions of Uganda on five channels, namely Blue Channel, Red Channel, Buteebo Channel, *Star FM* and *Mega FM*. The Blue and Red Channel broadcast on FM, MW and SW. Buteebo broadcasts on FM exclusively to the Eastern region. In addition the state broadcaster has two other channels: *Mega FM*, a channel dedicated to counter-insurgency broadcasting in rebel-infested Northern Uganda[9], and Star *FM*, a channel that closely resembles the commercial FM stations in programming. According to Sseruga-Matovu (2005)[10], the Station Manager, *Star FM* was put in place to combat 'opposition rhetoric' on the commercial radio stations' talk shows. In all *UBC* Radio broadcasts on 14 frequencies, with 13 others under reconstruction (Baguma 2004:23).

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[8] *UTV* recently entered an arrangement where they receive cheap programming from *Deutsche Welle TV*. Nearly all of the Deutsche Welle programming is in German, even though German is spoken by less than 1% of the population. The *UBC* has maintained the arrangement with *Deutsche Welle*.
[9] The state has used Mega FM to dissuade the people of Northern Uganda from joining the insurgency led by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) as well as persuade the LRA rebels to denounce rebellion.
[10] Personal conversation with Charles Sseruga-Matovu, Station Manager, Star FM. 2005

The Blue Channel caters for the Buganda and Western regions. It carries programming from the Midland and the Western sections of *Radio Uganda*. The Midland section, whose target is the Buganda region where the capital city is located, broadcasts exclusively in Luganda in recognition of the dominance of the Luganda language in the central region of the country. The Western section, on the other hand, broadcasts in eight languages including the 4Rs as well as Rukonzo/Rwamba, Luluuli and Urufumbira (see Addendum 1a. Ethnic map of Uganda). While the 4Rs (as at August 2005) took up 15 hours per day, the 'small' languages (Rukonzo/Rwamba, Luluuli and Urufumbira) had to share the remaining three hours. The Red Channel, which targets the predominantly Nilotic Northern region, broadcasts 12 of its 18 hours in English and Kiswahili. The indigenous languages of the northern region (Lwo, Lugbara, Alur, Kakwa and Madi) and Ngakarimojong from the North Eastern region take up one hour each.

Buteebo channel targets the highly linguistically heterogeneous eastern region of Uganda. The major eastern languages of Ateso, Lusoga and Lumasaba take up thirteen hours on the Buteebo channel daily. The other Eastern languages (Dhopadhola, Kupsbiny, Lunyole/Lusamia/Lugwe, Kumam and Leb-thur) which are considered 'small' languages are allocated one hour each daily. The criteria for categorising a language as a 'small' language are not clear, and could be political rather than objective. Thus, for instance, during the reign of Amin in the 1970s, his language, Kakwa, which hitherto had been categorised as a small language was allocated more time than some of the languages spoken by much larger populations.

In all government rhetoric, the state broadcaster is hailed as the country's 'public broadcaster'. However, the operation of *Radio Uganda* or *UBC* is anything but that of a public broadcaster as the arm of the state weighs heavily on it. Staff of *Radio Uganda* interviewed between April and August 2005 cited political interference as a major challenge. Apart from the fact that self-censorship has over the years been institutionalised, staff of the state broadcaster said they still had to get permission from the Directorate of Information before they could break news and were not allowed to use any electronic equipment to cover the President. They instead had to obtain approved footage from the Presidential Press Unit (PPU) if they were to run footage of the President (Mbabazi-Gunura, 2005).

With the liberalisation of the media sector, the formerly powerful Ministry of Information was turned into one of six 'directorates' under the Office of the President in 1998. According to Nsaba-Butuuro, the Minister of State for Information, Office of the President at the time of the

interviews with staff of the state broadcaster (2005), this was done to enable the security organs of the state better supervise the state broadcaster's operations in a liberalised environment. The restructuring of the Ministry of Information was followed by a drastic reduction in the state broadcaster's finances. According to the Controller of Programmes (Byekwaso, 2005) the total government grant for the running of the station stood at.25 million Uganda shillings (less than $12,000) per year in 2005. Of this, part time staff took up 10 million shillings and the two vehicles that the radio and television station shared took 8 million Uganda shillings. That left 7 million shillings ($3,500 USD) for the rest of the station's operations.

The staff of the *Radio Uganda* interviewed indicated a nostalgic awareness of the ideals of a public broadcaster but argued that their management and financing made it impossible for them to fulfil these ideals. They cited problems related to poor remuneration, dilapidated equipment, and lack of facilitation for day-to-day tasks. As a result, they said the quality of the state radio's programming had suffered, they could not meet their targets and morale was very low. The levels of neglect could be detected in the state of disrepair in which the buildings and the equipment of the state radio were and have been since the early 1980s, as well as the fact that by August 2005, according to Byekwaso (2005), the Controller of Programmes *Radio Uganda* had not conducted a comprehensive listenership survey since 1964. The staff of the state broadcaster attributed the general neglect they had suffered to the fact that the government no longer needed them.

Staff of the state broadcaster interviewed conceded that although the state radio is still the only radio station with a national reach, the privately owned commercial radio stations have taken away some of the state radio's previously assured audience. There is a strong sense that once government allowed private broadcasters on the scene broadcasting in a variety of local languages and reaching different parts of the country, the state lost interest in *Radio Uganda*. With their downgrading to the status of a directorate (rather than a ministry) the state broadcaster lost control over its internally generated funds and more and more government funds were channelled towards the Presidential Press Unit (PPU), the Vice President's Press Unit (VPPU) and the Prime Minister's Press (PMPU) which drew from the same resource pool. Some of the state broadcaster's best staff were also transferred to these specialised press units. The state thus created the PPU, VPPU, and PMPU as parallel structures to better filter vital information about state activities and portray the state in a positive light to the public. There was a corresponding increase in bureaucracy, and there was less and less investment in the infrastructure of the state broadcaster. Staff cuts and overall budget cuts severely affected staff morale and threatened the

very survival of the state broadcaster as the latter could no longer count on government funding to run efficiently.

Furthermore, according to the Controller of Programmes (Byekwaso 2005), there have been few appointments of full-time staff and no promotions at the state broadcaster since 1998. Meanwhile, many members of staff have died and others have joined the blossoming private media. From 450 full-time staff in 1998, *Radio Uganda* and *UTV* together had 206 full time-staff as of June 2005. The state broadcaster was given instructions to find ways of surviving, while at the same time being required to surrender all their earnings from advertising and sponsorship to the Consolidated Fund which is controlled by government. However, staff of *Radio Uganda* were not paid better as a result of this free ticket to collect advertising revenue. This is because the state broadcaster also lost financial autonomy in the process of restructuring. Furthermore, there were great disparities between the highest paid officials and the officials at the lower ranks, which further eroded staff morale. By the end of 2005, *Radio Uganda* was left to operate with a skeleton staff of professionals and to rely largely on part-time staff for its operations. According to Kenyi, the Head of Programmes, Northern Section (2005), recruitment of most of these was not based on qualifications in the area of journalism but rather on their knowledge of a specific language. A number were also recommended by government officials, and once they were in, felt compelled to use the airwaves to campaign for their benefactors.

In the midst of the above problems, the pressure to perform has increased for the state broadcaster as the audience expects more from them, having seen the apparently superior performance of the commercial stations. The sense that the state broadcaster can no longer depend on being the sole broadcaster weighs heavily on the staff.

Turyamwijuka (2005), the Commissioner, Radio, argued that both programming and presentation have been affected by competition from the commercial broadcasters**.** All programming on state radio originates from Kampala (where the headquarters of the *UBC* are based), and is produced in English and only later translated into the appropriate indigenous language. This has reduced the opportunities of the end-users of the programming to participate in the development of the programming. It has also diluted the appropriateness and authenticity of the programming for all except listeners based in Kampala. The staff interviewed said they no longer had the facilities to take radio to the people as used to be the case in the 1960s and 1970s. In the meantime, the state radio's commercial rivals have invested large amounts of money into the purchase of state-of-the-

art equipment, recruitment of presenters and big promotion campaigns. State radio has, correspondingly, lost staff to the commercial broadcasters.

Turyamwijuka added that *Radio Uganda* had lost listenership especially among the youth. Ironically, and as if to underline how low morale had sunk, he said, some of the staff think this is a relief as 'the public does not expect them to be perfect and meet all their needs any more'.

One of the most significant blows which the liberalisation of the media has dealt the state broadcaster is taking away the latter's monopoly in the rural areas. Since its inauguration, the state broadcaster had been the only source of news and information for the majority of Ugandans. Liberalising 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. Many listeners interviewed confessed that while they appreciated *Radio Uganda*'s content in their local languages, when *Radio Uganda* switched to another language, they tuned in to another station. Many also said the private media in their areas addressed their language needs in a more meaningful way than the state broadcaster's segmented approach. Moreover, while all of *Radio Uganda*'s programming originates from 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 centralised.

The comment of Musisi (2005) a senior member of staff in charge of the commercial division at the time of the interviews with *Radio Uganda* staff (August 2005) on the eve of its merger with *UTV* perhaps epitomises the historical, political and social importance of *Radio Uganda*, its unexploited potential and the need to preserve it.

> As a person who has seen *Radio Uganda* in its glory, I wish this thing [*Radio Uganda*] is not neglected [sic]. We had big hopes in the corporation [*UBC*]. It will be absurd if it turns out to be only a change in name. We should offer good programmes like the BBC, but people should not be derailed by copying the commercial stations. If in full use, *Radio Uganda* can answer all our problems, because of its reach.

The interviews with *Radio Uganda* staff revealed that at *Radio Uganda*, it was the responsibility of the different Heads of Section in consultation with the Controller of Programmes to allocate

time to the different languages. Furthermore, the interviews revealed that this was negotiated, and that demands for time allocation were rooted in listener preferences, gauged mostly informally. The programme schedule was revised every three months and the percentage of time allocated to each language ideally was based on government census figures from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

It may be concluded from the above that *Radio Uganda* has operated under severe budgetary constraints and limited staff and this has limited its capacity to play the ideal role of a 'public broadcaster'. One also notes that there has to date been no written policy on the use of the indigenous languages on *Radio Uganda*. This notwithstanding, *Radio Uganda*'s mandate has been understood as being 'to broadcast to as many Ugandans as possible in their languages'. This absence of a formal policy has created room for political manipulation, influence and patronage in the state media. It has also placed a heavy burden on the state broadcaster who at the same time has had to compete with a poorly regulated commercial broadcasting industry.

5.4.1   Indigenous language content and participation on the state broadcaster

The language practice of *Radio Uganda*, according to Byekwaso (2005), the Controller of Programmes, was largely guided by 'geo-economics'. The languages allocated prime time slots had to be of some economic value. For instance, there was more sponsorship for Luganda programmes on *Radio Uganda* because there are more listeners for Luganda than for any other language.[11] Those languages that have a bearing on production at the national level, Byekwaso added, (like Lumasaba whose speakers produce coffee, a leading cash crop) were favoured over others. Others like Ngakarimojong, on the other hand, spoken by one of the poorest communities in Uganda, were allocated one hour a day. Thus although *Radio Uganda* broadcast in 24 languages, most of this time was dominated by English, Luganda and Kiswahili. Of these, only Luganda is an indigenous language. The use of most of the other indigenous languages amounted to tokenism as none of them was allocated more than two hours a day. Given that there are commercial and community stations in all regions of the country, each broadcasting in only one or two indigenous languages, the chances of *Radio Uganda* (and now *UBC*) competing for a consistent audience are greatly curtailed. Interviews with *Radio Uganda* listeners in all regions of

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[11] It is important to note, though, that there are many non-native Luganda speakers who listen to Luganda programmes. While for some this is out of choice, for others it is out of necessity, as many broadcasters in the Bantu-speaking parts of the country choose to use Luganda because of its numeric advantage over other languages.

the country revealed that typically people revert to local private stations when *Radio Uganda* begins transmission in a 'strange' language. This suggests the possibility that the proliferation of private (mostly commercial) broadcasters could be driving Ugandans further into insularity. This raises the question: Could it be that while the proliferation of broadcast media that broadcast in the indigenous languages on one hand improves people's chances of participation in public debate through the media, it could on the other hand reduce the chances of the broadcast media enhancing a shared public sphere outside people's ethnic environs?

Some languages found their way onto *Radio Uganda* due to political clout rather than numeric strength. Hence Mbabazi-Gunura (2005), a senior producer at *Radio Uganda* in explaining the presence of languages of some of the smallest communities and the absence of 'larger' languages on *Radio Uganda* put it this way,

> Notwithstanding the official demographic logic for selection, the decision on which language to include is always political. There may be some economic considerations as well but it is more a mixture of population size and political muscle.

Mbabazi-Gunura reeled off a long list of small languages that have a place on state radio and the political muscle that has made this possible:

> Lusoga was brought in by Basoga Nsadhu, (Minister for information at the time), Madi by Moses Ali (First Deputy Prime Minister), Lukonzo by Crispus Kiyonga (Chief Political Commissar), Atororo by Paul Etiang (Minister for Information at the time), Luluuli by Muruuli Mukasa (then minister of state for defense) and Leb-thur by Omwony Ojok (member of parliament).

Mbabazi-Gunura further pointed out that for each of these 'small' languages, there was already an area language on radio that would be intelligible to the speakers. She explained that politicians resist any attempt to cut down on these languages, adding that 'the public would agitate if their own language]was] touched'. However, the role of politicians in determining what language got on air introduced a degree of arbitrariness into the operation of *Radio Uganda*. As Turyamwijuka (2005), the Commissioner, Radio noted, 'if the politician pushing for a language leaves the (political) stage that language may drop off the agenda as in the case of Atororo (Etiang) and Luluuli (Muruuli Mukasa).'

Budgetary constraints have also had an impact on the number of languages available on Radio Uganda. Because the labour force was cut to almost half its size between 1998 and 2005, there

were no established staff in the smaller languages and sometimes a language got dropped because the state broadcaster could no longer afford to pay a part-timer to broadcast in the given language. However, according to Kenyi (2005), Head of Programmes, Northern Division, members of parliament have been known to offer to pay the salary of a part-timer to ensure the language of their constituents stays on air.

The indigenous languages in Uganda have been tied very closely to local content. In a study commissioned by the Broadcasting Council in Uganda (Uganda. Broadcasting Council 2004) and conducted in the four regions of Uganda (Eastern, Western, Northern, and Central), those interviewed about their understanding of local content raised three main issues that they considered essential in defining local content (2004:52-53). These included comprehension, relevance, and utility. They argued that local content had to be in a language that the people understood. Secondly, they said the content had to be relevant and in consonance with local issues and people had to feel 'at home' with it. Finally, they said content was not 'local content' unless it had an aspect of utility for their livelihoods and experiences. The findings of the Broadcasting Council study further indicate that using the local languages in the media is considered important because it gives people a sense of belonging and they are better able to understand what is going on. Furthermore, broadcasting in the local languages enables more people to participate in debate and provides accessible information for the common people, amplifying their voice. This way, such programming is seen as strengthening civil society groups that can articulate economic or social concerns. Finally, programming in the indigenous languages is considered by many to be more appealing than programming in foreign languages as it uses expressions that make sense to them.

Regardless of the levels of education, the majority of people interviewed for the Broadcasting Council study in all five districts covered said they preferred to receive all programmes except music and foreign sports in a local language. The same study found out that while there may be many languages spoken in each district of Uganda, there seemed to be a majority language in every district. The current investigation also indicates that it is the same majority languages that all the private commercial stations capitalise on (Uganda. Uganda Broadcasting Council 2004:30-35). These include English, the 4Rs, Luganda and Lwo.

Current debates on local content have advanced the argument that a key factor in diversity is a thriving independent production sector. The argument is that unless the media are encouraged or compelled to devote a section of their programming time to independently produced content, the

demands of the market and the pressures of competition will cause the content repertoire to get narrower and narrower, compromising diversity for viewers and listeners who cannot afford to pay for variety offered on pay channels (cf. Chapter 2 for a discussion of the logic of critical political economy in this regard).

According to Mbabazi-Gunura (2005), Head, Western Section, most of the interactive programming on *Radio Uganda* was designed for political mobilisation towards government policies and programmes. All the language sections of *Radio Uganda* were expected to regularly host politicians to present their political programmes or defend them and interact with their constituents in their indigenous languages. Gunura (2005) pointed out that indigenous language programming for the different language sections of *Radio Uganda* also dealt with disseminating information from government, and the sources here included ministers, the different organs of government and the NRM secretariat. The staff of *Radio Uganda* said they occasionally hosted opposition politicians but they explained that they had to exercise excessive caution as the wrong statement could earn them a reprimand from the minister. A comment from Turyamwijuka (2005), the Commissioner for Radio, captures the delicate balance that the staff of the state broadcaster had to maintain: 'You can host anybody, [but] you cannot allow anybody to call in and abuse the president. As much as there is freedom of speech, we are partly the PR station of government.'

Interviews with *Radio Uganda* listeners' groups in the Central, Eastern, Northern and Western regions of Uganda revealed the majority of *Radio Uganda* listeners did not participate in the state media by calling into shows even though some of them, particularly in the Central and Western regions owned mobile telephones. Most of the *Radio Uganda* listeners said they were more open to writing letters or just listening, even for those shows that were designed to be interactive. Most of the latter shows have a list of regular callers who tend to be the more urban or peri-urban based, but according to the most recent population census report (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2005), nearly 90% of Ugandans live in the rural areas. While some *Radio Uganda* producers said they had attempted to involve people in the formulation of programmes, they added that this was greatly constrained by resources. However, all the producers interviewed agreed that people were more likely to participate in a programme if their language was used, and that the local language interactive programmes on *Radio Uganda* were much more popular than the English interactive programmes.

Challenges notwithstanding, *Radio Uganda* still appears to be doing better than its commercial counterparts in terms of availing a variety of indigenous language programming. However, it should be noted that the state broadcaster's chances of offering diversity in content are still compromised by its political obligation to cover the activities of government and disseminate information on government programmes, limited resources, failure to source programming from independent producers and to gauge audience trends through regular surveys.

5.5   THE STRUCTURE AND OPERATION OF UGANDA'S PRIVATE MEDIA

5.5.1   Ownership and political influence in Uganda's private broadcast media

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.

The investigations at the Registrar of Companies and the Broadcasting Council reveal that apart from businessmen and women, the broadcast media in Uganda are concentrated in the hands of government, the rich and the powerful, individual politicians, religious organisations and other non-governmental organisations. The state controls the largest number of frequencies (see Addendum 2b. Radio stations licensed and operating). Even so-called community stations are in reality not owned by communities but by powerful sponsors (like the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)). Perhaps because of the costs of setting up and running a radio or television station compared to the average Ugandan's income, the people who own the media tend to belong to the same (middle-class) socio-economic group. The largest number of private stations in Uganda are owned by active politicians mostly from the ruling NRM and by churches or religious organisations. Evangelical Christians dominate the latter. The evangelical Christians have their benefactors in the United States of America and internally are widely believed to be closely linked to the President's family (and by implication, the ruling NRM). The Catholic Church is closely linked with the opposition Democratic Party. Muslims, who form the third largest religious grouping in Uganda after the Catholics and Protestants have not as a group

invested heavily in the broadcast media. 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.

The historical advantage of the Central region is reflected in the uneven distribution of the media. 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 (see Addendum 2a. Radio stations and distribution of radio frequencies by district). 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' area.[12]

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 characterised by great ethnic heterogeneity, like Eastern Uganda, some of the stations broadcast in up to seven languages.

Records further reveal that in every region of the country there is at least one station (and usually more) where the key owners or shareholders/directors belong to the ruling NRM. It is not unusual

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[12] Information on the coverage of different stations was obtained from the Dennis Lukaaya, Operations Manager, Broadcasting Council at the time of the investigation.

for key politicians to own media stations, especially in their constituencies. These politicians have used their stations to mobilise 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. Although this 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.

5.5.2 Cultural power and station ownership in Uganda's private broadcast media

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 epitomises the interests of the powerful Baganda ethnic group and has run into trouble with the government, often being threatened with closure. Apart from one news bulletin, CBS broadcasts exclusively in Luganda, the language of native Baganda and also the language spoken by the largest number of non-Baganda in Uganda. The directors of *CBS* represent the different clans of Buganda.

5.5.3 Poverty and media ownership in Uganda

This investigation suggests that on the whole, the poor do not own media channels in Uganda. 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 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 have 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.

5.6   THE OPERATION OF THE PRIVATE MEDIA IN UGANDA

5.6.1   The 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* recently 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 recently 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.

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. All the eleven radio stations in the different regions of Uganda that this researcher 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 4Rs. 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' (Opio 2005).

5.6.2   The community media

Financial constraints define the operation of the community media in Uganda. Although registered as not-for-profit, most community stations have defied Broadcasting Council rules and taken to advertising just to survive. In many ways, therefore, community radio station 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 fulfil their mandate as media by and for their given communities as they are often answerable to donors as well as to advertisers and sponsors. Lutaaya attributes this to lack of political clarity on the role of community media in the broadcast industry.

Across the broadcast media, the largest number of broadcasting hours goes to English programmes (both on radio and TV), followed by Luganda. All other languages on Kampala-based stations appear only as 'fillers' during entertainment-based shows where the presenter tries to pander to as many listeners as possible by using a phrase or two in the different languages spoken in that area. There is reason to believe therefore that the phenomenon is related to the economics of broadcasting. Luganda commands the largest percentage of speakers in the whole country. English on the other hand was Uganda's sole official language between independence in 1962 and 2005. (Kiswahili was declared second official language by Uganda's parliament in 2005). Over time it has evolved from the language of the colonisers to the language of educated Africans and on to the language of big business. It has international clout and has proven impossible to challenge in the position that it occupies as official language and predominant medium of education. Luganda too has an assured position of power because it has numbers,

appeals to deep-seated loyalties to the Buganda monarchy and has the legacy of indirect rule to build on in large sections of the country.

5.7   INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE CONTENT AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PRIVATELY OWNED MEDIA

The factors that dictate content in the commercially owned media differ from those that dictate content in the state media. With the increased commercialisation of the media, the inclusion of certain languages in the media is primarily based on whether they are seen as of any commercial value to the enterprise. Thus the main consideration in the inclusion of a language on the programming schedule is what the media (or media house) will gain financially from the language.

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 & Kibenge 2004; Uganda. Broadcasting Council 2004). It was thus deemed important to probe the operation of the independent production sector in Uganda given the central part that this can play in promoting diversity of content. Media owners and managers interviewed said many radio stations maintain a close relationship with producers, and in particular members of the entertainment sector (like musicians and actors) to ensure a steady flow of popular locally produced content. A large percentage of what might be considered independently produced content for the broadcast media is produced by theatre artists with whom the stations sign contracts. Independent producers interviewed in turn conceded that they were dependent on the media for the promotion of their work. However, 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 for 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.

There is a struggling independent production sector in Uganda, which mostly represents the feature/documentary and plain entertainment type of programming rather than news, information or current affairs programming. There are many small operations but no umbrella organisation

uniting audio and video producers (although one has recently been established for theatre artists who also contribute significantly to media content). Most media content produced outside broadcast stations is for television rather than radio and even this is limited to the capital city. Although there are some relatively larger production companies in operation, these are mostly multi-national corporations who deal in commercial production for the advertising industry.

Most audio-production is in English. Some companies do translate into the indigenous languages if requested, but English is their default production language. The only exception to this is music where there is a growing amount of production by local artistes. One producer interviewed argued that English appeals to his target audience. Another producer said NGOs insist on English even if it is to be translated. Two plausible explanations for this are that the primary targets of this content are the donors (who commission the production in the first place), and that the international NGOs are deliberately promoting their languages (notably English) in the face of competing indigenous languages. Ironically, though, all but one of the producers interviewed admitted that there are some undeniable advantages to producing in the indigenous languages. Archie Luyimbazi (2005), an audio-visual producer put it this way: 'If key informants are more comfortable in the local languages they express themselves better. Some programmes only make sense in the indigenous languages…. Some concepts are hard to translate. Even body language makes a difference. '

However, although the producers acknowledge that their programmes would probably have more appeal in the indigenous languages, they argue that it is not cost effective to produce in a multiplicity of languages. Hence Luyimbazi (2005) concludes: 'There would be even more advantages in producing in the local languages if the audiences were homogenous. But [Great Lakes Media] does not broadcast to a particular ethnic group so the language advantage is lost.'

All the companies whose proprietors were interviewed said they have chosen to deal in a variety of themes and to derive their agenda from the 'client' who is often a government department or an international NGO. There is very little specialisation in any thematic area as the agenda for content tends to be set by the client.

The producers interviewed were unanimous on the fact that one of the greatest challenges they face is related to the costs of production and uncertainty about recouping what they have invested. They related this to the fact that audiences had become more sophisticated in their tastes and demand more from the producers. They also argued that fast-changing technologies have set new

production standards which they strive to keep up with. A policy environment that seems oblivious of the needs of producers compounds this. To get around this, producers make their product as culturally neutral as possible, and keep away from the complications of translation by maintaining English as the default language of production. According to Ssemwogerere (2005), theatre artistes' work is typically sponsored by corporate entities like MTN and Celtel, two of the largest multi-national companies dealing in mobile telephony. The two have branches in Uganda. Most producers of feature/documentary programming interviewed on the contrary run small organisations that are financed from personal savings or from clients, who are mostly government, NGOs or international organisations for whom they produce documentaries. As one producer revealed, the average producer in Uganda does not know where his or her next job will come from and therefore how long he or she can stay afloat (Luyimbazi, 2005).

Luyimbazi (2005) further explained that there is a shortage of good local content producers, because there is a shortage of people skilled enough with the local languages that are also comfortable with the production equipment. Formal education in Uganda has often been seen as inversely proportional to versatility in the indigenous languages so the most well trained producers are likely to perform very poorly in their mother-tongues or other indigenous languages. Furthermore, Luyimbazi added, the education system has not put any emphasis on the local languages even though they may be provided for in policy (see Chapter 6 for a detailed discussion of policy provisions for the indigenous languages). Language also constitutes a challenge for producers because it is hard to target the numerous ethnic groups of Uganda each in their own language or dialect.

On how to deal with some of these challenges, the producers interviewed said they have tried to cope by targeting an international audience. They explained that this is because the exotic has appeal abroad, and these audiences can afford their product. However, interviewees also said many upcoming Ugandan producers have not explored the international market because they fear that they will be overwhelmed by demand. They have also had to set a high premium on technical quality, which has meant investing heavily in equipment and human resources. Interviewees said much of the content produced independently is distributed internationally because that is where their clientele is. The rest is distributed in Kampala where the private commercial media are concentrated and in one or two of the larger towns that have relatively successful radio stations.

Producers interviewed also said most small production companies in Uganda operate on a lean staff, and outsource services when they need them. Independent producers interviewed also revealed that quite often services are out-sourced from the state broadcaster whose staff are considered better trained. This leaves the state broadcaster unable to compete favourably with its rivals as its best staff (and sometimes equipment) are often out on private assignment. Every member of staff with the state broadcaster interviewed admitted that their colleagues do make their services available as talent for private stations. They say they do this to survive since government pays them so poorly.

According to Luyimbazi (2005), sources for the content produced 'independently' are largely 'clients and their clients'. The clients include representatives of government and NGOs while their clients include beneficiaries of their programmes and projects. In addition, sources include newspapers, the internet, promotional literature, research, and beneficiaries of programmes. Often production companies have to tailor their content to fit the prevailing political atmosphere. One interviewee admitted that once his company had had to tone down criticism against the government's Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) programme even though the umbrella organisation for NGOs in Uganda (DENIVA) would have wanted them to be more critical. He explained that he had had to do this to avoid jeopardising further business opportunities with government.

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 commercialised 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) emphasises 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.

From the above picture, it appears that the private media's potential to contribute to linguistic diversity and hence enhance participation in Uganda is curtailed by a complex of factors principal among which are inadequate financing, commercial pressures, a weak production sector and a regulatory framework that does not adequately secure the place of community broadcasting. This coupled with the challenges of the state broadcaster that include a lack of both editorial and

financial independence greatly affect the opportunities of Ugandans to benefit from diverse opportunities for self-expression and representation. This is complicated further by Uganda's great linguistic diversity which unless well regulated could pose practical problems in ensuring meaningful diversity in programming.

5.8   CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an account of the history of the media in Uganda with a focus on radio. It has related the development of the media to political, economic and cultural factors in Uganda's history. The chapter has briefly analysed the structure and operation of both the state and the privately-owned media with a focus on diversity. Chapter 6 constitutes an examination of the regulatory environment for diversity and participation in Uganda's broadcasting.

CHAPTER 6

6.0 THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT FOR LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN UGANDA'S BROADCAST MEDIA

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapters 4 and 5 analysed the political, economic and cultural history of Uganda and they sought to place the state owned media and the privately owned media in Uganda in the context of the general commercialisation of the media. Both chapters sought to relate changes in Uganda's broadcast media environment with changes in the broader cultural, technological and political arena. The chapters also sought to relate these changes to the opportunities Ugandans have to meaningfully participate in broadcast media debate using their own languages.

This chapter seeks to establish links between policy and regulation for linguistic diversity in Uganda's broadcasting and the ability of Ugandans to participate in the democratic process. The chapter's focus therefore is on evaluating the provisions in Uganda's policy, law and regulation for people to be able to utilise their local languages in exercising their right to participate in the political process through the broadcast media. The broad questions this chapter seeks to address are: What are the salient features of broadcast policy and regulation in Uganda as it relates to linguistic diversity? How do these features relate to the local socio-historical context as well as the wider context of the commercialisation of the broadcast media? What are the implications of all this for Ugandans' participation in the democratic process through the broadcast media? The chapter thus examines the ideal as well as the realities of regulating key areas pertaining to diversity and participation such as public and commercial broadcasting, local content, the frequency spectrum and media ownership.

6.2   THE LAWS GOVERNING BROADCASTING IN UGANDA

Some major laws currently governing the broadcasting sector in Uganda with regards to diversity include the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (Uganda 1995), the Penal Code (Amendment) Act (Uganda 1998), the Electronic Media Act, (Uganda 2000a), the Communications Act (Uganda 1977) and the *Uganda Broadcasting Corporation* (*UBC*) Act (Uganda 2005). These are briefly examined below in relation to diversity and participation.

6.2.1   The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (Uganda 1995)

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda recognises the citizen's right to freedom of information and the media (Uganda 1995 sec 29) and the right of access to information (Uganda 1995 sec 41). The constitution also lists specific ethnic groups as indigenous. The most recent population census report (Uganda Bureau of Statistics. 2005) which was conducted in 2002 lists 56 Ugandan ethnic groups. However, the most recent revision of the Constitution lists 65 unique ethnic groups. Each of these groups is associated with a language or dialect of its own. Although there is a level of mutual intelligibility among some neighbouring groups, there are many ethnic groups in Uganda whose languages are mutually unintelligible to each other (see Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of the Ugandan language situation).

Though the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda recognises Uganda's multi-ethnic nature, it does not provide for any of the indigenous languages to be used outside the domestic sphere of the family and clan. Rather, the constitution stipulates that English shall be the official language (Uganda 1995 sec x). This is perhaps to be traced back to Uganda's colonial history which entrenched English as the official language. It has been further reinforced by the current hegemony of English at the global level as the language of international business. English plays a similar role in neighbouring Kenya, but in Kenya Kiswahili is recognised as the national language and has been the second official language and a major medium of instruction since independence. As a result, Kiswahili has taken root among people of various classes and it is used with comfort by a large percentage of Kenyans. Kenya differs from Uganda also in that, like Tanzania, there are some Kenyans for whom Kiswahili is the mother-tongue, which is not the case in Uganda. The main news bulletins and official announcements on the state radio and television in Uganda are therefore in English. On average, English takes up more time across the broadcast sector every day than any other language.

The majority of Ugandans speak one or more indigenous languages. A relatively smaller number speak Kiswahili. A very small percentage of Ugandans are able to read, write or otherwise communicate in English. This is because formal education, the main means by which Ugandans learn English, has been a privilege throughout most of Uganda's history. Thus at a very basic level a large number of Ugandans are excluded by language from official discourse that they would otherwise be a part of through the media. Though the state broadcaster makes an effort to translate most important government information into the indigenous languages, this is not provided for in legislation and is done on a case-by-case basis depending on the availability of resources. Besides, the privately owned media which account for a much larger listenership than the state media are under no obligation to translate official communication into the indigenous languages if English happens to be their chosen medium.

One of the major language pre-occupations of successive Ugandan governments since independence has been the search for a 'unifying' language rather than for a way to balance the needs of nation-building and the needs of cultural diversity and enhanced participation for the majority in the democratic process. The search for a national language was thus one of the major issues that the Odoki Commission (Uganda 1992) was charged with as part of the consultations preceding the 1995 constitution. The Odoki Commission concluded that there was no national consensus on the national language and that the matter should be deferred. They proposed that in the meantime, resources should be put into developing Kiswahili as a *lingua franca*. The Ssempebwa Commission (Uganda 2003), set up prior to a revision of the 1995 Constitution in 2005 came to a similar conclusion and recommended that English be retained as official language and be reinforced with French, Kiswahili be developed as a regional *lingua franca,* all other Ugandan languages be enriched and the state develop a national language policy (Uganda. Commission of Inquiry 2003:19-257). The above facts demonstrate not only the immense linguistic diversity of Uganda but also the potential complications for regulating language diversity in the broadcast media in spite of constitutional provisions for freedom of expression and access to information both of which in the Ugandan context lean heavily on language.

6.2.2   The Penal Code Act (Amendment) 1998

The Penal Code Act contains a number of provisions that may not bear direct relevance to linguistic diversity but have a bearing on how freely people may express themselves in the broadcast media. Some of these have the overall effect of diluting the constitutional provisions for

freedom of expression and access to information discussed above. The provisions in the Penal Code Act constitute an ominous backdrop to all other laws and have the potential of causing journalists to refrain from publishing 'risky' information that may be pertinent to open democratic debate. These provisions may also instil a level of self-censorship among media owners and gatekeepers. One of these provisions relates to the prohibition of the publication of information prejudicial to national security (Uganda 1998 sec 39A). Whereas national security is a valid concern and should be safeguarded, the state has often used it as a cover for stifling freedom of expression. Any information published about the military in a situation of ongoing conflict could render a journalist liable to prosecution. Stations have been closed down, accompanied by a lot of debate on whether or not they ought to have been closed down or not. While strong commercial stations manage to resume production, weak stations may not be able to recover from such repressive measures.

Ugandan journalists also live in fear of being charged with sedition (Uganda 1998 sec 41), because unlike in other jurisdictions (like the United Kingdom) sedition in Uganda carries criminal sanctions. Nearly every journalist that has been brought before the courts of law in Uganda has been charged with *interalia*, sedition. Although the state rarely wins sedition cases because intention is difficult to prove, these laws come in handy to intimidate journalists and media houses and to interrupt the smooth running of the concerned media and journalists. More importantly these laws curtail democratic debate that the state may find uncomfortable. In addition, the Penal Code Act contains other provisions such as 'promoting sectarianism' (Uganda Penal Code Act 1998 sec 42a), 'incitement to violence' (Uganda 1998 sec 50), and 'criminal defamation' (Uganda 1998 sec 174-181). What these provisions have in common is that their interpretation is subject to manipulation and being part of the Penal Code Act, they all invite criminal sanctions. Although these provisions do not on the surface appear to relate to diversity, they form part of the environment within which the media in Uganda operate thus potentially limiting debate.

6.2.3   The Communications Act (1997)

The main objective of the Communications Act (Uganda 1997) is stated as 'to increase penetration of telecommunications services driven by private sector investment instead of government.' The law's objectives seem to be aimed more at increasing investment in rather than access to communication facilities (Uganda 1997 sec 3). Furthermore, the Uganda Communications Act (Uganda 1997 sec 5c, e) which came into being a year later than the

Electronic Media Act and is thus deemed to supersede previous related laws also empowers the Uganda Communications Commission to allocate and license the use of radio frequency spectrum and to process applications for the location of satellite orbital locations as well as to supervise and enforce the conditions of those licenses. The above scenario has been compounded by the fact that the National ICT policy, which also came into being after the Electronic Media Act, in many ways presumes a converged regulator. The confusion of roles and the resulting lethargy on the part of the broadcast regulator must be seen as a contributing factor to the fact that the broadcast sector is hardly regulated and the regulator has focused most of its energies on reigning in stations whose programming is deemed to 'offend public morals' or 'threaten national security' rather than on broader issues relating to diversity.

6.2.4 The Electronic Media Act (2000)

The Electronic Media Act, which came into being (as a statute) in 1996 establishes the Broadcasting Council as the regulator for the broadcasting sector. The duties of the broadcast regulator (Uganda 2000a sec 10) include coordinating and supervising broadcasting activities, standardising, planning and managing the frequency spectrum dedicated to broadcasting, and allocating spectrum resources in such manner as to ensure the widest possible variety of programming and optimal utilisation of those spectrum resources. The regulator's duties also include the mandate to consider applications for frequencies and to advise government on any matters relating to broadcast policy. The Electronic Media Act also lays down minimum broadcasting standards (Uganda 2000a First Schedule s. 8) among which is the requirement that programmes should not promote ethnic prejudice. However, this Act makes no provision for linguistic diversity and offers no guidance on specific roles for any of Uganda's languages, and neither does it provide for the presence of the indigenous languages in the broadcast media. This has freed broadcasters to choose those languages that they consider financially viable, to the exclusion of many minority languages.

Thus Uganda's Electronic Media (2000) Act is on the whole a weak law with regards to provisions for diversity. The object of the Electronic Media Act seems to have been to legitimise the liberalisation of the broadcast media which had preceded the enactment of the law. According to Ogundimu (1996:166) the liberalisation of the media in Uganda too was influenced by pressure from entrepreneurs rather than concerns for freedom of expression or diversity and pluralism. Because of this, the electronic media law has many loopholes when compared to broadcast legislation in other parts of the world, and is badly in need of revision.

6.2.5   The Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) Act (2005)

The most recent piece of legislation affecting the broadcast sector's regulation is the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) Act (Uganda 2005). This Act purports to transform the state broadcaster, that is *Radio Uganda* and *Uganda Television* (*UTV*) into a public broadcaster. However, the Act at the same time stipulates that the *UBC* will be wholly owned and controlled by government. The Act further states that the public broadcaster will be sustained through government grants and loans, loans from 'any person,' 'any moneys that may become payable to the corporation in the discharge of its functions and commercial activities,' and 'television viewing license fees and advertising revenue' (Uganda 2005 sec 13). The opportunity of the television viewing license fees as a source of revenue for the *UBC* was recently lost when, amidst growing public outcries about the irrationality of paying fees for a poor, unreliable and partisan service, the President ordered the Minister in charge of Information to suspend the fees limiting their payment only to hotels and other commercially operated entities. This not only illustrates direct executive intervention in regulation, it also leaves the funding of the public broadcaster at the mercy of government and advertisers. Furthermore, it demonstrates a conflict between policy formulation and implementation in the sector. Given that there are no clear provisions in the *UBC* Act to protect the broadcaster from manipulation by government or business, this can significantly affect the editorial independence of the public broadcaster and have negative consequences for diversity. It could also lay the foundation for linguistic diversity being set aside or abandoned in favour of commercial expediency.

Furthermore, the *UBC* Act mandates the 'public broadcaster' to 'voice public opinion and criticism of a given Government policy in a fair and objective manner' but 'without becoming an institutional opponent of the Government or its interests' (Uganda 2005 sec 20). This too could contribute to 'libel chill,' causing the media to permit only those types of debate that would be in line with government policy and rhetoric. This is veiled censorship, as it particularly tends to shut out the voices of the opposition.

Thus in an environment where there are no adequate provisions for diversity, the *UBC* Act serves to restrain rather than free the 'public broadcaster,' reducing the latter's chances of playing a major role in promoting diversity, including linguistic diversity.

6.3   POLICY GUIDING THE BROADCAST SECTOR IN UGANDA

The following section examines the formal expression of the current government's position on the issue of linguistic diversity and highlights the political-historical context within which this position arises. To achieve this, the section examines the different policies in the context of their relevance to linguistic diversity and participation. The policies examined include the Education White Paper (Uganda. Policy Review Commission 1992), the Communication White Paper (Uganda, Department of Communications 1998), the National ICT Policy (Uganda, Ministry of Works, Transport and Communications 2003) and the Draft National Broadcasting Policy (Uganda, Directorate of Information 2004).

6.3.1   The Education White Paper

The position of the National Resistance Movement government on linguistic diversity has been most clearly articulated in the Education White Paper (1992). The Education White Paper (Uganda. Policy Review Commission 1992:6) lists forging national unity, evolving democratic institutions and guaranteeing fundamental human rights (among which is freedom of expression and communication), among Uganda's national goals. The White Paper further lays out government's philosophy of national integration. The government of Uganda in the Education White paper holds that it prioritises unity between ethnic groups and social classes, evolution of 'common national values,' elimination of historical regional imbalances and economic disparities among regions, and 'the democratic establishment of cultural authority,' (a veiled reference to the restoration of the traditional kingdoms banned by the UPC government in 1967).[1] However, government also expresses commitment to ensuring all peoples' 'effective and purposeful participation in organising social service programmes, preventing individuals from imposing dictatorship and tyranny on society (or promoting their 'sectarian' interests) thus enabling people to plan, manage and administer their own community and national affairs (Uganda. Policy Review Commission 1992:6). It is important to note here the tension between government's emphasis, on the one hand, on ensuring 'effective and purposeful participation,' and, on the other hand, unifying the country and minimising sectarianism. This tension has expressed itself in a number of contradictions in government policy relating to linguistic diversity.

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[1] See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the banning of the kingdoms in Uganda.

The Ugandan government (Uganda. Policy Review Commission 1992:16-21) comes out clearly in favour of promoting Kiswahili rather than any of the indigenous languages for official use. Indeed, government presents Uganda's linguistic multiplicity as an obstacle in the way of Uganda's achieving 'rapid universal and democratised education, literacy for all, intellectualisation of all peoples as well as the attainment of the much needed national unity' (Uganda. Policy Review Commission 1992:15).

Perhaps because of fearing to deal with the tensions that result from seeking to balance diverse local linguistic interests, the government expresses support for the use of African languages (such as Kiswahili) as national media of communication and, (as much as possible), media of instruction. Government also asserts its determination to prevent the development of a national language policy that is based on, and is likely to promote in society the problems of 'emotionalism, sectarianism, reactionary prejudices and inflexibility, and therefore likely to hinder progress.'

Hence the Ugandan government presents Uganda's language problem as the failure to adopt a unifying language for pragmatic reasons such as greater economic opportunities and national integration and cohesion. The role of the indigenous languages in enabling citizens to meaningfully participate in political debate is not tackled in a direct way in the Education White Paper. Government rather prioritises the adoption of a 'Pan-African' language as a means of achieving national and regional unity.

What emerges from the position of the NRM government on the role of the indigenous languages in the public domain vis-à-vis other languages is that English should continue to play the dominant role as the language of public communication but Kiswahili should be vigorously promoted with a view to it taking over this role from English. Below, therefore is how government sees the potential role of Kiswahili:

> The rapid spread of permanent, functional and developmental literacy (through Kiswahili) will be important in the establishment of a solid and permanent basis for the development of democratic ideas, ideals, values, practices, institutions and systems in the country…(and)…the establishment of genuine, and permanent ideological and quantitative (numerical) unity among all citizens. It will also enable the masses of the working people in the rural and urban production sectors to participate fully and effectively in the local and national politics and in the control of political power and economic markets in the country (Uganda. Policy Review Commission 1992:18).

It is important to note that among the stated strategies for promoting Kiswahili is that the national media will give special emphasis to the use of Kiswahili as 'the main language for national unity' and promote it through the education system and the media. The implementation strategy focuses almost entirely on Kiswahili, hardly saying how the indigenous language will be promoted.

Government's position on the role of the indigenous languages is that they should be nurtured especially through using them as media of instruction in the early half of the primary school cycle. However, the NRM government clearly does not see a role for the indigenous languages in the public domain in the near future. The strategy one perceives in looking analytically at the Education White Paper is one where the role of the various indigenous languages will be gradually minimised as English and Kiswahili take a more prominent position. Indeed the Education White Paper sees the identification and use in education of area languages as a step towards reducing what it sees as the divisive potential of the indigenous languages.

It should be noted, however, that while there is a clear push towards integration and perhaps even cultural homogenisation in this policy, subsequent white papers and draft policies (especially in the media and communication sectors) seem to significantly depart from this and to acknowledge and celebrate Uganda's ethnic and linguistic diversity. Such inconsistencies could partly explain why both the government's position expressed in the Education White Paper and its subsequent positions expressed in communication policy documents and legislation have largely not been followed up by any concrete legislation or action with regard to the role of the different languages in the public domain.

6.3.2 The Draft Communication White Paper

In 1999, seven years after the liberalisation of the media and three years after the Press and Journalists Statute and the Electronic Media Statute (later to become the Press and Journalists Act 2000 and Electronic Media Act 2000 respectively) came into being, the government of Uganda developed a White Paper on regulating the broadcast sector. The Draft Communication White Paper (Uganda. Department of Communications 1999) was the result of a relatively wide consultative process both at the national and local levels. It was intended to pave the way for a revision of the existing broadcast law to bring it in conformity with international standards.

The Communication White Paper (Uganda. Department of Communications 1999) states that government's priorities for development include 'the practice of good governance.' It further

recognises 'the fundamental importance in any policy for development of creating the conditions for the fullest participation by all sections of the population in the process.' Finally, it links the policy to the government's decentralisation policy[2] which is intended to ensure that 'opportunities exist at every level of Ugandan society for discussion and the formulation of local opinion' (Uganda. Department of Communications 1999:4). The Communication White paper states that to ensure such participation, the means of communication from centre to grassroots and vice versa must be addressed. However the White Paper goes on to say that the information which is of interest to government is that about the physical circumstances of the population (e.g. health, education, instruction on agriculture as well as citizenship and the cultivation of a sense of national identity (Uganda. Department of Communication 1999:4). The Communication White Paper defines good governance as:

> [T]he exercise of politico-administrative and managerial authority and order which is legitimate, accountable, transparent, democratic, efficient and equitable in resources allocation and utilisation, and responsive to the critical needs of promoting human welfare and positive transformation of society (Uganda. Department of Communications 1999:6).

Government in the Draft Communication White Paper recognises the positive role that village councils[3] have played in improving the flow of information between the governors and the governed. It however notes the limitations in the available means of information among which are technical and linguistic limitations (Uganda. Department of Communication 1999:7-8).

The objectives of government's policy in communication and information are articulated as 'to ensure the provision of information for development should be as comprehensive as possible and *so designed that it reaches its targeted recipients in the forms best adapted to their needs and circumstances of reception* [italics mine].' (Uganda. Department of Communication 1999:11).

Some of the principles underlying the Draft Communication policy are that the policy must be developed to stimulate the awareness of national identity in pursuit of socio-economic, political and cultural goals, reflect the ideal of inclusiveness and enable each citizen to affirm his or her personal and cultural identity. Others include the idea that the policy should increase people's access to independent public means of information and communication and ensure that the whole

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[2] The decentralisation policy entailed the devolution of power, services and resources to the Districts from the Central government. See Golooba-Mutebi (2004) for a detailed treatment of decentralisation.
[3] Village councils are local administrative units. They represent an attempt to involve Ugandans at the grassroots in their governance and have provision for balanced representation in terms of gender, disability etc.

of the population benefits from modern communication technology and that rural communities are treated on an equal footing (with) urban communities.

Government in the Communication White Paper argues that the policy of decentralisation provides further impetus for communication policy to ensure the availability of vital information at every level of society so that people have the information they need for regular and well-informed public discussion and decision-making. It is important to note, however, that there is little or no mention in the Draft Communication White Paper of the importance of clear policy on the roles the different languages will play in the media in this process, given the level of linguistic multiplicity and the country's political history of ethnic tension.

The Communication White Paper (Uganda. Department of Communications 1999:18) also acknowledges the need for the promotion of local art and talent but it does not say how the local art thus produced will be provided for especially in the commercial media. The White Paper only states that it should become 'increasingly possible' to make use of such talent in local programming 'to promote a sense of national identity'. This is a rather non-committal statement where local content provisions and local language requirements for the broadcast media should have been included.

The Communication White Paper (Uganda. Department of Communication 1999:20-21) does recognise that gaps exist between the urban and rural populations in terms of access to the media. Among other things, the White Paper proposes the decentralisation of broadcast services and ensuring that public interest messages are delivered in appropriate languages and at suitable times for their target audiences.[4] But it also contains some claw-back clauses like 'but not to the detriment of their national roles' and 'maintaining sight of associated national aspirations'. The latter further underline government's intrinsic discomfort with allowing the indigenous languages to freely proliferate in the broadcast media. This could in turn reflect a lack of awareness among Ugandans of the value of these languages compared to English and Kiswahili

The government of Uganda (Uganda. Department of Communications 1999:27) further proposes the establishment of sub-county information and communication centres to handle 'development

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[4] According to the 2002 population census (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2005) 88% of Uganda's population lives in the rural areas and a large proportion of them are not literate and are dependent on their mother-tongue and one or two neighbouring languages for communication.

information' and provide a bulletin for the community. The White paper also lays a foundation for the merger between *Radio Uganda* and *UTV* and decentralised public broadcasting services, but adds a proviso that by this decentralisation, 'it is not intended that national services should be abandoned.' This proviso once again underlines government's ambivalence over promoting Uganda's linguistic diversity on the one hand and unifying its multi-ethnic population on the other. Though the Draft Communication White Paper therefore raises the issue of decentralised public broadcasting (seen as creating satellite stations for the 'public broadcaster'), it is silent on community broadcasting which in many parts of the world is best placed to carry the load of linguistic representation.

Government acknowledges that in a liberalised context, the public broadcaster cannot harness the large audiences that it used to, and would be challenged if required to carry the load of public service broadcasting alone. However, there is a reluctance to put too many conditions on commercial broadcasters for fear of upsetting the industry or losing revenue. Government therefore proposes to make the public service obligation of commercial broadcasters conditional on the latter's profitability. Thus, according to the Draft Communication White Paper, commercial broadcasters would be free to broadcast in English, Kiswahili or any language that they may deem commercially viable, but more importantly, they would be free *not* to broadcast in any language that does not fall within their commercial priorities.

The Communication White Paper also makes provisions for the establishment of a regulator who would be charged with the responsibility of allocating frequencies in the public interest. This would imply that the regulator would cater for, among other things, linguistic diversity. However, the relevant broadcast law has to date not been revised and remains silent on the issue of equitable license allocation. Once again, linguistic diversity (through equitable frequency allocation) is left to chance.

From the above discussion, a number of issues relevant to the debate over the role of the indigenous languages in enhancing participation in and through the broadcast media emerge. Firstly, the government of Uganda appears to view information and communication in a traditional, linear way. Government thus fails to accord the language issue its due emphasis in engaging with issues of participation through interactive politics. This seems to contradict government's overall position on the importance of information in enabling citizens to participate meaningfully in the democratic process. Secondly, the government's policy emphasis seems to be

on providing for the widest possible dissemination of pre-packaged information originating from government departments, and using the media as a means of consolidating 'national unity' rather than enhancing a diversity of voices and identities participating in important public debate. Government is thus hesitant to encourage people to freely express their 'local' identities through the media for fear that this will undermine national unity. Thirdly, given that the current government was until 2005 reluctant to 'allow' multi-party political activity at any level, but especially at the local level, it would appear that the current Ugandan government sees the local level as such a powerful site for the formation of public opinion that it needs to be checked to stave off or weaken possible political opposition. This fear could explain the negative sentiments expressed about local languages and ethnic loyalties in key documents such as, for instance, the Education White Paper (Uganda. Policy Review Commission 1992).

6.3.3   The National Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy

The telecommunications sector in Uganda was liberalised in 1996. However, like the broadcast sector, it did not have a Communications law governing its operation in a liberalised setting until 1999. The liberalisation of the telecommunications sector in Uganda was followed by great growth particularly in the area of mobile telephony. Growth in the mobile telephony business in turn stimulated growth in the broadcast sector. This came about because the most popular programmes on the ubiquitous privately owned stations depend on telephone calls for continuous interaction between programme presenters and their audiences.

The three mobile telephone companies (MTN, CELTEL and UTL) operating in Uganda are also the biggest sponsors and advertisers in the broadcast sector. Because of their enormous revenue collections, the three are also ranked among the top five taxpayers in the country. Notwithstanding this phenomenal growth, the disparities that dog the broadcast industry in terms of access in the rural and urban areas also applied to the telecommunications sector at the time the National ICT Policy was being developed. This is attributed to a number of factors. First, the private investors shunned the poor rural areas as there was no infrastructure to support their work there. Secondly, there was no legal framework. Thirdly, there were no incentives to invest in the rural areas. The main impetus for a communications policy to regulate the communications sector therefore came from a combination of the above factors as well as from stakeholders in the telecommunications sector who were restless about the absence of a policy regulating, especially, the operation of mobile telephone companies (Uganda. Ministry of Works, Housing and Communications 2002:9-11).

The National ICT Policy is the only comprehensive formal policy relating to the media in Uganda. All other communication 'policy' is in the form of White Papers, ministerial policy statements or draft documents. The studies that formed the foundation for this policy were the draft Communication White Paper (Uganda 1999), the Uganda Communications Commission's Study on Policies and Strategies for Rural Communications Development, the Perwitt International report on promoting e-business in Uganda and a survey of Strategic partnerships for e-business in Uganda.

The ICT policy was deemed to have subsumed the concerns of the Communication White Paper 'in the spirit of convergence.' This subsumption would lead to 'a redefinition of sectoral policies, boundaries, institutions and regulations in a manner that takes account of industrial policy, telecommunications policy, science and technology policy and information and communication policy' (Uganda. Ministry of Works, Housing and Communications 2002:10). In practice, however, the broadcast sector is still governed by the Electronic Media Act (Uganda 2000) while the telecommunications sector is governed by the Communications Act (Uganda 1997). Both laws preceded the National ICT Policy. After a protracted struggle for control of the policy, it was eventually agreed that the National ICT Policy be hosted by the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communications rather than the Directorate of Information. Notwithstanding the fact that the policy seeks to guide both the traditional telecommunications and broadcast sector, the emphasis of the National ICT policy is clearly not the media but telecommunications.

It is important to note that the National ICT policy articulates the importance of ICT differently from the Communication White Paper that it subsumed. It emphasises that information is a resource that activates various sectors of the economy, 'making it possible for producers and consumers to be linked to markets' (Uganda. Ministry of Works, Housing and Communications 2002:8). The Policy in outlining the importance of ICT elaborates this thinking, mentioning the connection between ICT and 'knowledge-based economies,' improved delivery of social services, increased transparency in governance through ICT and modernisation of the private sector through improved market access, sales, trade and knowledge of business trends.

The ICT policy further presents ICT as an enabler for the constitutional provisions on freedom of expression and the media and access to information (see Uganda 1995 sec 29a, 41). ICT is also presented as a way to ease coordination between the central and local levels of government. The

policy states that the current developments in technology worldwide call for Uganda to put mechanisms in place to enable her to catch up and to take advantage of global opportunities. The policy is thus concerned with a need for a policy framework to guide investment, especially in view of perceived trends towards the convergence of technologies and distribution platforms. In addition, the National ICT policy addresses the need to take cognisance of industrial growth, the rise of the information society and knowledge-based economies, the need for development of content for various sectors via ICT, issues of intellectual property rights associated with growth in the ICT sector and the need to coordinate the different players in the ICT area.

The National ICT policy articulates repeatedly the need for Uganda to be up to 'global standards' in ICT. The input from stakeholders' list included in the policy (Uganda. Ministry of Works, Housing and Communications 2002:11-12) reveals at what level the debate over the shape of the ICT policy took place. Included in this list are the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology, Uganda Information and Infrastructure Agenda which is based at the Faculty of Technology, Makerere University, and The Big Push Strategy which is affiliated to the Uganda Investment Authority. Notably absent from this list, however, is the average Ugandan or any representatives of civil society. Although it could be argued that civil society was included during the consultations that preceded the Draft Communication White Paper, one notes that the thrust of that White Paper and the issues it addressed were considerably different and many of its recommendations were either adjusted to fit into the scheme of the ICT policy's outlook or thrown out altogether.

The National ICT policy (Uganda. Ministry of Works, Housing and Communications 2002:33) states that communication is a basic human right and access to communication channels should not be left entirely to market forces '…because this creates a situation of information dualism, with a minority urban information-rich and the rural majority being information-poor… and adds, 'a conducive environment for investment should be promoted to narrow the information gap between the urban and the rural areas.' Even though the National ICT Policy acknowledges the beginnings of convergence and the rural-urban disparities in access to telecommunication services, (both of which, unregulated, could threaten diversity), that is clearly not the emphasis of the policy. The policy devotes an entire section to investment in ICT and argues that the largest obstacle to a vibrant ICT sector at that time was a lack of political commitment rather than of willing investors.

Only two out of the National ICT Policy's 14 objectives address issues of diversity (Uganda. Ministry of Works, Housing and Communications 2002:36-37). One of these focuses on promoting a conducive environment for media pluralism that will enhance cultural identity and national sovereignty, and the other on promoting multilingualism and other efforts to provide access to information by disadvantaged groups and communities. The policy here promises to put in place mechanisms for the promotion of local ownership of media and local content production.

Although the National ICT Policy (Uganda. Ministry of Works, Housing and Communications 2002:10) states that it incorporates the policy concerns of the broadcast sector, it is clear from what has happened since the policy came into effect that regulating the broadcast sector was never a high priority for this policy. Thus the mobile telephone sector has registered tremendous growth since the National ICT policy came into being, with most districts in the country having access to the mobile telephone network. In contrast, the state broadcaster which had the greatest chance of attaining universal coverage is still very weak. The commercial media have grown numerically but their services and their areas of coverage are barely regulated, causing most of them to concentrate in the lucrative urban areas and offer mostly entertainment programming (see Chapter 5 for a detailed treatment of the structure and operation of the media in Uganda).

6.3.4   The Draft National Broadcasting Policy

The government of Uganda in 2004 initiated the formulation of a broadcasting policy, the first since Uganda's broadcast media were established in 1954. In this policy (Uganda. Directorate of Information 2004), government admits that the Electronic Media Act (2000) which is still the principal legislation for the regulation of the electronic media, is 'not in tandem with modern concepts of holistic broadcast management.' Therefore, the Act stipulates that '… a clear and comprehensive broadcasting policy is essential for the preparation of new legislation to effectively address sectoral concerns' (Uganda. Directorate of Information 2004:16).

The Draft Broadcasting Policy's objectives include promoting liberalisation, ensuring a balance between profit and the fulfilment of public service obligations, establishing a framework that takes into account the convergence of technologies, ensuring that the broadcasting system contributes to unity and patriotism by safeguarding, enriching and strengthening the cultural, social and economic fabric of Uganda, and ensuring pluralism and diversity in the provision of news, views and information (Uganda. Directorate of Information 2004:17).

Broadly, with regard to diversity, the Draft Broadcasting Policy proposes specific regulation to address the establishment of three distinct tiers of broadcasting and to promote community broadcasting. It also proposes to regulate ownership and content in the interests of diversity. The policy further seeks to harmonise the role of the broadcast regulator and the telecommunications regulator with regard to the management of the broadcast frequency spectrum.

Although the draft policy highlights the importance of all stations, and particularly the public broadcaster offering substantial amounts of local content, it however steers clear of any discussion on language and its use in the media *per se*. It only states that license holders will be required to be linguistically relevant to their areas of operation.

The Draft Broadcasting Policy appears to have the potential to improve the atmosphere for media diversity and therefore opportunities for participation in the broadcast media in Uganda even though it does not specifically address the language issue. However, it remains ineffectual and the broadcast sector continues to operate largely unregulated with regard to linguistic and other aspects of diversity, as parliament is yet to discuss a bill emerging out of the Draft National Broadcasting Policy.

From the above discussion, the reality of the policy environment for broadcasting in Uganda suggests that existing policy is inadequate to support the kind of linguistic diversity in the media that would allow the majority of Ugandans to articulate their concerns through the broadcast media in their own languages. This may be attributed to some of the following factors:

- Government's focus on a linear communication model that emphasises disseminating 'development information' in a process spearheaded by government rather facilitating a debate on governance that has civil society at its centre;
- A failure to streamline the regulation of broadcasting vis-à-vis telecommunications in an environment that is increasingly dominated by the communications sector (see McQuail and Siune 1998:166-168; Mcquail and Van Cuilenburg 2003:197-198 for a discussion of the tension between the two sectors);
- A growing emphasis on the commercial aspects of communication at the expense of the public interest; and

- A failure to address the language issue in a concrete way that guarantees citizens in a multilingual context such as Uganda's meaningful participation in a media atmosphere that tolerates diversity to enable them to make a meaningful input into their governance.

McQuail and Van Cuilenburg summarise this situation which is not peculiar to Uganda thus:

> The emerging policy paradigm for media and communications is mainly driven by an economic and technological logic, although it retains certain normative elements. The latter cover a wider range of values and are less exclusively supported by the normative underpinnings of democratic theory. The relevant norms are in fact noticeably more 'communicative' and less 'political' or cultural in character (McQuail & Van Cuilenburg 2003:198).

The above discussion raises the questions: To what extent can communication policy in a multilingual environment where the local democratic structures are weak be relied upon to cater for the needs of linguistic diversity? How can policy in such situations empower civil society to participate in meaningful debate regarding their governance using indigenous language broadcasting, especially when global policy priorities increasingly influence local ones? The following section briefly examines the case for policy and regulation for linguistic diversity while at the same time acknowledging challenges to their legitimacy and efficacy.

6.4   A CASE FOR POLICY AND REGULATION FOR LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

There has been intense debate in communication circles in the last two decades on whether it is not best to let human agency take charge of how the average citizen uses the media, given how prone to political and economic manipulation policy is (see Chapter 2 for an elaboration of this debate, spearheaded by cultural studies). The argument emerging out of cultural studies has been that the kind of unifying public sphere with the media as a component which Habermas envisages is unattainable, and that what is more realistic are multiple spheres each representing some cultural peculiarities (see Thompson 1995; Berger 2002; Dahlgren 2002) for a comprehensive critique of the Habermasian view of the public sphere).

However political economy has maintained that notwithstanding human agency, the intervention of the state through media policy is still essential to the full exercise of citizenship rights. Political economy approaches to the media thus posit that the enjoyment of the right of access to information and communication is fundamental to the appreciation and enjoyment of especially

civil and political rights (Murdock & Golding 1989:183-184; Golding 1990:98-99; Goldsmith Media Group 2000:54). Civil rights include freedom of speech and opinion, the exercise of which is closely linked to the media. Political rights on the other hand include the right to participate in the exercise of political power-hence holding public office, voting, and participating in the making of the laws by which one consents to be governed. The two sets of rights are closely intertwined. Access to adequate information and to a diversity of debate is therefore a basic precondition for the effective functioning of a democratic polity and for the full exercise of citizen rights. Thus the proponents of the political economy of the media argue that communication systems (and therefore the media) should provide people with access to the information, advice and analysis they need to know and pursue their rights and provide the broadest possible range of information, interpretation, debate and advice on areas related to rights and political choice. This would enable them to choose, or to dissent and propose alternatives (Murdock & Golding 1989:183; Golding & Murdock 1991:21-22; cf. Berger 2002:32, 34-5, 41). However, because the market is imperfect, market forces cannot be depended upon to secure the kind of access to information that enables citizens to make sense of their world, contribute to how they are governed and generally make informed choices. In this regard, Van Cuilenburg (1998:40) has argued persuasively that for the free market model to apply to the marketplace of ideas, we have to assume that there are a number of different providers of information, that there is full and fair competition between them and that the recipients of this information are 'fully and rationally informed' about the marketplace. 'Then, and only then, will there be a balance of power between providers and users of information. And then, and only then, will maximally diverse information be supplied, exchanged and used by all people in the marketplace of ideas.'

To understand how the ordinary person in Uganda sees policy on the use of the indigenous languages in the media influencing their opportunities for participation in public discourse, it is important to look at the problem at two levels: the macro level that embraces media ownership and policy as well as the micro level of consumption of media content, where, according to cultural studies, important choices are made (see Durham & Kellner 2001:4).

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 recognise 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 the stations they own. 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. Two questions however arise. Firstly, of what democratic value are the indigenous language programmes available in the broadcast media? and secondly, to what extent can the repertoire of languages available in the broadcast media, seen as a whole be improved through policy and regulation so that private media owners do not only use the commercially viable languages.

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. In his words, 'even if political talk shows do not always facilitate or spur participation, they are themselves an addition to the repertoire of avenues of political participation.' The fact that many of these shows are in the indigenous languages has also given ordinary Ugandans an unprecedented chance to participate in debate on a number of important topics pertaining to their governance. 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 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 (2004:105). 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. The latter point was corroborated by many of the interviews which this study conducted (cf. Chapter 7). 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.

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. The following comment from a media manager in Lira in the above study illustrates this phenomenon:

> For private stations, the space is open for all political views…[t]here is no policy barring any political view from using our station. However, like every other private radio station, the airtime largely depends on affordability (Uganda Broadcasting Council 2004:26-27).

Interviews conducted in the different regions of Uganda (cf. Chapter 7) indicate ambivalence among listeners on the efficacy of policy in improving linguistic diversity in the broadcast media. While many interviewees say they appreciate hearing their own languages on radio and would wish to hear them on television as well, they also recognise the immense complexity of the linguistic situation in Uganda and the challenges of trying to broadcast in all the languages. This debate is examined in greater detail in Chapter 7. It appears, therefore, that there is a high degree of apathy among Ugandans about finding solutions to the dilemma of linguistic diversity through the avenue of policy.

In a multilingual environment like Uganda's, availability of content in the indigenous languages is an integral part of a healthy atmosphere for the kind of diverse programming that promotes participation by the majority of citizens in the democratic process. As seen earlier (cf. Chapter 5), the broadcast media in Uganda can be a significant contributor to strengthening participation. As already shown, there are some commercially and community owned radio stations in every region of Uganda. These, coupled with the state broadcaster which also has regional services, have created opportunities for people to access radio in at least one indigenous language in addition to English, Kiswahili and/or Luganda. Ideally, within the NRM's 'popular participation' model (see Golooba-Mutebi 2004:291-292), all adults in Uganda have a right to deliberate in their LC village assembly. This includes social categories that have often been excluded such as women, youth and the disabled. In addition, all adults can stand for elective office at the village LC committee level.

Thus while it should be noted that there have been significant changes both in the political and the cultural (media) arena in Uganda that facilitate the participation of ordinary Ugandans in the political process through the media, one recognises that there are still obstacles. The market alone is inadequate to secure the necessary opportunities for inclusive participation in the media. Thus policy for media diversity would be essential. Such policy should in particular address the indigenous languages as they are considered central to the identities of the different peoples residing within Uganda that need to have access to and representation in the broadcast media. Regulating for diversity (including linguistic diversity) presupposes that this would contribute to the inclusion of more voices in the broadcast media. This is particularly key in countries where

citizens identify themselves first by the local (ethnic) polity and then by the national polity. Policy to address the availability of the indigenous languages is also important in as far as the indigenous languages are integral to local production and the development of local talent to strengthen the cultural industry, which in turn contributes to the overall atmosphere of diversity.

6.4.1 The role of *inclusive policy and independent regulation* in promoting linguistic diversity and participation

At the continental level, the African Charter on Broadcasting (MISA 2001) represents an effort to address the challenges of regulation in an African context in light of the liberalisation of the media, globalisation and the convergence of technologies and the observed effects of these phenomena on diversity. For the vast majority of the peoples of Africa the broadcast media remain the main source of public communication and information. However, the Charter recognises the existence of serious barriers to free, independent and pluralistic broadcasting as well as to the right to communicate through broadcasting in Africa. The Charter also lays down some key principles for securing independence, pluralism and diversity in the broadcast media and in the context of freedom of expression. Of particular relevance to this discussion, the Charter addresses the establishment of independent regulators, the strengthening of public and community broadcasting, the regulation of key areas such as local content, the management of the frequency spectrum and media ownership. These are briefly discussed in this section.

Policy, law and regulation may be seen as essential tools in ensuring that the media continue to serve the public interest. However, in order to do this, policy, law and regulation should, in the words of the African Charter on Broadcasting (2001) 'enable, not cripple' the broadcast media. The policy-making process should therefore be inclusive, just as implementation should enjoy a high priority and degree of independence. Thus the African Charter on Broadcasting states:

> All formal powers in the areas of broadcast and telecommunications regulation should be exercised by public authorities which are protected against interference, particularly of a political or economic nature, by, among other things, an appointments process for members which is open, transparent, involves the participation of civil society, and is not controlled by any particular political party (MISA 2001).

The charter further proposes that the whole regulatory environment should promote respect for freedom of expression, diversity, the free flow of information and ideas, and a three-tier (or multi-tier) system for broadcasting including public, commercial and community media. The Charter

also affirms that the frequency spectrum is a finite public resource, which must be managed in the public interest.

Broadcast regulators get their credibility from being seen to be independent of powerful influences like government and business, being equitable, being transparent in their operations and being consistent in their treatment of those they regulate. In situations where the very processes of the appointment of regulators are not transparent and are marred by partisan interests, however, it becomes difficult for regulators to measure up to these ideals. Unfortunately, except in rare situations, members of broadcast regulatory bodies in many African countries (including Uganda) still tend to be selected by government and the transparency of the process of their selection varies from country to country. Such regulators are often accountable to their appointing authority, the government, rather than to the public. All this makes it difficult for appropriate regulation, independent of vested interests, and focused on diversity to be put in place.

6.4.2   The role of *policy on public broadcasters* in promoting linguistic diversity and participation

Just like independent regulation, the existence of properly functioning public service broadcasters is an integral part of the regulatory context for diversity (MISA 2001). The basic aims of public service broadcasters include ensuring universal coverage, offering diverse content, providing for minorities, catering for the national culture, language and identity, serving the needs of the political system and maintaining a high quality of programming. This, the charter argues, is the only way that the media will be able to play a meaningful role as a space for information, debate and opinion formation in the current commercialised media and communication environment. Catering for the needs and tastes of minorities is seen as one of the primary mandates of the public broadcaster because it is assumed that in an environment where the privately owned media are increasingly driven by the profit imperative, the needs of smaller linguistic communities are likely to be overlooked in favour of larger audiences. It is also assumed that properly functioning public broadcasters would provide a wider variety of programming than their more commercially oriented counterparts would.

Ideally in multilingual settings, it should be the public broadcasters along with community broadcasters who are most strategically placed to carry the weight of linguistic diversity. This is because of the public broadcasters' traditionally non-commercial mandate. The availability of

programmes in the indigenous languages on the public broadcaster therefore is essential in equipping the majority of people in developing countries with information they need to be active citizens. As Redekopp (2002), Executive Vice-President, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) English Television puts it, 'informed citizens are equipped to participate in the open public discourse that is the lifeblood of democratic society. They demand more of their institutions and they are able to contribute more to them.'

In recognition of the potential of public broadcasting as a key arena for public debate for the majority of citizens, particularly in African countries, therefore, it has been recommended that an important step in accomplishing diversity would be to transform all state broadcasters into public broadcasters accountable to the public and independent of manipulation by the state or business interests (MISA 2001; Article XIX 2003:201; Mbaine 2003:142-143). The African Charter on Broadcasting recommends, in particular, that state/government-controlled broadcasters should be transformed into public service broadcasters which are accountable to all strata of the people. These should be represented by an independent board, serve the overall public interest, avoid bias in regard to religion, political belief, culture, race and gender, and should be governed by diverse and independent bodies which are protected against interference.[5]

With the commercialisation of the media, many governments have abdicated their responsibility to ensure provision for public service media that are editorially independent and financially secure. Not only have governments maintained restrictions on editorial independence, but whenever they have given public broadcasters the freedom to generate revenue, they have also withdrawn grants and subsidies from them, condemning them to competition with the better-resourced commercial broadcasters. Because of the scope of their mandate, which entails covering as much of the country as possible with linguistically and culturally balanced programming, public service broadcasters enter the competition at a disadvantage (Fourie 2003:150-152; Nyamnjoh 2003:131).

With the free market philosophies that have been adopted by most governments of the world in the 21st century comes pressure for public service broadcasters to behave like business enterprises. Their commercial counterparts usually have minimum public service obligations, or, as in the case

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[5] While there can be no 'one-size-fits all' arrangement with regards to broadcasting, these standards have been debated and agreed upon by individuals representing different backgrounds and jurisdictions and may in that sense be considered 'internationally accepted standards.'

of Uganda, none at all, which leaves them the freedom to cultivate niche audiences and lessens their obligation to invest in high quality programming. This has compromised the public broadcasters' capacity to deliver on their public service mandate. It has forced them to emulate their rivals in offering the most popular and least expensive programming while increasingly leaning on commercial advertising for survival (Fourie 2003:150-152; Nyamnjoh 2003:131; McQuail & Van Cuilenburg 2003:198). In Uganda, this is evident in the fact that the government, upon adopting liberalisation policies, has systematically withdrawn financial and logistical support from the *Uganda Broadcasting Corporation* and required them to do whatever it takes to survive, while declaring them a public broadcaster in law.

Although the *UBC* Act (2005) establishes the former *Radio Uganda* and *UTV* as a public broadcaster, it hardly makes any provision for the indigenous language programming except to say one of the functions of the corporation shall be 'to provide radio and television broadcasting services…and to provide…programmes that contribute to a sense of national unity in culture diversity [sic]' (Uganda 2005 sec 5.1). The *UBC* Act, despite having elaborate provisions to ensure that the 'public broadcaster' remains financially competitive, is silent on the latter's language mandate.

The pressure to remain financially viable at all costs was evident in interviews with staff of *Radio Uganda* and UTV (now *UBC*). All the senior officials at Uganda's state broadcaster interviewed for this study (cf. Chapter 5) see their unwritten mandate to broadcast in as many Ugandan languages as possible as a burden and an obstacle to survival in a competitive and hardly regulated environment.

Public broadcasters in a number of African countries have the extra burden of playing the role of public relations officers for government, sometimes at the expense of programming for rural and ordinary people. The bulk of government resources often go to presenting a positive picture of government activities and policies rather than reflecting the realities of the average citizen. Thus the 'public' broadcaster in most African countries is hard-pressed to be able to present impartial news and information and host genuine debate that informs democratic citizenship. As Mbaine (2003:154) puts it, such public broadcasters 'instead of empowering citizens to participate in the collective decisions that affect their lives only strengthen those who hold undemocratic power.' Saddled with the above constraints, the public broadcaster therefore fails to play the role of public sphere-that realm of social life where the exchange of information and views on questions of

common concern can take place so that public opinion can be formed (Dahlgren 2002:195; cf. Habermas 1989:37).

Mbaine also notes that although public service broadcasters in Africa tend to have a degree of linguistic diversity compared to their commercial counterparts, African governments have taken advantage of the local languages to take propaganda rather than beneficial information to the people in their own languages. He argues that proper regulation on language in public service broadcasting is therefore vital in terms of (increasing) accessibility and (strengthening) cultural identity. This is because the colonial administration in many places relegated the indigenous languages to an inferior role to the colonial languages. To compound this, the authoritarian regimes that took over from the colonial governments used public broadcasters in their projects of establishing ethnic and cultural hegemonies by privileging some languages over others. Thus where there is no national language or languages, like Uganda, the colonial language often dominates national broadcasting. This is followed by the major languages or the languages of those who are able to influence policy in the public broadcasting service (Mbaine 2003:155; cf. Bamgbose 1992:113-115).

From the afore-going discussion, 'public broadcasting' in Uganda falls far short of the ideal. The mandate of public broadcasters as well as their independence still need to be secured through laws and policies. Laws and policies must in particular provide for linguistic diversity because the market looks inadequate to do this. Such laws and policy should be cognisant of the likelihood that commercial broadcasters will go for the commercially viable languages as well as the fact that the public broadcaster in most African contexts is still vulnerable to manipulation especially by those who wield political power.

6.4.3   The role of policy on *community broadcasters* in promoting linguistic diversity and participation

Like public broadcasting, community broadcasting is key to empowering people to participate in public debate on how they are governed. This is because they often have the capacity to mobilise people that have common values, aspirations and languages. However, there has never been any policy in Uganda establishing community broadcasting as a separate tier and the media that exist under the label 'community media' have had to fight for their niche with little recognition or assistance from government. Although the Draft Broadcasting Policy (Uganda, Directorate of

Information 2004) does provide for three tiers of broadcasting (Public, Commercial and Community), this policy has not yielded an enabling law yet.

The African Charter on Broadcasting (MISA 2001) states that community broadcasting should be clearly defined as community based, participatory, not for profit, aimed at social development and clearly distinguished from decentralised public broadcasting. Invariably, the indigenous languages are central to community broadcasting. Policy to promote community broadcasting, therefore, is key. Community broadcasting, even more than public broadcasting which may still be limited to the larger 'area languages,' can help include highly specific linguistic communities that would otherwise be left out even by public broadcasting.

6.4.4 The role of regulating *local content* in promoting linguistic diversity and participation

Regulating local content has become an integral part of regulating for diversity in the broadcast media. This is because nations increasingly believe that local content is linked to the preservation and promotion of local culture and that broadcasting their culture can strengthen the nation at home and enhance its image abroad (South Africa Department of Communications 1998: sec 1.3.8; Kariithi 2003: 163-166; cf. Hutchison 1999:198). Definitions of local content have typically emphasised the personnel at the centre of the production of media content, as well as the financial power behind it**.** There are three sets of reasons typically advanced for regulating content: economic, cultural and moral.

The economic reasons advanced for local content regulation are based on the belief that developed countries have superior technological abilities but that their markets are saturated. These countries therefore need markets to dump their cultural products (usually in developing countries). Local content regulation based on economic considerations seeks to harness synergies between the local broadcasting and production sectors, and to improve employment opportunities for local artists as well as broaden the local revenue base.

The cultural reasons for regulating local content are related to the preservation of language as well as to the political values and of a society. This rationale underlies cultural imperialism arguments. The moral reasons are closely linked to the ideological. These reasons are normally related to 'preserving public decency and decorum' (Kariithi 2003: 167).

Local content regulation in most countries is based on a combination of the above sets of reasons. While the cultural and economic reasons for regulating local content seem credible, many doubts

have been cast over the assumptions underlying the moral reasons. Indeed it has been argued that often the moral reasons are advanced to justify shutting out content that governments consider politically unpalatable.

One however notes an unusual silence in this debate on political reasons for regulating local content, linking the availability of local content in the indigenous languages to the kind of participation that increases people's involvement in the polity. This may be attributed to the fact that linking local content to a sense of belonging to the polity raises the question: Which polity? Current debate on language in Uganda (discussed in detail in Chapter 7) suggests that many Ugandans feel a greater sense of belonging to the local than to the national polity. If this were true, however, it would only strengthen the argument for securing more programming in the various indigenous languages of Uganda through sound policy and regulation. Coupled with an expansion in media freedoms, highlighting the political benefits of regulating local content in the debate could eventually lead to more confident participation in the national media, especially through the public broadcaster.

A large part of content regulation focuses on local content, typically defined as 'programming that is produced under the creative control of the nationals of (the country).' There is a close association therefore between local content and indigenous language content. To illustrate this, the National Electronic Media Performance Study (Uganda Broadcasting Council 2004:53) sought to gauge Ugandans' understanding of local content and their views about local content regulation. The study found that most Ugandans interviewed for the study defined local content in terms of comprehension, relevance and utility. The interviewees linked comprehension to language, relevance to the media's treatment of local issues, which gives people a sense of being at home with the content, and utility to 'developmental' programming. The study also found that with the exception of foreign sports and music, the majority of those interviewed said they preferred to listen to radio or watch TV in their own languages.

The above findings are relevant for the debate on citizen participation in Ugandan broadcasting. They suggest that where people have to participate or follow issues in a debate, the indigenous languages are key. Hence the exceptions of music and foreign sports. However, problems arise at two levels. The space for serious debate on issues of political relevance in the broadcast media is threatened by a deluge of cheap, imported entertainment programming mostly in English. As explained earlier, there is no policy or law in Uganda which puts any linguistic requirements on commercial broadcasters. There are also no guidelines for political programming

in the indigenous language. However, perhaps due to the immense audience appeal of such programming and the corresponding dividends in form of advertising revenue, most stations have at least one interactive political programme every week and others have such a programme daily. Policy and regulation here would be important in addressing the issue of language, i.e. answering the question: To what extent are these programmes available to the average Ugandan in the indigenous languages? However, it would be difficult to guarantee through regulation the content or political quality of these programmes. This notwithstanding, regulation could at least ensure the availability of interactive political programming in as many languages as possible and on as many media outlets as possible. This would allow audiences to make better sense of what content is available to them and perhaps play a more active role as citizens.

Kariithi (2003:163) argues that broadcast policies emerging in many African countries offer little or no guidance to regulators, media workers, or the public with regard to local content. Kariithi explains that local content regulation has become contentious because it deals with the complex tensions between individual freedoms, constitutional guarantees, international agreements and a society's endeavour to create a collective identity.

The globalisation of trade and communications poses one of the greatest challenges to the regulation of content. Local content rules are under assault from the international trade pacts such as the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). These organisations and treaties see/portray local content regulation as a constraint on the free flow of information which forms an integral part of globalisation. These pacts are opposed to any nature of protectionism unless it is in the interests of the big powers. Both the USA and France have been accused of protectionism. Furthermore, globalisation emphasises larger markets for a variety of products including media content because it operates on the principle of economies of scale. It should be noted that cultural or linguistic diversity is not always considered desirable as homogenised media content is easier to sell across borders (Wilkinson 2003:4-6; Article XIX 2003:4). In addition, local content regulation in many African countries is further constrained by a host of economic and administrative challenges. Many African countries are constrained by a shortage of skilled personnel, technical capacity and finances. Even South Africa which has made greater strides in building local capacity than other African countries has had to tone down their requirements for South African financing and personnel in laying down the criteria for what qualifies as local content.

Another major challenge to regulating local content has been the limitations in monitoring and enforcement. The commercial media are aware that governments often depend on them to supply information on how they are doing in complying with local content regulations and they take advantage of this. This gives them room to take short-cuts, focusing on the 'letter' rather than the 'spirit' of the law. In Uganda the situation is complicated further by the fact that the tiers of broadcasting are not even clearly distinguished in policy or legislation, so their different obligations are not clear. Currently in Uganda, there are no local content regulations although the subject has been debated vigorously (especially between the regulator and commercial media owners) in the process of developing the new draft National Broadcasting Policy.

Finally, depending on the level of democracy and participation in the political arena, local content regulation is viewed with suspicion on the ground that it could be used as an excuse for governments to push their own agenda under the guise of 'patriotism' and the preservation of national sovereignty. In this case local content regulation would cease to serve the purpose of empowering people to participate in their governance through participating in meaningful and familiar programming.

The above challenges notwithstanding, independent and sensitive regulation on local content is still of paramount importance in maximising the benefits of local content not only for strengthening cultural identities and creating employment but also for enhancing citizen participation in the political process through the broadcast media. It has thus been suggested that broadcast regulation should include local content quotas tied to the license so that service-providers can be held accountable at the point of renewing their licenses (MISA 2001). This would be in line with the African Charter on Broadcasting in Africa, which proposes that different license categories be held to different local content requirements. Hence the public broadcaster and community broadcasters should be required to offer more local content than commercial broadcasters as the former are less likely to discriminate on the basis of social status, thus leaving out the majority of voices.

From the afore-going discussion, and in spite of the numerous challenges that local content regulation raises, there are some key things which it could accomplish. These include:

- Protecting the unity, identity and sovereignty of nations;
- Promoting pluralism in opinion and choice;

- Promoting a common sense of citizenship (both in terms of the local and the national polity); and

- Increasing the chances of democratic participation in the polity by the majority of citizens (cf. Kariithi 2003:165).

6.4.5 The role of regulating *frequency spectrum* allocation in promoting linguistic diversity and participation

Frequency regulation is another key element in ensuring a conducive environment for participation in democratic debate for the majority citizens through the broadcast media. The logic of frequency spectrum regulation was originally based on the belief that the spectrum is limited and finite to the extent that it can only take so many users at any one time, and that its use must be carefully regulated, preferably by an independent body to avoid abuse at the expense of diversity (MISA 2001). Frequency regulation is also grounded in the recognition that technological advances of the last few decades both in broadcasting and in telecommunications mean that there will be more demand on the spectrum although some, like digitalisation also mean the spectrum can accommodate more users at a time (McQuail & Van Cuilenburg 2003:197-201). Finally, the argument for regulation of the spectrum is that although there are many other uses to which the spectrum could be put such as mobile telephony and air-traffic control, broadcasting has a unique role because it has the potential to promote diversity and pluralism. Frequency regulation thus serves to ensure that broadcasting is not marginalised in the process of frequency allocation among the different possible uses (Nyman-Metcalf 2003:9-10**).**

The management of the frequency spectrum has far reaching implications for diversity because it is highly prone to being diverted to pragmatic uses that may not necessarily have the public interests as their highest priority. It has been proposed therefore that in order to avoid such abuses, it is necessary to ensure the following through regulation,

- Transparent and participatory approaches to decision-making regarding the allocation of frequencies;
- Fairness and equity;
- The independence of the regulator from government, business and other powerful interests that would seek to have influence over them;
- A clear policy context;
- Equitable treatment of the three tiers of broadcasting (that is public, commercial and community) in frequency allocation;

- Clear, open and transparent criteria for allocation of frequencies, consistent with the goal of promoting diversity and pluralism;

- Reasonable license periods, striking a balance between allowing investors to recoup their investment and to develop, and allowing the regulator to retain a measure of supervisory control;

- A vigilant regulator to ensure fair use and fair pricing of spectrum resources; and

- Alertness to the possibilities of using new technologies to increase channel availability (see MISA 2001; Nyman-Metcalf 2003:7).

The above would safeguard against the airwaves being monopolised by a few rich and powerful or being misused to the exclusion of important local programming. It would create an environment where the commercial broadcaster would be free to experiment with innovative or economically viable programming while leaving room for deliberate programming targeting people who, but for the availability of their language on the airwaves, would be unable to participate in the broadcast media at all.

Broadcast frequencies may be allocated on a first-come-first-served or highest bidder basis, or based on identified need. The official position is that Uganda uses the first-come-first-served model. However on further probing it transpired that there is degree of political influence in the allocation or denial of licenses. The license allocation process in Uganda is thus highly politicised and not totally transparent. Although the Uganda Communications Commission-the telecommunications regulator-has the mandate to allocate licenses to intending broadcasters, it does this on the recommendation of the Broadcasting Council. The Broadcasting Council has no publicly known, written procedure for evaluating applications. As such, allocation often depends on the discretion of the Council's Chairman. Furthermore, apart from the fact that the 12 members of the Broadcasting Council are appointed directly by the Minister in charge of information and without any public vetting process, the minister is by law empowered to interfere in the day-to-day running of regulatory affairs (Uganda 2000 sec 9.5). The Broadcast regulator in Uganda thus continues to issue licenses in a policy vacuum resulting in the current situation where over 100 radio licenses have been issued in a country with a population of 24 million people and a relatively small economy. Other pertinent considerations like clear and transparent license conditions, issuance of licenses based on need, foreign and cross-media ownership and linguistic diversity also seem to have been frozen in the absence of clear parameters for operation of the broadcast regulator.

Once again, to safeguard diversity in a context like this, it would be imperative to have policy that addresses the issue of spectrum management. Otherwise the spectrum would continue to benefit the few with the necessary clout, leaving out the minorities and less economically powerful. Policy could also safeguard against the commercialisation of spectrum management at the expense of public interest considerations. Finally, it would probably take the intervention of the state through policy to ensure that broadcasting has its fair share of the spectrum vis-à-vis other aspects of communication like mobile telephony and radio services for the security forces.

6.4.6   The role of regulating *ownership* in promoting linguistic diversity and participation

Media ownership is an important aspect of regulating for diversity because ownership is linked with access. Because of this, unless measures are put in place to ensure that even those who are not politically or economically powerful have access to the airwaves, diversity is likely to be compromised. Arguments for letting the market regulate ownership are based on the notion that the individual is supreme over the community. Furthermore in this logic, audiences are expected to have the capacity to synthesise different views presented by the media and come up with the truth (Nyamnjoh 2003:125). Government on the other hand is viewed with suspicion with regards to safeguarding the public interests as opposed to the interests of the regime (Article XIX 2003: 1-2). Political economists have argued strongly however that the market is not perfect, and plurality of channels and abundance of information does not always equal diversity (Murdock & Golding 1989:183; Curran 1998:292; Golding & Murdock 1991:21-25). It has been argued therefore that there is a need for the state to intervene through policy to safeguard diversity with regards to media ownership and access.

If the indigenous languages are a key factor in actualising diversity in multilingual settings like Uganda's, regulation must look at not just what information is available but also in what level of diversity-including linguistic diversity-and to what extent the necessary information is accessible to the average person. This, it would seem, considerably increases the chances of the majority of citizens being able to participate in the broadcast media.

From the early days of independence in Africa, it has been common for states to claim that central control of the media was less wasteful of limited resources, and that it guarantees the political stability badly needed for rapid development and for catching up with the West (Article XIX 2003:2; Nyamnjoh 2003:124;) Most African states promised to loosen up on the media once the nation had been consolidated, stabilised and matured. But the experience of many African countries suggests that it has been difficult for governments to live up to this promise and that

most post-colonial governments in Africa have been more tolerant of pluralism and diversity in the print media than in the broadcast media. This is because the broadcast media are perceived by politicians to be more accessible to the majority and are believed to have a powerful impact on development (Nyamnjoh 2003:124; Mwesige 2004).

In an economy as undeveloped as Uganda's where the majority of the population are poor and uneducated rural dwellers, indigenous language programming, which would appeal to them and meet their needs, often finds itself in this 'disposable' category. Advertisers and sponsors do not consider indigenous language programming (other than entertainment) commercially viable. Tackling themes of relevance to poor urban dwellers is as profitable as imported or English programming. As such, limited resources are invested in its development and then it becomes a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' that indeed indigenous language programming does not measure up.

The priorities of commercial broadcasters are such that anything that threatens audience ratings must be shifted or dropped (McChesney 2001:3-9). This often applies to languages that do not carry vast numbers or tremendous buying power. Media owners are able, through high-powered meetings, connections and deals, to convince regulators and policy-makers that the best thing to do to develop the 'free' media is to let the market regulate content. Instead of having a secure place in regulation therefore, indigenous language programming is left to the vagaries of the market. Consequently, even if there may be interactive programmes tackling political themes, some of these tend to have entertainment as their primary goal, and participation in them tends to be dominated by the elite. Interviews conducted with listeners between April and August 2005 lend credence to this conclusion (see Chapter 7).

The ownership landscape in Uganda's broadcast media is far from diverse (see Chapter 5). Records at Uganda's Registrar of Companies indicate that more than half of all the radio stations operating in Uganda today are controlled by active politicians in the National Resistance Movement or their sympathisers. Hardly any station is known to be controlled by an opposition political organisation 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. 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 businessmen 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.

Unless there is regulatory intervention, it is unlikely that this array of owners would prioritise linguistic diversity for its own sake. Thus, even though in a liberalised environment audiences are able to make some choices, policy and regulation to ensure that not only the rich and powerful or numerically strong have access to the airwaves still appears to have a role in improving the environment for participation in and through the media using the variety of indigenous languages that Uganda has.

6.5   CONCLUSION

On the whole, diversity in Uganda remains challenged by a weak regulator and a 'public broadcaster' that still functions as a state broadcaster. The arm of the state is still to be felt in the operation of the broadcast media. This has implications for how freely the regulator and the public broadcaster, both key guarantors of, among other things, linguistic diversity, can help create opportunities for the average Ugandan to participate meaningfully in their governance in and through the broadcast media in their own languages. This situation is compounded by the little interest shown in the development of a vibrant community broadcasting sector and the total lack of firm provisions for their sustenance. The areas of spectrum management, local content and media ownership are also poorly regulated, which leaves them to abuse by both commercial and political interests.

Sound policy and regulation creates an environment where participation of the full range of people that make up a polity may take place. There are however numerous obstacles to the formulation and implementation of policy and regulation. Thus while good broadcast policy and regulation may create the potential for improved participation in democratic debate, these may not, on their own, automatically yield diversity. This is because policy and regulation are constrained by political, economic, technological and cultural obstacles. Whether it is human agency or policy that is best placed to deliver diversity has been debated, particularly in political economy and cultural studies circles. The role of human agency should be seen as working alongside policy and regulation rather than against them in securing a positive environment for diversity and enhancing the participation of the majority in important public debate through the broadcast media. The task of policy therefore, as McQuail and Van Cuilenburg have succinctly put it, should be '…to recognize what needs to be done and can be done, recognizing and respecting other dynamic forces that work for (but also against) the chosen objectives' (2003:205).

This chapter constituted a review of pertinent literature in the area of broadcasting policy and regulation, as well as a review of key documents pertaining to policy and legislation that have a bearing on the operation of the broadcast media in Uganda in the interests of diversity, and particularly linguistic diversity. The chapter also reviewed some broad principles and challenges underlying broadcast policy and regulation. The next chapter will analyse the salient issues in public debate on policy relating to the role of the indigenous languages in the broadcast media in Uganda.

CHAPTER 7

7.0   DEBATING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE BROADCASTING POLICY IN UGANDA

7.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters, the focus was on examining the media environment in Uganda and establishing the socio-historical and regulatory context within which Uganda's media operate. Thus far, a synopsis of key economic, political, social and cultural factors influencing indigenous language programming in Uganda's broadcast media has been presented. The growing tensions between the public interest imperative of the 'public' (state-owned) broadcaster and the pressures to compete favourably with new commercial broadcasters have been examined. All this has been related to the implications of the prevailing situation for diversity and for citizen participation in the broadcast media.

This chapter seeks to answer the question: What do Ugandans say about indigenous language broadcasting policy, and the significance of indigenous language programming for their participation in the democratic process via the broadcast media?

In Chapter 1, reference was made to Thompson's depth hermeneutics. Thompson argues that depth hermeneutics enables us to develop a framework which is oriented towards the interpretation (or re-interpretation) of meaningful phenomena, and that such inquiry should aspire towards an understanding of a phenomenon (in our case the broadcast media) in its social, political and historical context.

Thus, as a further step towards our understanding of the media-language issue in Uganda, and in addition to our preceding description of the media environment and the regulatory context within which Uganda's media operate, the opinions of key role players on this issue are elicited in this chapter. In order to do this, and given the fact that little is documented about the Ugandan language debate in relation to the broadcast media, interviews were conducted with people ranging from government officials, local leaders, media owners, media managers, media practitioners, academics and listeners (cf. Chapter 1). The purpose of the discussions and interviews was to collect firsthand views on the issue of language in Uganda's broadcast media.

On the basis of this, and along with the preceding theoretical discussions, some conclusions can be drawn that may contribute towards future broadcast policy in Uganda.

The chapter seeks to document the content of the debate on the role of Uganda's languages in the public domain between 1988 and 2005. These years span a period in Uganda's history where the issue of the role of different languages in the public domain was put to public debate, mainly triggered by the work of two Constitutional Commissions and their reports, namely Uganda Constitutional Commission 1992[1] and Uganda Commission of Inquiry (Constitutional Review) 2003[2]. In addition the inquiry relies on news stories as well as opinions expressed in the mainstream print media in form of commentary, opinions and/or letters to the editor during the period 1988-2005.

7.2   BACKGROUND TO THE LANGUAGE DEBATE IN UGANDA

According to Walusimbi (2005), a professor of Linguistics at Makerere University and a Buganda kingdom loyalist, language became an issue for public debate in Uganda as far back as the early 1930s when the British government proposed Kiswahili as a *lingua franca* for a planned East African Federation. The Buganda government is on record as fiercely resisting this move. In 1972 Amin declared Kiswahili the national language after a brief public debate, but this was never followed up by a concrete policy, laws or regulations to operationalise the decision, perhaps because such elevation of Kiswahili above other languages was deemed politically sensitive.

The debate on the role of Uganda's different languages in the public domain has since typically rotated around the issues of the national language, the role of Kiswahili in regional integration, the role of Luganda in relation to the other languages, the need to promote national unity through one language vis-à-vis the need for preserving Uganda's linguistic and cultural diversity and heritage, the role of language in education and the role of language in easing communication between the governors and the governed. It should be noted, however, that the public debate on language in Uganda has seldom dwelt on the role of language in the media *per se*, or the role of indigenous language broadcasting in enhancing Ugandans' participation in the democratic process.

According to Gumoshabe, a lecturer in Makerere University's Institute of Languages, for the majority of Ugandans, language has remained an elitist discussion.

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[1] Popularly known as the 'Odoki Commission'
[2] Popularly known as the 'Ssempebwa Commission'.

> People do not care about the status of the language policy, as long as Luganda is not the made the national language. The Baganda want this [to have Luganda as the national language], and the rest of the population do not. This is the only issue that has generated discussion among ordinary people (Gumoshabe, 2005).

Nekyon (2005), the first Minister of Information and Tourism after Uganda attained independence in 1962 says Uganda's colonial language policy involved the use of English for all national level communication, and the use of the indigenous languages for official communication at the different districts. Mayanja (2005), former minister of information in the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government further argues that though this policy appeared to promote diversity, it may not have been as benign as it appeared. He contends that the colonial policy was aimed at creating a divide-and-rule situation as well as preventing the formation of large political blocks aided by a common language (Mayanja, 2005). The same policy was reflected in the state-run *Radio Uganda* where broadcasts were divided between the national, dominated by English, and the regional, dominated by the major area languages. Whatever the motivation of the colonial language policy, this policy was inherited by the post-colonial governments of Uganda. *Radio Uganda* continued to broadcast in as many indigenous languages as was practically possible after independence in 1962. Over the years the languages in use on *Radio Uganda* have grown from eight to 24.

Post-independence governments in Uganda have attempted to address the language situation in Uganda with a particular focus on identifying a 'unifying' language. Uganda's political history (see Chapter 4 for a detailed treatment) has had a bearing on the way Ugandans view the language issue. The majority of interviewees at the national level, while acknowledging the power of the indigenous languages, see Uganda's linguistic diversity as a major political problem, expressing the view that nation-building is inconceivable without a common (national) language. They argue for instance, that while Ugandans are able to express themselves through the broadcast media without linguistic restriction, this has trapped them into the legacy of operating as different units. They further argue that as the official language, English may have helped to move official business and governance, but it has not accomplished the kind of national cohesion that countries that have a unifying indigenous language have. Referring to neighbouring Tanzania that has had Kiswahili as its national language, Kiyimba, a senior lecturer in Literature at Makerere University who spent three years in Tanzania argues,

> Apart from its usual role in literacy and communication, language can weld a nation together, and cause the whole country to operate with a rhythm. You are able to argue and everyone understands what you are all saying.

However the subject of language has remained a delicate one, and most government efforts to come up with a comprehensive policy addressing key aspects of the public domain like schools, courts of law and the media have been half-hearted and have availed little. Thus, as Okullu-Mura (2005), Director of Broadcasting and member of the Broadcasting Council until January 2005 observes that policy on language in Uganda has generally not been discussed rationally. Similarly the debate on the use of language in the public domain in Uganda since 1986 (when the NRM government came into power) has been on and off and has rarely been related specifically to the role of language in the broadcast media. Okullu-Mura adds that because the majority of Ugandans place their ethnic origins above their national identity, any discussion involving the elevation of a Ugandan language to national or official status tends to get emotional (Okullu-Mura, 2005).

7.3   UGANDA'S SEARCH FOR A 'UNIFYING LANGUAGE'

7.3.1 The 'Odoki Commission'

Soon after the NRM took over power in 1986, they appointed a Constitutional Review Commission chaired by Justice Benjamin Odoki. The Commission had the promotion of a participatory democracy as one of its key objectives. Language was seen as central to this effort and the emphasis was on a language that would foster national unity after the country had been polarised by decades of conflict (see Chapter 4 for a fuller discussion of Uganda's political history).

In a feature article in the *New Vision*, one of Uganda's two leading newspapers, Odoki (1991:8) associates the language issue with citizenship. Uganda's language problem, he argues, consists in the lack of a unifying language. Odoki thus reflects on the imperatives of the constitutional review process with regards to language:

> Colonialists encouraged division. How can we move away from this? Can we evolve a national language to promote our unity and national identity...There is a need to promote factors which can enhance unity and national consciousness, drawing on our common history and culture, economic realities and other common interests.

As the Odoki Commission proceeded with its work, it emerged that there was a strong push, particularly within government circles, to promote Kiswahili as the 'unifying language.' The following three excerpts from articles published in the local newspapers demonstrate how polarised the major positions during this phase of the language debate were.

Aruo (1991:5) argues:

> [Uganda is]…a country made up of several nationalities or tribes, each having its own language and culture which must be guarded jealously…. I do not think a Muganda will surrender his language and culture and learn Lwo or Ateso for the sake of national unity. If a Muganda cannot do so, who would be so naive as to surrender his language and culture for the sake of national unity? Not for a million dollars.

Aruo adds that for a national language to be meaningful it must be drawn from one of the languages spoken in that country and that to most Ugandans, Kiswahili is as foreign as English or French.

Sserwadda (1993) cites the then Prime Minister Samson Kisekka criticising Kiswahili at a public meeting as a foreign language which came to serve traders, and advocating for the adoption of Luganda.

> How could Kiswahili make us one people, or how would we accept to lose our identity? Luganda was then and up to now taught at Makerere (University). It is Luganda which is a national language. What will Kiswahili help a common person on the village? [sic]...I speak my opinion. This is what I have at the bottom of my heart. I do not mind whether it hurts anybody or makes one feel like bursting. I have everything and I am very old. I have nothing to lose.

Kintu (1994:5), on the other hand argues,

> There is yet no sensible argument against Kiswahili apart from the fact that our country is still dogged by the Ganda chauvinism and unless this obstacle is removed we shall not have anything accomplished.

Kintu adds that Kiswahili has a wider vocabulary than Uganda's indigenous languages which borrow from it. At the time the Odoki Commission presented its report to the Constitutional Assembly, an interim legislative body charged with the promulgation of a new constitution, the polarisation expressed by the public through local newspapers was mirrored in the Constitutional Assembly. There were some strong pro-Kiswahili elements, people who had been in exile in Tanzania or had learnt Kiswahili over the five years of resistance to the Obote II government. However there were some equally strong sentiments against Kiswahili especially among the Baganda who saw Kiswahili as the language of oppression (see Chapter 4 for a discussion of the genesis of this sentiment).

The Odoki Commission proposed that Kiswahili, Luganda and other area languages should be promoted, envisaging that 'in the course of time one of them will emerge as the National

Language.' They also recommended that English remain the official language (Uganda Constitutional Commission 1992:79). However, when the recommendations of the Odoki Commission were sent to the Constitutional Assembly, the latter voted to make Kiswahili the national language. This decision caused such acrimony in the legislature where powerful anti-Kiswahili forces were at work that the decision was eventually withdrawn.

To demonstrate the intensity of public sentiment on the language issue, when the news broke that the Constitutional Assembly had voted to abandon the proposal to make Kiswahili the national language, a local language opposition paper, *Ngabo*, led with an article entitled 'Kiswahili at long last thrown out.' The lead sentence stated:

> The Constitutional Assembly has finally abandoned the dictatorial proposal that was trying to force Kiswahili upon the people (of Uganda) as the national language (Ssempa 1995:1).

The above debate suggests that with regards to a common language, Ugandans' views are far from unified. It also emerges that the contest is really between Luganda and Kiswahili, and that prejudices based in the historical experiences of Ugandans colour the debate. These may be seen as constituting an impediment to the development of language policy in the public interest.

7.3.2   The 'Ssempebwa Commission'

In 2001, the NRM government put in place another Constitutional Review Commission, known as the Ssempebwa Commission after its chairman, Prof. Frederick Ssempebwa, to review the 1995 Constitution. This Commission also had the mandate of identifying a possible national language 'to unify Ugandans.' Once again Kiswahili and Luganda emerged as the two languages in contention. As in the debate surrounding the Odoki Commission in the early 1990s, the debate in the local papers in the early 2000s was polarised along support for or opposition to Kiswahili and Luganda.

During this period, the *New Vision* (2002:10)*,* the government paper, carried an editorial piece where they argued that it would be good to have a national language that cuts across all ethnic and geographic boundaries. *The New Vision* argued that Kiswahili is 'the perfect candidate because it is simple, and easy to learn and understand.' The editorial further argued that current Ministry of Education policy promoting teaching in the different languages would fragment Uganda further linguistically, and neither Luganda nor English can accomplish the role of unification.

The *New Vision* also argued that Uganda needs a common medium of communication with Kenya and Tanzania in light of the 'resurrected' East African community. Finally the *New Vision* argued that ordinary Ugandans need to be able to talk to one another through a common language. Thus, they concluded, in the interest of both nation building in Uganda and strengthening regional unity in East Africa, Swahili is the way forward and it is time for Government to seek ways of increasing Kiswahili instruction in schools and to introduce Swahili into society beyond just the army and the police.

There were strong reactions to the Ssempebwa Commission's preliminary proposal that Kiswahili be considered as Uganda's national language. In support of Luganda, for instance, Ssenyondo (2004:15) made the following typical argument:

> …every free thinking Ugandan can agree with me, putting tribalism aside, that Luganda is the most widely used language in the country. Why then should we import Swahili? I think we should put tribalism aside and face the reality because Luganda is used in almost all corners of Uganda with the biggest number around Kampala for obvious reasons.

In another opinion piece, Walusimbi (2004), a professor of Linguistics at Makerere University argued further that government's proposal to make Kiswahili Uganda's second official language must be 'strongly condemned and fought,' emphasising the fact that Kiswahili is not an indigenous language and has no cultural base.

> If Kiswahili, a non-native language and worse still, a language without culture, is made a national language, our languages and rich cultures will gradually fade away. …Are Ugandans ready and willing to lose their natural identities? (2004:10).

Although identifying a unifying language was the priority of the Ssempebwa Commission, the outcome of the Commission's investigations on the issue of a national language did not offer much guidance for policy.

Some of the salient issues in the report were that:

- There is unanimity that language can be the most critical instrument for the promotion of nation-building;
- The absence of a language that can easily be a mark of identity of Ugandans as a people, a medium of communication through which Ugandans can easily communicate, understand one another and promote a Ugandan culture is 'lamentable,'

- The languages with the potential to serve the above purposes are Luganda, Kiswahili, English and a combination of select tribal languages; and

- Based on memoranda from a cross-section of Ugandans, the majority of Ugandans objected to making Luganda the national language and instead proposed that all Ugandan languages be promoted (Uganda. Commission of Inquiry 2003 19 sec 254-256).

Thus the Ssempebwa Commission, after two years of work, came to the following conclusion on language:

> That the people throughout Uganda are finding it necessary to communicate in either Kiswahili or Luganda is a fact that cannot be denied. Nevertheless, the people did not come out strongly in favour of Luganda or any other local language becoming a national language. The statistical inclination is towards Kiswahili (Uganda. Commission of Inquiry 2003:19 sec 256).

The Commission thus proposed that Kiswahili be promoted as the *lingua franca* to foster integration in the East Africa region, and that the state continue to preserve and enrich all Ugandan languages.

Historically, elevating Kiswahili to any officially recognised position has been portrayed by proponents of Luganda as a direct threat to Luganda. For some, therefore, it remains preferable to have all the languages officially on the same footing than to have Kiswahili elevated to official or national status.

Even though public debate on the issue of language in the public domain has been focused on the selection of either Luganda or Kiswahili as official or national language for purposes of uniting Ugandans, others in this debate have argued that this is besides the point, as *one* language does not necessarily make for unity. The Buganda government's spokesman captures the spirit of this position when he argues,

> Nation-building is not about uniformity. It is about sharing goals. It is to do with social and economic objectives...with concretising the pillars. A common language is just an added advantage…What makes a nation is the collective heritage of the people. To forget your language would be to abdicate your heritage. Buganda is because of language, Bunyoro is because of language, Busoga is because of language, Lango is because of language. We need to recognise the particular first. …Besides there are certain things that cannot be translated (Mayiga, 2005).

Proponents of this position cite countries like Burundi, Rwanda and Somalia that have been bedevilled by civil strife in spite of having one language.

The above discussion paints a picture of some of the issues that have typified the language debate in Uganda. In particular it highlights pre-eminence of the issue of a unifying language, the tension between the proponents of Kiswahili as opposed to the proponents of Luganda and the security of the position of English.

7.4   LANGUAGE FOR TRANSMISSION OR PARTICIPATION?

Ugandan governments' attempts to evolve a language policy have rarely addressed the aspect of diversity for the purpose of enhancing participation. This may be attributed to government's attitude towards the media demonstrated in communication policies and draft policy documents, namely that the role of the media is to 'transmit messages' to the 'masses' and assist in 'mobilising' them rather than to serve as an arena for different voices to be heard or to challenge the status quo (key communication policies and draft policy documents are examined in Chapter 6). Government therefore seems to view the role of the different languages in the broadcast media in terms of their role in facilitating mobilisation and efficiency in disseminating information on government programmes, hence the heavy emphasis on the need for a common language.

7.4.1   Government policy on language in the media

The NRM government through the Broadcasting Council in 2004 initiated a dialogue on the formulation of a policy to guide the broadcast sector. The Draft Broadcast Policy that emerged out of this dialogue came at a time when the state broadcaster no longer had a monopoly of the airwaves. Several stations had come up that broadcast almost entirely in one local language or another. The most powerful media owners had formed an association (The National Association of Broadcaster (NAB) through which they were able to lobby for favourable policy positions particularly on ownership and local content. Although Uganda's Draft Broadcasting Policy (Uganda 2004 sec. 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4) addresses local content, therefore, it does so in relatively mild terms. Dennis Lukaaya, the operations manager[3] for the Broadcasting Council attributes this to the influence of powerful actors like NAB. He further argues that government regards media owners rather than the public as their key stakeholder in the policy-making process.

According to the Broadcasting Council (2004:67), the majority of Ugandans regarded the inclusion of provisions about indigenous language content in the Draft Broadcast Policy as priority. Nevertheless, the issue of language still did not feature as prominently in public debate of the policy as did other issues such as media ownership and licensing. Thus Okullu-Mura, Director

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[3] The operations manager heads the secretariat of the Broadcasting Council and oversees its day-to-day running.

for Broadcasting in the Department of Information[4] concludes that in the arena of language in the broadcast media, 'might' tends to be 'right.' Those groups that have exerted the greatest pressure on policy-makers (usually the economically or numerically strong) have had their languages included, while the weaker language groups have been left out of the media (Okullu-Mura, 2005) (Also see Chapter 6 for a fuller discussion of the forces at play in the formulation of broadcast policy in Uganda).

Interviews with regulators and government officials reveal the same lack of focus on the significance of linguistic diversity in the media for participation in the democratic process. Most government officials interviewed seem preoccupied with the country's need for a common language.

7.5   WHAT UGANDANS SAY ABOUT THE MEDIA, INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND PARTICIPATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

There seems to be broad agreement on the importance of the indigenous languages in Uganda's media. Although Uganda's political history has so polarised the different Ugandan ethnic groups that it has been difficult to debate the issue of language policy rationally, different actors in the realm of policy have expressed their views on what are perceived as the salient issues with regards to language policy with a fair degree of consistency. The debate has been dominated by the tension between a desire to forge a united people through the adoption of one language (and therefore arguments about what language) and a desire to protect linguistic and cultural identities and allow for maximum participation by having as many languages as possible on the airwaves.

7.5.1   What do Ugandans say about the significance of indigenous languages for their participation in the democratic process?

The indigenous languages make it easier for politicians to communicate with the electorate. Political mobilisation in a setting as multi-lingual as Uganda's would be difficult without the indigenous languages, as the alternatives (English and Kiswahili) are each spoken by a minority. Muranga (2005), professor of Ethno-linguistics at Makerere, 'throughout our history, the languages of Uganda have been political factors. Whoever dares to do politics must address the language question.'

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[4] Dr. Okullu-Mura ceased to be a member of the council upon his retirement in January 2006.

Muranga adds,

> When politicians go to camp upcountry in their home areas they are expected to be able to speak the local language. The argument is: 'if you don't speak our language you don't represent our interests.' In addition, many of our people have original opinions but they cannot express them well in English. They can only do this in the vernacular. If you deny the people the opportunity to express themselves in their mother-tongue, you are muzzling them. They do not feel free enough. Besides the few who know English are not necessarily the wisest or most creative (Muranga, 2005).

Besides, as Nsaba Butuuro (2005), Minister of State for Information, Office of the President says, when a national programme is conducted in a local language, listeners feel a part of the national vision.

The importance of the indigenous languages in Uganda has also been expressed in economic terms. The majority of Ugandans are illiterate. Those interviewed for this chapter thus contended that it is important for people to access information of economic value (such as job announcements, tender information and advertisements) in the local languages. They also pointed out that promoting the indigenous languages is related to the development of local artistic talent and provision of employment (cf. Kariithi 2003). Most interviewees at the national level agree that people are better able to express themselves artistically in their own languages than in a foreign language, and that it is difficult to be creative in a foreign culture.

The indigenous languages are also seen by Ugandans as important in the cultural arena. All language academics interviewed agree that language plays a central role in the preservation of culture. Thus language is variously described by interviewees as 'the vehicle of culture,' 'the depository of our heritage' and 'our source of identity.' Walusimbi (2005), a professor of Linguistics at Makerere University argues that people can understand and think better in their languages, and that debate is likely to be more calm and rational if conducted in people's indigenous languages. He adds that it is also likely to have more depth.

The debate on the availability of the indigenous languages in Uganda's broadcast media is therefore of particular significance because, although *Radio Uganda* has broadcast in 24 languages for many years, it has been forced to split the available time into portions that for most languages are seen as so small as to almost be meaningless (see Chapter 6). The privately owned stations on the other hand have had the liberty to devote as much time as they wish to the respective local languages of their audiences. Some of them (like Radio West) boast of broadcasting over 90% in one local language. Thus while the state broadcaster is influenced both

by political pressure to represent more and more languages and economic pressure to survive in a competitive environment, the commercial media operate under pressure to keep expanding their audiences. They also operate in a vague policy environment and under a constraining legal regime (see Chapter 6). The question that arises is, given the political and commercial pressures under which the broadcast media operate, to what extent do Ugandans think that the kind of programming available in the broadcast media is of any political significance to them?

All local leaders interviewed acknowledged the importance of the indigenous languages, saying they ease communication between governors and governed, facilitate political mobilization of local communities, and enhance participation in the democratic process. Most local leaders also argued that people learn better in the indigenous languages (cf. Chapter 3 on language and participation). They emphasise the point that the majority of people in the rural areas understand only local languages, and if they are to fully participate, they have to use the local languages.

The following comment from Wambede (2005), the District Information Officer in Mbale, summarises what many see as the democratic significance of indigenous language broadcasting:

> When the programme is in Lumasaba (the majority local language in Mbale), you get very good points that come from people who have not gone to school. The audience of radio is in the rural areas. Here real people talk to their leaders…The media has [sic] a very big role especially in our area here. Print circulates only among the elite, and the majority of ordinary Ugandans are illiterate. Radio broadcasts in languages they understand so they pay more attention.

It is not clear, however, whether the average Ugandan believes that their participation in indigenous language programmes on the broadcast media has any impact on follow up action. Some feel strongly that listeners' contributions are indeed taken seriously and responded to and cite instances of roads having been repaired or garbage having been collected because of contributions of the local people over the radio. Others, however, are more modest about the effect of their contributions, saying that it depends on a number of factors, such as the issue in question and whether the radio guest has the power to do anything about it. Indeed the majority opinion across the regions visited was that government officials in particular only respond to inconsequential listeners' suggestions, and that listener contributions on interactive local language programmes have little effect on governance beyond the cosmetic. Interviewees also pointed out that government does not take the broadcast media as seriously as it does the print media. Their explanation for this is that the print media are read by the elite, and government 'fears' the elite

more than they 'fear' the ordinary people because the former are more likely to sustain a challenge to government programmes through debate.

Listeners interviewed also suggest that any programme in the local language (with the exception of music and international sport) tends to be more popular than a similar programme in, say, English or Kiswahili, or a language not well understood in a given region. However, the majority of interviewees also indicate that they prefer to listen to and participate in political satires and dramas rather than straight political debate. Indeed it was widely noted in the interviews and discussions that followed from the interviews that participation of ordinary people in programmes of a specifically political nature is limited to periods of high political activity like elections, by-elections or referenda. If this were true, it would imply that although the local stations in Uganda are broadcasting in the local languages, to draw any conclusions about the significance of this for their participation in the democratic process, one would need to go deeper and inquire into what kind of programming the stations are broadcasting in the indigenous languages and who is able to participate meaningfully in these programmes.

Furthermore, even with programmes in the indigenous languages, there are some structural obstacles in the way of participation. Some interviewees raised the important issue that knowing the local language alone may not earn a person the right to participate in a programme, as other socio-economic factors come into play. They argued that such factors as level of education, lack of money to buy airtime or to make calls to the station, and not having the kind of social status that would earn one an invitation to the studio, also come into play.

As far as media practitioners, managers and owners are concerned, there was near unanimity that indigenous language broadcasting plays a vital role in enhancing ordinary people's participation in the democratic process. They argued that indigenous language radio enables the majority of Ugandans to access accurate information in languages they understand and to participate through the media in issues that concern them. Furthermore, they argued that the importance of indigenous language radio in the democratic process is demonstrated by the significance local and national politicians attach to the local stations. Matojo, Station Manager, *Radio West* summarises it thus: 'Every standing politician has to come to radio. And now they are all setting up their own radio stations' (Matojo, 2005).

Some of the practitioners, managers and owners, however, cautioned that radio has its limitations in what it can accomplish. As Mukiibi, Programmes Director with the *Central Broadcasting*

Service (CBS) puts it, 'Radio just creates awareness because people who come to the studios are not always competent enough to address these issues, with the exception of government bureaucrats' (Mukiibi, 2005).

Lutambo (2005), Programmes Director, *Simba FM*, supports this view, saying**,** '…the response of leaders who appear on radio shows is more marginal. They use the radio to get to their constituents. It's more of publicity-motivated than feedback-oriented.' Nevertheless, Lutambo maintains, Ugandans' lives have been improved, they make more informed choices and they are enlightened as a result of the availability of broadcasting in the indigenous languages.

It appears that the media in the urban and in the rural areas differ with regards to their role in enhancing participation in the democratic process, as Mutazindwa (2005), Station Manager, shareholder and presenter (Vision FM) argues:

> … I don't think that they [the stations] are taking people on the right track. [Instead] they are building some form of political segmentation, i.e. the East, the North, the West kind of blocks. Secondly these stations [outside Kampala] conduct their business differently. They focus on human rights, law and order, constitutionalism, and good governance, but in Kampala it's quite different. In the urban areas, the majority population support the opposition hence the government preferring to use the broadcast media in the rural areas. Most up country stations try to balance their content between politics and social life.

Thus interviews with media owners, managers and practitioners suggest that on the whole they acknowledge the importance of broadcasting in the indigenous languages as this enables more Ugandans to participate in the broadcast media. However, a number of media owners also admit that often the purpose of their programming is more 'publicity-motivated' than 'feedback-oriented' and that there is a limit to what most studio guests can accomplish beyond talking and opening up debate on an issue. It also emerges that there may be differences in focus between rural based stations and urban stations in that the former are more likely to address 'bread-and-butter' issues concerning the local people than the latter.

7.5.2   What do Ugandans say about regulating language in the media?

There is currently no concrete, written down policy on the use of Uganda's different languages in the broadcast media, although there is a draft broadcast media policy that seeks to address, among other things, local content. Gauging from the majority of academics, policy-makers and regulators with whom discussions were held, the prevalent view across different categories of Ugandans seems to be that in a liberalised environment, it is not necessary for government to regulate the use of the indigenous languages in the media because, they argue, market forces will take care of

that. Even those who would consider some form of regulation think it should be done with caution, using inducements rather than sanctions, lest it upset the smooth running of the commercial owned media.

> ..[Y]ou see, the stations we have are commercially driven. They are not motivated to have variety for its own sake. They prefer to deal with large language blocks. If people were economically strong then stations would attempt to reach out to them. But most groups are poor. …This is a threat to democracy (Nsaba Butuuro, 2005).

The minister thus appears to endorse the market as the regulator for language. Ironically, Mutabazi (2005), chairman of the Broadcasting Council, the government regulator for the broadcast sector, expresses a fundamentally different view from that of his Minister:

> I am totally opposed to market forces regulating languages. I don't believe that market forces should dictate. The airwaves are public property. We can't issue licenses to satisfy everybody. Let's take an example: It's important that whoever is going to broadcast in Central Buganda should use Luganda but if *WBS*[5] thinks English is fashionable and begins to broadcast in it, we should stop that. My position is that if your radio is in a particular location, they should broadcast in a language spoken by those people in that area.

Discussions on the role of language in the media at fora like academic institutions, cabinet, parliament and the regulators have assumed that policy determines linguistic practice with regards to the media. The emphasis has been first to establish a national language, and then to create room for the indigenous languages in education. The indigenous languages in the media and their role in the democratisation process has rarely featured in public debate perhaps because the role of the media has been framed by the authorities in linear rather than participatory terms. In existing policy documents, the indigenous languages in the broadcast media have not been seen as key components of a broader diversity that relates to enhanced political participation, but rather as conduits of government programmes to a largely illiterate public. The assumption has been therefore that if the indigenous languages are provided for in the education sector, their preservation is ensured. The indigenous languages can then be used in all other sectors.

The current government has also sought to promote Kiswahili as a regional language because of its neutrality and its perceived capacity to catalyse the development of a political and economic block in the fast-unifying East Africa region. It is instructive to note the disparities between the agenda of government with regards to the roles of the different languages and the priorities of the Ugandan public. It is also important to note that while members of the public have definite

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[5] *WBS* is the largest and most viable privately owned local TV station in Uganda.

positions on the potential role of the different languages of Uganda in the media, government's position on the matter remains ambivalent.

The tensions between the proponents of Luganda and the proponents of Kiswahili appear to have stood in the way of exhaustive public debate on the subject of regulating the roles of the different languages of Uganda in the media. Mayiga (2005), the spokesman for the Buganda government, for instance, argues that there is in fact no need to debate the language issue because Kiswahili poses no threat and is unlikely to 'take off' in the media. Put another way, Mayiga suggests that the place of Luganda vis-à-vis that of other languages in the media is secure and needs no debate. Without expressly advocating market forces as the arbiter, the Buganda spokesman also expresses the anxieties associated with a concrete language policy. Because government's contribution to the language debate has been mostly on the issue of a national language or a unifying language[6], Mayiga argues, such a language should evolve *alongside* the other indigenous languages, *not instead of* the indigenous languages, because the indigenous languages are vital in ensuring the inclusion of as many Ugandans as possible in the democratic process.

According to Gumoshabe (2005), a lecturer in the African languages at Makerere University, it has been difficult to rationally debate the roles of different languages in Uganda's broadcast media at the national level because of the interests of the Baganda, by virtue of their location vis-à-vis the distribution of the broadcast media (see Chapter 5), have dominated the language debate drowning the interests of the other indigenous ethnic groups. Gumoshabe further argues that because Luganda is the default indigenous language (particularly for radio) in most of the country, the Baganda are satisfied with the status quo. The only times the Baganda have come out strongly to talk about the use of language in the media, he further argues, is when they have perceived Kiswahili as threatening the place of Luganda.

There appears to be no consensus among the local leaders in the different regions of Uganda on whether government or the market is best placed to regulate the use of the different languages in the media. Local leaders interviewed from the Northern region, for instance, are generally agreed that government should have a say in what languages are used in the broadcast media and in what proportions. Among the local leaders from the other regions, however, support for government intervention in the regulation of language ranges from lukewarm to non-existent. A few argue that for the media to exercise their social responsibility in the best interests of the ordinary person,

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[6] In addition to the role of language in education.

government needs to guide them. Others, however, are more lukewarm in their response to government regulation of language use in the media because they do not trust that government will not use regulation of language as an excuse to infringe upon media freedoms. The prevalent at this level of the language debate is that the market is best placed to regulate the use of these languages in the broadcast media because what languages the media use depends on the number of speakers and how culturally relevant the given language is. Some think, therefore, that government should keep out of regulating language use in the media all together.

On the other hand there seems to be near unanimity among media practitioners, managers and owners interviewed for this study on the position that government should not intervene in the regulation of language in the broadcast media. Only one producer among those interviewed raised the need for government to intervene on language in the broadcast media for purposes of promoting unity through language, ensuring quality and overseeing representation of the whole range of ethnicities. The majority of media managers and owners interviewed affirm the view of some local leaders, namely that the market is perfectly capable of regulating language and that government intervention could give them a 'leeway' into other areas like editorial content. Kawooya-Mwebe (2005), the station manager, *CBS*, for instance, likens the broadcast sector to the telecommunications sector, arguing that the telephone company Mobile Telecommunications Network (MTN) runs its communications campaigns in any combination of languages and nobody stops them, so why should government want to direct the radio sector on how to use the different languages? To emphasise his point, Kawooya-Mwebe cautions:

> For government to come and dictate on languages, I think the government would be going [too] far in a liberalised environment... . The government can force security and it happens but on issues of language, they should be careful.

Another argument frequently raised by the media managers and owners interviewed is that government has no right to regulate a sector it does not fund. Many concede that the only area of language where government intervention would be welcome is in controlling vulgar use of language. Media managers and owners defend their objection to government intervention saying language policy in the broadcast media is driven by commercial considerations coupled with relevance. The programmes director of Simba FM, Lutambo (2005) captures the gist of this argument:

> Our target audience is comfortable with Luganda…Many people use it as their first language. It creates psychological and emotional attachments. We want to sound as local and African as possible to serve our objectives efficiently. We are very commercially

driven; we zero in on a particular target, unlike public or state radio that is segmented. It would be expensive to serve more than one language on a commercial radio.

The station manager and owner of *Simba FM*, (Ssekalaala 2005) shares his experience as a successful media owner to illustrate the pragmatism that drives many commercial stations' language policy,

> [When we started] we found that there was a divergence. There seemed to be a concept that local communication on FM's [sic] meant playing *kadongokamu music*[7]; local meant *'birango'*[8]… we had to have a communication thread with the people, to do things in a local content fashion. The feel, the look in the news, the music, the discussions held, the humour all had to be local. There was sufficient proof that it would be successful. We thought that there was a small market of about 5000, a niche market, a very focused market, people who are proud to be Ugandan. In our vision, we thought that these would probably be male but not overly loyal to the Kabaka[9]; age group-22-35, young people, self defined, not too rooted in the earth [Ganda culture places a high premium on land]. We thought this would be competitive. In terms of politics, there was a very big gap between English-understanding people, and Luganda speakers in the [central] region. There was an information deficit. Newspapers catered for the English speakers. But for the rest of the people there was no independent point of view, no breaking news…*CBS*[10] was no strong purveyor of the news …We have received no complaints about using Luganda. Instead people want us to extend the signal to their areas. The key thing with the central [region] is that we need Luganda to communicate; non Luganda speakers have got someone serving them.

Apart from audience preferences, other factors that media owners and managers see as key in influencing the use of different languages in the privately owned media are the language competence of particular studio guests, the high levels of illiteracy as well as the priorities of the station owners and those of advertisers and sponsors. Thus most commercial stations have some programming in English because English has been the official language since independence and is understood to be the language that policy-makers listen to, not because policy says so.

It is important to note that while many Ugandans interviewed acknowledge the role of individual choice in determining linguistic practice, and express caution or scepticism with regards to the role of policy in arbitrating issues of language in the media, policy remains vital in ensuring linguistic equity for ethnic groups that lack numeric strength. Policy is also important in ensuring equity in participation to include people who lack certain language competencies (such as

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[7] A basic music genre with minimal instrumentation and no sophisticated sound mixing. *Kadongokamu* is considered the most local form of music played on Ugandan radio.
[8] '*Birango*' is the Luganda name for a unique genre where ordinary people announce the death of loved ones, or the advent of major family events or lost property on radio, usually in the local language.
[9] The Luganda word for 'King'.
[10] Central Broadcasting Service, the oldest private local language radio in the country, owned and controlled by the Buganda (Mengo) government.

competence in English). Policy is also key in determining what value people attach to the different languages.

7.5.3 What do Ugandans propose as the ideal language model for the broadcast media?

A few local leaders interviewed think there is a place for government in regulating language use in the broadcast media. These make a wide range of proposals for regulating language use in the media. They argue that apart from a language for international communication (English), Uganda also needs a language for inter-territorial communication (Swahili), and a language to cover each of the four major regions of Uganda. There are other local leaders, though, who maintain that internally, Uganda needs not just a unifying language, but an *indigenous unifying language*. The two possible unifying languages proposed in most of the interviews were Luganda and Kiswahili.

The majority of local leaders from the central region say they have no objection to Kiswahili as a pragmatic choice for use in inter-territorial communication but they are emphatic that if there must be a 'unifying language' for use in the media, it should be an indigenous language. In other words, Kiswahili is fine as long as the place of Luganda is preserved.

One notes though that the penetration of Kiswahili among the majority of Ugandans is limited. Even though the Education White Paper (Uganda White Paper on Education 1992) mandates primary schools to introduce Kiswahili as a compulsory subject in primary four, most schools have neither teachers nor teaching materials to make this possible. In addition some Ugandans still harbour negative sentiments towards Kiswahili, describing it as 'the language of oppression'.

The majority of local leaders interviewed also agreed on the need to have fewer languages in the broadcast media than the state broadcaster currently offers. They proposed a hierarchy consisting of English, Kiswahili and the majority local languages of the different regions, or Kiswahili, English and the majority local language of the different regions. Others suggested that since some ethnic groups are not necessarily located in one region (see Addendum 1a. Ethnic Map of Uganda), instead of area languages based on geography, policy could instead adopt Luganda for all Bantu, Lwo for all Nilotes and Ateso for all Nilo-Hamites (mostly the Ateso and Ngakarimojong) and broadcast all three languages on all the broadcast media. This would take care of issues of arbitrary boundaries as well as migration.

In spite of the absence of a concrete policy to address the use of the different languages in the broadcast media in Uganda, most stations in Uganda consider it prudent to devote 80-90% of their time to the major indigenous language of the area and only 10-20% to other languages. Some

stations, however, have a more haphazard policy, where they broadcast in the different languages of the area depending on availability of presenters who speak those language, or on perceived trends in the 'market.'

7.6 PROPOSALS FOR A MODEL FOR REGULATING LANGUAGE IN UGANDA'S BROADCAST MEDIA

There are two familiar language policy models for the broadcast media in Uganda: the multiple languages model (practiced by the state broadcaster) where an attempt is made to accommodate as many of the languages of Uganda as possible, and an open policy, where stations individually select what languages most suit their goals. Elsewhere in the East African region however, for instance in Tanzania, another model, where one dominant language is used on all the media and for most of the time, has been tried. One other model that has not been tried but has been discussed is the area languages model[11], where one language is selected to serve each region, normally based on the number of speakers of that language and used as the main language of the media in that region.

Ugandans interviewed make a distinction between what policy would be ideal for the state broadcaster and for the other broadcasters. The majority of local leaders interviewed, for instance, think *Radio Uganda*'s policy (to use English, Kiswahili and as many of the indigenous languages as possible) has been good for *Radio Uganda* since the latter has had a national reach and sought to serve as many Ugandans as possible. The '*Radio Uganda*' model is also seen as important in ensuring the inclusion of minorities. Tumwiine (2005), District Information Officer, Mbarara, for instance says,

> People insist on their local languages, so if time is available, let them use their language. For example the people of Bufumbira (in Kisoro District) insist that *Radio Uganda* use their language, even though they understand Runyakitara[12].

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[11] The Ministry of Education has proposed Ateso/Ngakarimojong, Luganda, Lwo, Lugbara and the 4Rs as area languages to be used in Education in the North Eastern region, Central region, Northern region, North Western and Western regions respectively.

[12] In 1993 a row erupted among government officials over whether there was a need to include the Urufumbira language on Radio Uganda. Some influential officials of Rwandese origin argued that there is no difference between Urufumbira and Kinyrwanda and that it was more meaningful to include Urufumbira instead. The *New Vision* carried articles in the month of April 1993 where this debate played itself out. Eventually Urufumbira was added to the list of languages on Radio Uganda.

However, some local leaders interviewed maintain that an open policy such as the state broadcaster has had is no longer practical, is unnecessarily expensive and promotes tribalism.

The majority of local leaders say they have no objection to the broadcast media, including the state media, using select area languages as this would save time and other resources. The local leaders also agree that using the local languages could unify Ugandans and catalyse development in the different regions. However using area languages is seen as disadvantageous to the extent that it reduces opportunities for employment outside one's area of origin, causes insularity among the different regions, and overshadows the smaller languages.

Media managers and owners often need to balance economic considerations, ethnic diversity and inter-territorial relationships (and therefore to carefully weigh what role each language plays on the airwaves). The majority of media managers and owners interviewed also agree that the broadcast media, and in particular radio could not do without the indigenous languages. However, none of them think it is practical for the privately owned media to attempt to emulate the state broadcaster in broadcasting in as many indigenous languages as possible. They instead argue that the privately-owned stations must adopt a different strategy from the state broadcaster's, adding that in order to survive in a competitive environment, the state broadcaster must also re-examine its language policy.

Opio (2005), station manager of *Open Gate FM*, puts it this way:

> Before the private radios it [*Radio Uganda*'s language policy] was okay because it was a monopoly and centrally placed to disseminate the information. But today *Radio Uganda* is inefficient and lacking in content. I propose that *Radio Uganda* reduces on [sic] the languages and leave most of the local languages to private radio in respective geographical locations, which are in position to do the detailed work and present factual information to the people.

The prevalent view, especially among media owners, managers and practitioners is that the state broadcaster would be wise to zero down on a few languages to secure larger audiences. Mutazindwa (2005), station manager and shareholder of *Vision FM*, captures the general feeling among media managers and owners when he describes *Radio Uganda*'s current language policy as 'dangerous,' saying it leads to tokenism, and arguing that there are certain languages that are 'not necessary' to have in the media, so it would be better to concentrate on the 'major' languages.

As far as the private stations are concerned, most of the media managers and owners interviewed are driven primarily by the need to remain economically viable in a highly competitive market, and have devised a variety of strategies to deal with Uganda's multilingualism. *Radio West*, for instance has chosen to broadcast mostly in Runyankore, the predominant language of Mbarara where the station is located. In selecting to focus on Runyankore and leave out languages like Luganda, Lukonzo, Rwamba, Runyaruguru, Rutagwenda, Rufumbira, Rugungu and others that are spoken within their target area of broadcasting Matojo (2005), station manager, *Radio West*, argues that his station was driven by pragmatism. While on the one hand they had to decide which languages were not commercially viable, they also had to decide where their comparative advantage lay. 'We realize that we cannot speak Luganda more than *CBS* and *Simba* so we stick to Runyankore,' Matojo admits. Fraser (2005), a director at *Radio Wa* argues in the same vein that *Radio Wa* has chosen to mostly broadcast in Lwo because they fear that if they switch languages, their Lwo listeners (who are the majority in Lira) may switch to another station and never come back to *Radio Wa*.

There appears to be a pattern in the language policy of commercial stations vis-à-vis that of community stations. In the Central region, *CBS* and *Simba* broadcast predominantly in Luganda, using English mostly in one or two news bulletins and in advertisements. *Maama FM*, a community station in the Central region however broadcasts in at least 5 languages. In the Northern region, *Radio Wa* broadcasts predominantly in Lwo, using English only for the occasional news bulletin and a few advertisements. *Radio Apac*, a community station in the same area on the other hand, broadcasts in several languages which vary depending on the availability of volunteers. Similarly *Radio West* broadcasts predominantly in Runyankore, using Luganda and English in one or two news bulletins and some advertisements. *Open Gate FM*, a commercial radio station in Mbale, however represents the exception as they, like *Radio Maria*, a community station in the same area, broadcast in a variety of the local languages, adopting and dropping them depending on the availability of volunteers. *Vision FM*, a newly established commercial station in Mbarara broadcasts in seven languages but it was difficult to draw any conclusions based on this at the time of interviewing the station manager. *Vision FM* was still testing its signal and its language policy was not yet finalised.

From the above, it seems as if the more economically driven a station is, the less languages it is likely to employ in its broadcasting. Also, stations located in economically vibrant areas where there is a dominant language spoken seem more comfortable zeroing in on the major language spoken in the area than stations located in ethnically heterogeneous areas with no numerically

dominant ethnic group. It would however be necessary to conduct a more focused study to determine how broadly representative these preliminary findings are.

Among ordinary listeners some argued that the ideal language arrangement for all broadcast media would be to use as many of the indigenous languages as possible. They argued that radio was key in the transmission of culture and that every culture had a right to be perpetuated.

Open Gate FM listeners (in Mbale) were the most emphatic on the need to use as many languages as possible. Some of them were supportive of using area languages, as long as the language for the East was Lugisu (the dominant local language in Mbale). Those in support of using as many of the indigenous languages as possible also argued that at the moment English could be selected as that one language and this would leave out the majority illiterate who do not understand or speak English. Some argued that even Kiswahili would not work because people still harbour prejudices against it from the past. They argued that considering that there are over 100 radio stations in operation, the state broadcaster could broadcast in major languages but the other stations should broadcast in whatever the languages of their target population happen to be. They proposed that the languages taught in schools could be limited to a few but languages in the broadcast media should not be limited.

There appears to be no consensus amongst ordinary listeners on whether or not it would be appropriate to have a single official language of broadcasting in Uganda. Most people interviewed link the idea of using one language to a proposal that either Luganda or Kiswahili be adopted in some official capacity alongside English and some resist this. While the position of English is seen as secure and not worth further discussion by most interviewees at the local level, none of the other indigenous languages (apart from Luganda) is seen as a serious contender for the position of official language of the media. The discussion therefore often boils down to the possible role of Kiswahili and Luganda in the broadcast media.

The majority does not think it is viable to have an indigenous language as the official language of broadcasting because of 'historical ethnic tensions,' as well as fear of losing individual ethnic identities. Kiswahili therefore is seen as the lesser of two evils because it is a neutral language and therefore would not spark off ethnic tensions. Many also agree that Kiswahili is a well developed language which is easy to learn even for people who have never been to formal school (unlike English). Perhaps the strongest argument for Kiswahili, however, is that it would enhance economic relations with neighbouring countries.

The support for Kiswahili notwithstanding, there is some hesitation expressed in the ongoing debate about the role of Kiswahili as the official language of broadcasting. Some argue, for instance, that it would go against government's policy of promoting the mother-tongue in education, and that it is unpopular among the ordinary people, being the language of traders the police and the military. Some Ugandans maintain that in spite of the advantages of Kiswahili, a single official language of broadcasting in Uganda would have to be indigenous. Luganda is believed to be the most widely spoken single language in Uganda[13]. The strongest arguments in favour of Luganda as the official language of broadcasting are based on the fact that it is indigenous and that it is widely spoken. The proponents of Luganda also argue that Luganda is easier for Ugandans to learn than either English or Kiswahili and that it is accepted in most of the Central, Eastern and Western parts of Uganda.

On the other hand there are also arguments against the possibility of adopting Luganda as the official language of broadcasting. The most common of these arguments is that since Luganda belongs to one of the indigenous ethnic groups (the Baganda) it would give them a sense of superiority over the other groups. Another argument is that an indigenous language would not serve any purpose in international communication, and since Kiswahili is unpopular, English would be preferable.

What emerges from the interviews is that even though the indigenous languages may play a role in enhancing participation, to bring about a real change in participation the majority's recognition of the importance of broadcasting in the indigenous languages must be accompanied by political will on the part of the leaders, as well as policy to address not just language but also other structural issues that impinge on participation.

7.7   CONCLUSION

The debate on the use of language in the public domain in Uganda since 1986 (when the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government took over state power in Uganda) has been on and off and has rarely been related specifically to the role of language in the broadcast media. Since 1985, two constitutional processes both of whose priority was to explore the role language could play in national integration have energised the debate. The ensuing debate has been characterised by

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[13] It has been argued, however that some mutually intelligible language blocks like the 4Rs may compare favourably with Luganda in terms of numbers of speakers.

polarised positions with regards in particular to the role of Luganda and Kiswahili vis-à-vis the rest of Uganda's indigenous languages in the public domain.

On the whole, there seems to be a degree of consensus among Ugandans from different regions and stations in life that the indigenous languages are important and that the availability of broadcasting in these languages is key to their participation in the broadcast media. A number of interviewees (particularly government officials) however see the indigenous languages more as aiding political mobilisation and facilitating the dissemination of government information rather than facilitating meaningful debate on how people are governed. From the listeners' perspective, people listen to radio for a variety of reasons, including relevance of programming, familiarity of presenters, information-seeking, or simply to be heard on air. It should be noted though that a wide range of Ugandans interviewed, also suggest that they are more willing to participate in programmes if they perceive them to be linguistically relevant.

Contrary to the views of media practitioners, managers and owners interviewed, interviews with listeners do not suggest that overtly political programmes (such as political talk shows) are the most popular programmes among the local people. Rather, the majority seem more motivated to participate in entertainment programmes, and in particular programmes where they can send greetings to relatives and friends or where they stand a chance of winning a prize. Overtly political programmes seem to be popular only during periods of peak political activity, such as when there is a referendum or an election.

How best to harness indigenous language broadcasting towards meaningful political participation and diversity, therefore, remains a challenge. The fact that for historical reasons, many Ugandans come to any debate on the roles of different languages with political baggage appears to have implications for the development of a language policy for the broadcast media. The situation is further complicated by the commercialisation of the broadcast media and the shift in emphasis from serving the public interest to maximising profit.

Chapter 8 constitutes a continuation of the afore-going debate and addresses the questions: With specific reference to linguistic diversity in the broadcast media, how do the views of Ugandans on the issue of language policy for the media correspond with the socio-historical and regulatory context in which the broadcast media in Uganda operate, and with what implications for future broadcast policy? Chapter 8 further focuses on interpreting the outcome of the entire inquiry as

well as drawing conclusions and making recommendations for the future regulation of language in Uganda's broadcast media, with a focus on diversity.

CHAPTER 8

8.0   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1   INTRODUCTION

This thesis investigated the significance of indigenous language broadcasting for citizen participation in the democratic processes of Uganda. It examined existing policy or the lack of policy on the role of the indigenous languages in the public domain. The above was done against the background of some of the central tenets of critical media studies with specific reference to critical political economy (cf. Chapters 4, 5 and 6). For this reason an overview of the current state of the broadcast media and regulatory environment in Uganda was analysed in the context of Uganda's socio-political history.

The study was guided by the following questions:

- What are the key political, economic and cultural factors at play in influencing the structure and the operation of the broadcast media in Uganda?

- What are the salient features of broadcast policy in Uganda as it relates to linguistic diversity and to participation in the democratic process?

- How do these features relate to the wider context of the commercialisation of the broadcast media?

- What do Ugandans say about indigenous language broadcasting policy, and the significance of indigenous language programming for their participation in the democratic process via the broadcast media?

- What are the implications of the socio-historical context, current policy and regulation and public perceptions of the role of the indigenous languages in Uganda's broadcast media for future broadcast policy on indigenous language programming, diversity and participation in the democratic process?

In conclusion, this chapter puts forward some recommendations for future policy. The purpose is to emphasise   the role of the indigenous languages in the broadcast media in view of enhancing diversity and participation in Uganda's democratic processes. Finally the chapter suggests some areas to for further inquiry into some of the phenomena examined in this thesis.

8.2   OBSTACLES TO MEDIA PARTICIPATION IN UGANDA'S HISTORY

Uganda's socio-political history brings to light some key factors that have had a bearing on the ability of the average Ugandan to participate in public debate on matters concerning their governance through the broadcast media. These factors include the aftermath of British administrative policies and the use of ethnicity as a tool for governance and subjugation by both colonial and post-colonial governments. They also include the de-politicisation of civil society and a failure for policy and regulation to take cognisance of the importance of the indigenous languages in enhancing diversity and participation in the broadcast media, and to address important language 'valuations and evaluations' grounded in Uganda's political history (see Chapter 3; cf. Spitulnik 1998:164-165). Below is a recap and interpretation of these factors.

8.2.1   The aftermath of British administrative policies

In securing the territory that eventually became Uganda, the British laid the foundations for the future governance of Uganda based on patronage, epitomised by their policy of 'divide-and-rule.' In particular the British singled out Buganda, one of the most powerful, most organised political units at the time, for special privileges in return for their cooperation in the subjugation of the rest of the territory (see Chapter 4). To the extent that the Baganda attempted to transfer their own model of administration based on an all-powerful monarch and powerful chiefs to other parts of the country, they created resentment among their 'subjects.' This was particularly because the Ganda mode of administration vested excessive powers in the local chief and left little room for the ordinary person to participate in their governance. It could be argued that the tension thus created between Buganda and other parts of Uganda not only continues to dog the politics of Uganda but often manifests in hostility towards the Luganda language (see Chapter 7).

The British administrative policy of dividing the country into Central, East, North and West, keeping similar ethnic groups together and discouraging cooperation among these groups also resulted in a high level of insularity in each of the regions who saw each other as rivals (cf. Kabwegyere 1995:144-145). Thus when it was time for Uganda to rally together to demand their independence on their terms, the mechanisms were not in place for this to happen and the pre-independence period was characterised by in fighting based on ethnicity. This has at different times in Uganda's history made it difficult for Ugandans to rationally debate issues of common political interest such as language as the debate has been reduced to specific ethnic interests.

Because of the British inclination towards the politics of patronage, at a time when the other regions of the country could have coalesced around Buganda to form a strong nation, many saw Buganda as the internal enemy that had to be cut down to size. The tensions between the central government and the Buganda government culminated in the 'Buganda crisis' of 1966 in which the UPC under Milton Obote downsized Buganda militarily and politically (see Chapter 4). The Buganda crisis further resulted in the loss of the few democratic freedoms that had been won from the British. From this point in Uganda's political history democratic freedoms have appeared to be a privilege rather than a right as subsequent regimes have banned and abolished whatever they deemed a threat to their own political survival. This it could be argued has had an impact on the culture of open debate as survival has sometimes dictated that the media avoid probing too far into subjects deemed 'politically sensitive' by the state.

It is important to note that throughout Uganda's history, the most prevalent reason for clamping down on political freedoms and other freedoms (such as the rights of association and freedom of expression) has been 'in the interests of national security and unity.' Thus, especially among policy-makers, it is in relation to national security and unity that the roles of the media and Uganda's different languages have been 'framed'. However at another level (the level of the average citizen) language has been debated more in relation to education, democratic participation and the preservation of cultures. The challenge of language policy appears to be how to balance the practical concerns of inter-ethnic and international communication with the need to preserve the diversity made possible by the different indigenous languages. Thus future policy would need to take advantage of the colonial

linguistic heritage of English and Kiswahili, harness the strength of numerically powerful indigenous languages such as Luganda, Lwo and the 4Rs (Runyakitara) and guarantee space for the rest of Uganda's indigenous languages in the broadcast media. Policy would also need to address the practicality of elevating several area languages instead of one language to official status.

8.2.2 Ethnicity and participation in Uganda's democratic process

Ethnicity in Uganda' history has been a crucial determinant as to who could and who could not participate in the democratic process through public debate. Even though Uganda is now believed to have 65 unique ethnic groups (according to the most recent debates relating to a revision of Uganda's constitution), however, it is only English, Luganda and Kiswahili that have featured specifically in public debate on the roles of different languages in Uganda. All the other languages have been mentioned in a general way and without raising the likelihood that any of them could play a national role in the public domain, even though some of them, like the 4Rs which are highly mutually intelligible could have more speakers than Luganda, Kiswahili or English.

Powerful Ganda forces have typically been behind the strongest opposition to the elevation of Kiswahili to any official position. The consequences of this for the participation of Ugandans in the democratic process by means of the broadcast media have been that Kiswahili, an African language that has the potential to be learnt by the majority of Ugandans (having roots in the Bantu language group) has been repeatedly subverted by fears that it will threaten the position of Luganda and perhaps even English (see, for instance, Chapter 4 for a discussion of how Kiswahili failed to become the language of the East African Federation in the 1930s). To date Uganda lacks a language that enables Ugandans to communicate across ethnic barriers. Consequently, this has curtailed opportunities for political mobilisation as well as participation in the democratic process especially in light of the fact that the majority of Uganda's population can only communicate effectively in their mother tongue. Even more significant is the fact that in a commercialised media environment, most of Uganda's indigenous languages are seen as commercially non-viable because they cannot garner enough numbers to justify their regular inclusion on the broadcast schedule of most stations.

The fact that Uganda has never had a comprehensive language policy and that English still retains the role of official language underscores not just the powerful position of English as the global language of official business, but also the internal weaknesses that have militated against the evolution of any of Uganda's indigenous languages to a similar position. This has been cemented by the fact that in colonial Uganda, the British maintained the dominant local languages as the languages of official business only at the local level in order to combat any efforts in the regions to cooperate with one another in the independence struggle. The colonial language policy thus served to maintain separate development in the regions.

In handpicking a few Ugandans, typically from privileged families in Buganda and parts of Western Uganda, and giving them a Western education, the colonial administrators in Uganda created a small group who alone were equipped to participate in debate on Uganda's political direction[1]. The average Ugandan at the districts was thus, from an early stage, limited to discussing the local politics of his or her respective district or ethnic group (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed treatment of the inequalities engendered by British colonial policies). Such policies have over the years served to widen the gap between the elite (usually highly educated) and the rest of the Ugandan population. As a consequence of this, public debate in Uganda has often been conducted at two levels, one dominated by the elite and often conducted in English, and another dominated by the remainder of Uganda's population and usually conducted in the indigenous languages.

At some stage in Uganda's history notably between 1971 and 1985 under Idi Amin, Obote II and Tito Okello, even discussing politics at the local level was closely monitored by state agents. In pursuit of this the state, for instance, banned the formation of civil society organisations. The implication of this was that until 1986, when the NRA/NRM captured state power and began to introduce reforms aimed at promoting what they termed 'popular democracy', the average Ugandan hardly had any input into debate pertaining to the political direction of his or her country. This situation was complicated by the fact that the media for most of the period following independence were under the control and close surveillance of the state (see Chapter 5 for a discussion of the evolution of Uganda's broadcast media). The

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[1] This is because English which was the official language of business and debate was a privilege of the colonial masters and those Ugandans with a Western education.

broadcast scene in particular was for three decades after independence dominated by *Radio Uganda* and *Uganda Television* (*UTV*), the state media.

The ethnic factor in Uganda's politics has also been brought to the fore in the practice of nepotism by different regimes. Not only has this driven a wedge between ethnic groups sometimes culminating in violent take-overs of political power by those who felt repressed, it has also intensified inter-ethnic animosities, which have included animosities against particular languages, notably Kiswahili (for a long time associated with Northern Uganda) and Luganda. These animosities appear to have in turn contributed to a laxity in Uganda's post-independence governments to evolve a coherent policy to address linguistic diversity in the broadcast media or the need to engender a viable Ugandan public sphere.

8.2.3   The de-politicisation of civil society in Uganda

Another key factor in Uganda's political history that has affected participation of the majority in the democratic process has been the systematic de-politicisation of civil society. Just as the British colonial rulers permitted trade unions to operate only on condition that they did not actively engage in politics, post-independence governments in Uganda have employed various tactics to ensure that civil society remains de-politicised (see Chapter 4; cf. Bazaara & Barya 1999; Okoth 1996; Oloka-Onyango & Barya, 1997). Although the broadcast sector has now been liberalised, the prevailing regulatory environment is such that broadcasting remains under the close surveillance of the state. For their survival therefore, the media exercise caution in what they permit to be debated on the airwaves (see Chapters 5 and 7). This has in many ways emasculated civil society. Golooba-Mutebi captures the import of this de-politicisation:

> In a context where political culture dictates obedience and deference towards people in positions of power and authority, years of oppressive rule have rendered avoidance of politics the sensible way to ensure personal safety and survival…chances that popular participation could serve as an effective tool for policy-making and implementation, and holding leaders to account (are) necessarily limited (Golooba-Mutebi 2004:301-302).

8.3   OBSTACLES TO PARTICIPATION RESULTING FROM WEAKNESSES IN THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

8.3.1   Weak laws and vague policies

Policies and laws relating to linguistic diversity in Uganda have sought to strike a balance between preserving ethnic diversity and promoting national unity. The current government has for instance strongly proposed the promotion of Kiswahili over the indigenous languages arguing that the indigenous languages in Uganda have historically played a divisive role. However, facts on the ground show that even though Uganda liberalised the broadcast sector in 1993, the average Ugandan has not been the chief beneficiary of this liberalisation. This is related to the way the laws and the policies governing the broadcast media came into being as well as how they have been actualised in terms of key areas such as independent regulation, provision for a genuine public broadcaster and community broadcasters, as well as regulation of local content, ownership and the frequency spectrum (see Chapter 6 for a more detailed treatment of the laws and policies relating to media diversity).

Most existing laws pertaining to media freedom and diversity in Uganda came into being in the absence of formal policy and were conceived as emergency measures to legitimise the liberalisation of the media while ensuring sufficient protections for government against the media (Ogundimu 1996:165-166; cf. Mcquail & Van Cuilenburg 2003:199-200 for a discussion of how political self-preservation influences media policy).

Although Uganda has a statutory regulatory body-the Broadcasting Council-to regulate the broadcast sector, the composition and selection process for the Council renders it vulnerable to undue influence from both state and business interests. Such a scenario constitutes a form of double-jeopardy for participation as neither the market nor the state seem equipped or inclined to regulate in favour of diversity, paying attention to a detail such as language.

8.3.2   Inadequate provisions for public and community broadcasters

Public broadcasting which is an important pillar in providing for both linguistic and political diversity in Uganda remains an unfulfilled dream. For thirty years the broadcast media were under the direct control of the state. At the worst of times, free speech was so constrained that the state broadcaster served no other role except that of being a government mouthpiece.

Staff of *Radio Uganda* interviewed affirm that most languages were able to get on or remain on the programming schedule by virtue of having advocates in politically powerful positions (see Chapter 5).

Indications are also that the newly formed *UBC*, which is supposed to be the public broadcaster, is not significantly different from its predecessors, *Radio Uganda* and *UTV,* in as far as it remains under heavy state control. In addition, the law governing the state broadcaster compels the *UBC* to operate like a commercial station in order to generate funds for its sustenance (Uganda 2005 sec. 13.1). The corporation is also by law barred from 'becoming an institutional opponent of the Government or its interests.' While *Radio Uganda* was originally mandated to broadcast to the majority of Ugandans in as many languages as possible *UBC'*s stated language obligation amounts, simply, to providing programmes that 'contribute to a sense of national unity in culture [sic] diversity' and adopting programmes to indigenous needs (Uganda 2005 sec. 5.1). This allows the state broadcaster to pick up and drop languages depending on audience dynamics as well as political forces at play. Furthermore, *UBC* also faces many of the logistical challenges which other public broadcasters attempting to convert to public broadcasters face (see Chapter 5 for a discussion of these challenges).

The above scenario demonstrates the fact that *UBC*, which is supposed to be the public broadcaster, is still in many ways a state broadcaster. The scenario also underlines the difficulty of the 'public broadcaster' in Uganda serving the broad needs of diversity or continuing to provide for linguistic diversity in a fast-commercialising environment as it must remain politically safe as well as financially viable and competitive. The fact that in a commercialised environment, the inclusion of a language on the programme schedule of most stations is linked to the number of its speakers who are deemed to be economically viable has implications for diversity as smaller languages with no significant economic power behind them tend to be gradually edged off the programming schedule.

Following the liberal pluralist view that the processes of liberalisation, privatisation, de-regulation and re-regulation of the media and communication sectors worldwide are linked to increased access to information for citizenship some have sought to address the issues of diversity and participation by advocating for the liberalising of the media. Their object is to

create a plurality of channels and thus purportedly allow for a variety of voices and languages access to the airwaves. Research indicates, however, that this does not in and of itself solve the diversity problem in a fundamental way (Murdock & Golding 1989:180-184; Murdock 2000:149-150; cf. Van Cuilenburg 1998**).** Murdock and Golding (1989:180) for instance argue that market-oriented communication and information systems purport to give people more choices, liberating and empowering them to influence the trend of their lives, but deliver much less than they promise (cf. Murdock 2000:149; Article XIX 2003:4). Hence the argument that in a context where profit maximisation is paramount, small scale, genuinely pluralistic media are difficult to sustain, with the likely consequence that those who do not have the socio-economic clout to access or express themselves through the mainstream media have limited opportunities for participating in public debate through the media. This is significant for the Ugandan situation as, in the absence of a genuine public broadcaster, it is the small-scale media that would be best placed to deliver broadcasting in a range of indigenous languages. The existence of a public broadcaster and a multiplicity of channels in a liberalised media environment works best, therefore, if accompanied by transparent and independent regulation. This would improve the likelihood of equity in access for the different economic and linguistic strata of society to the airwaves, thus improving the average citizen's chances for participation in the democratic process through the broadcast media.

8.3.3   Ownership and local content regulation

There is no official regulation of ownership or local content in Uganda's broadcast media. Since the largest proportion of privately owned broadcast stations in Uganda are commercial, and their priority is to make a profit, they do not prioritise diversity for its own sake. Media owners and managers interviewed for this study emphasise this point. As a result of these priorities, commercial media owners view language not as a means of enhancing participation, but as a way to maximise audiences. Thus only those languages deemed to be commercially viable tend to be used in the commercially owned media (cf. Wilkinson 2004:19 and. Chapters 2 and 7 of this study). In Uganda these boil down to very few, namely English, Luganda, Kiswahili, Lwo and Runyakitara compared to the over 30 languages that there are in the country. Though other languages have been used in the media, this has been more on an experimental basis, often as a way of gauging where the largest audience is. In addition, this inquiry has shown that because of resource constraints, stations sometimes pick up or drop a language depending on the availability of presenters. This latter practice has a

major impact on participation as people find it difficult to listen to a station that is not linguistically predictable. Unfortunately, the practice is most common with community radio stations, which tend to be resource-constrained and therefore have to depend on the linguistic competence of available volunteers.

Because of the financial and political power that commercial media owners in Uganda wield (see Chapter 6 for a detailed discussion of the relationship between the regulator and commercial media owners, for instance), both government and the regulator handle commercial media owners with kid gloves. In return, commercial media owners desist from offending government, as this would threaten their chances of existence. For as long as this symbiotic relationship between government and the media obtains, there is little incentive for media owners to push for a language policy which does not prioritise profit. There is also little motivation on the part of government to make the process of policy-making more inclusive as this could upset a delicate balance of interests. It seems unlikely therefore that policy would seek to promote linguistic diversity except in so far as it serves the political and economic interests of government and business.

8.3.4   Management of the frequency spectrum

There has not been a systematic or transparent way to manage the spectrum in Uganda. The result has been that media are unevenly distributed both geographically and in terms of ownership. Furthermore, while a small class of wealthy and politically well-connected people own most of the media, the poor hardly own any of the media at all. This has implications for diversity as those who control the airwaves control programming. As long as the largest part of the spectrum is controlled by the telecommunications sector and commercial media owners whose priority appears to be profit rather than diversity, one should not expect to hear more than a few numerically and economically powerful languages on Uganda's airwaves.

On the whole, one could argue that even though there are opportunities for Ugandans to engage in debate regarding their governance using the indigenous languages, colonial policies perfected by post-colonial governments, the regulatory environment as well as different governments' efforts to contain civil society have had an impact on how the average Ugandan can engage in democratic debate through the broadcast media. Because of the

centrality of the language factor, though, there is a case for specifically addressing this to cure some of the challenges presented by Uganda's socio-historical context.

8.4   SALIENT ISSUES IN THE CURRENT DEBATE ON LANGUAGE, DIVERSITY AND PARTICIPATION IN UGANDA

Indigenous language policy in Uganda has been debated in terms of their role in unifying and/or dividing the country, preserving culture, producing and disseminating knowledge and enhancing participation in the democratic process. Although the role of language in the media has not been discussed much at the national level, there appears to be a considerable amount of debate at the grassroots as well as among media owners and managers. This debate focuses on the roles that the indigenous languages are playing and ought to play in the broadcast media and their significance for participation in the democratic process. The next three sub-sections constitute a synopsis of the salient issues emerging out of current language debate.

8.4.1   Regulating indigenous language programming

There is no consensus over whether there should be any policy at all guiding the use of the different languages in Uganda's broadcast media. Furthermore, there is little evidence that this issue has generated much debate in Uganda. Indeed the predominant view among Ugandans interviewed in the course of this investigation seems to be that any change in language practice is likely to come about by the choices of individuals and media owners rather than by policy, although some maintain that policy 'can determine how seriously a language is taken' (Kiyimba, 2005; cf. Kellner & Durham 2001:4).

Although the state broadcaster has taken the lead with regard to broadcasting in a variety of languages, the historical mandate of the state broadcaster to broadcast in as many of Uganda's indigenous languages as possible is seen by the majority as unsustainable in the era of liberalisation. Area languages are seen as the most viable alternative but there are misgivings about these as they are also seen as a potential threat to 'smaller' ethnic identities.

For many Ugandans, government intervention in the broadcast sector still conjures up images of political manipulation. It is important to note in particular that media owners and managers are united over the issue that private media be left to regulate themselves with regards to language, balancing ethnic diversity with regional integration and economic viability.

8.4.2   The roles of Kiswahili, English, Luganda and the other indigenous languages

There seems to be no consensus yet among Ugandans about whether or not a common language for use in the media would necessarily unify the country, even though many relate Uganda's turbulent history to the lack of a common language. This notwithstanding, a single language for communication among all Ugandans is seen by a significant number as having the potential to heal some wounds, as long as this language does not threaten their own languages. Whereas some Ugandans favour a regional or international language as the language of unification, saying it would make Ugandans more versatile abroad and would be politically neutral, others argue for an indigenous language. It should be noted that the arguments raised for or against either option, are grounded in Ugandans' historical experiences (see Chapters 4 and 7 for a detailed presentation of this debate).

Furthermore, while English seems to be well accepted across the regions of Uganda there is still resistance (particularly in the central region) against Kiswahili becoming a 'unifying language.' This may be explained by the fact that Kiswahili has been the only African language that threatened the hegemony of Luganda. The strongest argument for Kiswahili among all the categories interviewed for this study and across the regions of Uganda, though, is that it would enhance relations not among Ugandans, but with neighbouring countries. This fits in with the current discourse of regional integration and larger markets. While recognising the economic role of a regional language however, there are still strong arguments for the position that a single official language of broadcasting in Uganda would have to be indigenous in order to be widely acceptable.

With a few exceptions, media owners and managers are on the whole positive towards adopting more Kiswahili programming as they see regional integration in pragmatic business terms rather than sentimental ones. This inquiry found resistance to the possibility of Luganda being elevated to official status in all regions except the Central region. This notwithstanding, there has been little debate about indigenous languages other than Luganda

as serious contenders for the position of 'unifying language' in the broadcast media. Furthermore, the position of English is not a subject of debate as many think increasing the volume of programming in Kiswahili and the indigenous languages would be *in addition to* rather than *instead of* English.

8.4.3   Language and participation in mediated public debate

Ugandans are more likely to participate in a programme in the broadcast media if a programme is in their own language. Indigenous languages are particularly seen as key in including people who did not acquire a formal education who would otherwise be eliminated from important debate by their lack of competence in English.

There is a some scepticism among listeners on the efficacy of their participation in the democratic process through indigenous language radio. The argument of the majority is that this is as an exercise in futility, because any policy is determined long before it is discussed on air.

One notes from current debate also that because of the political and economic realities of the business of broadcasting in Uganda, most radio entrepreneurs steer clear of 'cumbersome' programming like features, documentaries and drama as well as programming that overtly challenges the political status quo. They instead concentrate on lighter and safer programming formats. This could be seen as influencing the depth of debate available on radio in the long run.

From the above, it would seem that policy on language in Uganda's broadcast media would have to take cognisance of the sentiments in various regions relating to Kiswahili, Luganda and other indigenous languages while looking at what would be in the public interest in terms of the whole country. Policy would also have to be sensitive to the political and economic realities that media owners deal with in prescribing roles and obligations with regards to the indigenous languages.

While the emphasis in debating the roles in particular of Luganda and Kiswahili is on their capacity to unify Ugandans, perhaps the debate needs to shift from the role of Luganda or Swahili as 'unifying' languages to the role of these languages in cutting across ethnic

boundaries to broaden participation in the democratic debate. This would counter the historical reality of insularity engendered by colonial policies and affirmed by post-independence governments.

8.5   CONCLUSIONS

A fundamental assumption of this study has been that the imperatives of the market are in tension with the need to preserve a significant amount of indigenous language broadcasting in Uganda's broadcast media for purposes of diversity. Another assumption of the study has been that this tension can be discerned in the political-economic environment within which the broadcast media in Uganda have evolved and operate as well as in public debate on indigenous language programming in the broadcast media. The study also made the assumption that the current state of the media's structure, operation and regulation have roots in Uganda's political history. Finally the study proceeded on the assumption that policy on the indigenous languages has a bearing on Ugandans' capacity to participate meaningfully in the democratic process through the broadcast media.

Thus the study has:

- Probed the political, economic and cultural context of the broadcast media and media policy in Uganda
- Analysed the policy and regulatory framework governing broadcasting in Uganda, with an emphasis on indigenous language broadcasting and related this to the commercial ethos pervading the broadcast media; and
- Documented the debate on indigenous language broadcasting policy in Uganda and its relation to citizen participation in Uganda's broadcast media.

The analysis indicates that broadcasting in the indigenous languages in Uganda has played and continues to play a key role to the extent that it enables Ugandans, and especially those who are only able to communicate in the indigenous languages, to participate in democratic debate through the broadcast media. In this sense the broadcast media in Uganda appear to be contributing to the formation of a public sphere that involves not only a few Ugandans with a formal, Western education, but the majority of Ugandans. This contribution has however continued to be hindered by political factors such as colonial policies and the limitations

which post-independence governments of Uganda have placed over the media and freedom of expression. The contribution of the broadcast media is also hindered by the profit imperative in an infant and barely regulated media industry, as well as people's attitudes towards specific languages. In addition the nature of the 'public sphere' thus engendered is atypical of the Habermasian ideal in as far as it consists in a number of discrete spheres defined primarily by language and to a lesser extent, socio-economic status.

While the position of English still appears uncontested in public discourse, Luganda and Kiswahili continue to vie for second position in Uganda's broadcast media, and Ugandans' views on the roles that these two languages should play in the media remain polarised. The situation has been exacerbated by a lack of concrete policy to guide the broadcast sector with regards to the use of the different languages of Uganda in the broadcast media. Different Ugandan governments have failed to evolve a policy and implementation structure that secures the place of the indigenous languages in the broadcast media and allows any of them to develop to the level of, for instance Kiswahili, with a view to ensuring access to the airwaves for more Ugandans.

In the recent past, there has been an improvement in terms of what policies are in place to facilitate diversity in broadcasting. The broadcast sector has been liberalised and to a large extent privatised. However, the liberalisation and privatisation of the broadcast sector has come with its commercialisation. This has shifted the priorities of media owners, in simple terms, from the public interest to profit. One manifestation of this shift in priorities is that many of the broadcast media have had to select the more broadly spoken languages for use in their broadcasting, leaving many of the smaller languages to be catered for by a weak state broadcaster and community media which are so constrained financially that they end up broadcasting in whatever language they can find a volunteer for, thus lacking consistency in their programmes and consequently failing to mobilise loyal audiences (see Chapter 5 for examples of such community media).

Furthermore, while there is now a plurality of channels, the environment for the operation of the broadcast media is not sufficiently focused on enhancing a diversity of which the indigenous languages are a crucial part. Media owners and managers who were interviewed said they see the different languages (English, Kiswahili and the indigenous languages)

primarily in terms of their capacity to mobilise large audiences for advertisers and not necessarily their democratic potential.

Many listeners interviewed, while admitting that they see indigenous language programming as crucial, said in spite of the availability of programming in languages they know, their participation continues to be hindered not only by bottlenecks in the political and regulatory framework, but also by such mundane obstacles as limited formal education, lack of personal telephones, inability to afford airtime, and inaccessibility of the mobile telephone network due to their geographical location.[2] There is a limit therefore to what improvement broadcast policy focusing on language alone can bring about in peoples' ability to participate in the democratic process through the broadcast media.

All the above notwithstanding, it can be argued that the average Ugandan is far more able to have his or her voice heard through the broadcast media, to participate in policy formulation, to challenge the powers that be and to make proposals for change now that there is a multiplicity of channels broadcasting in different languages. There remains a residual scepticism, however, about the efficacy of such participation in terms of whether government really does pay any attention to the ideas of Ugandans which are expressed in their languages in the local media. Ugandans are also sceptical about whether the media serve only to give the illusion of freedom of expression without being real avenues for participation in debate on issues of governance except for the rich, the educated and the powerful. Policy therefore needs to pay specific attention not just to what indigenous languages are given time in the broadcast media, but what kind of programming is available in those indigenous languages, and what other obstacles there are to meaningful participation in the broadcast media. This would perhaps call for a multi-sectoral approach to language policy in particular and media policy in general.

Thus this study has argued that it is important not just that vital and balanced information is regularly available in the broadcast media, but also that it is available in a variety of the

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[2] It should be noted that obstacles like a poor mobile telephony network and low levels of education are in turn linked to structural inequalities sometimes linked to the history of specific regions of the country.

indigenous languages of the people to secure their meaningful participation. Because the commercialised media value languages primarily based on these languages' capacity to draw audiences with purchasing power, policy remains key in ensuring the availability of information in the media in a variety of languages. The market will not automatically rule in favour of linguistic diversity, and for the average person to be able to 'use the symbolic forms available to them to liberate themselves or assert their uniqueness, these languages must be assured a place in the public sphere.

Indigenous language broadcasting, which in many developing countries is the only means by which the majority of citizens can meaningfully participate in the democratic process through the media, can be fundamental to increasing diversity in the broadcast media and thus improving access to the public sphere or public spheres. While individual choice is significant, policy to guide the roles that these languages can play and what space they are accorded in the media cannot be dismissed as irrelevant as long as there are forces in the politico-economic environment militating against the fair and independent regulation and operation of the broadcast media.

For policy on the indigenous languages in Uganda to be effective, however, it will be important that it be developed in a way that incorporates the full range of not only political but also linguistic inclination. In the final analysis, if linguistic diversity can be addressed in a systematic and radical way and provided for in policy, there is a possibility that this will remove one major obstacle to participation in public debate, namely the inability of Ugandans to benefit from the plurality of channels available to them due to language barriers created by a complexity of historical, political and economic factors. Given how central language and ethnic loyalties have been to Uganda's politics, as well as the socio-economic make-up of Ugandan society, such intervention has the potential to increase the number and variety of voices participating meaningfully in public debate as well as to broaden the democratic debate beyond insular ethnic barriers.

8.6   POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Against the background of the preceding and given the present lack of adequate broadcast policy in Uganda, this study recommends the following as critical points of discussion for

future policy debate. It is recommended that the issue of policy on indigenous language programming in Uganda be addressed at three levels, namely the level of policy, the level of independent regulation and the level of the transformation of the *UBC* into a viable public broadcaster as follows:

- Policy: Policy should address the necessity of putting in place a broadcast policy that lays the foundation for prioritising not only pluralism but also diversity- including linguistic diversity and putting in place a rationalised language policy that seeks to strike a balance between the need for Uganda's media to remain economically viable and to be politically relevant;

- Independent regulation: Policy should address the establishment of an independent regulator to oversee the policy's implementation; and

- Transformation of the *UBC*: Policy should ensure that the transformation of the *UBC* into a public broadcaster is done according to internationally agreed standards.

Fundamentally addressing the above areas through policy would give as many Ugandans as possible the best chance to participate fully in the broadcast media. To this end the following are recommended:

Prioritising language in broadcasting policy

- Government should give top priority to a broadcasting policy for Uganda's broadcast media. The policy should, among other things, clearly lay out procedures for ensuring equitable distribution of spectrum resources, the transformation of *UBC* into a public broadcaster according to internationally accepted standards, provisions for community broadcasters, regulation of ownership and local content and the establishment of an independent regulator.

- The broadcasting policy should seek to provide for the repeal or amendment of all current media and related laws to bring them in harmony with the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) and with internationally accepted standards of freedom of expression, and in particular the African Charter on Broadcasting with regards to the values of pluralism and diversity (see African Charter on Broadcasting 2001 PART II).

- The broadcasting policy should seek to make provisions for harmonising the roles of the broadcast regulator vis-à-vis those of the telecommunications regulator with regards to spectrum management. It should also harmonise laws governing the broadcasting sector and the telecommunications sector to ensure the smooth running of the two and the retention of diversity and the public interest as priorities in the broadcast sector. Due priority should be given to indigenous language broadcasting because of its potential for energising the democratic process.

- The broadcasting policy should seek to specifically address the role of language in broadcasting and make provision for at least one area language for each of the regions of Uganda to be used as a regular part of the schedule of the public broadcaster as well as all broadcast media in the respective areas. The final selection of the area languages could borrow from the area languages adopted by the Education sector (Uganda. Policy Review Commission 1992) but should also be based on extensive research and community consensus. As recommended by the African Charter on Broadcasting (2001), language obligations, like local content obligations, should be imposed by the regulator bearing in mind the mandate of the different tiers of broadcasting with the state and community broadcaster carrying the bulk of the obligation.

- The broadcasting policy should seek to make linguistic diversity an integral part of the definition of diversity in Uganda's media. It should require the public broadcaster to offer a regular balanced menu of programming in all of Uganda's area languages.

- The broadcasting policy should seek to provide for the promotion of the increased use of Kiswahili in the broadcast media with a view to increasing its presence on the airwaves and wider acceptance as a *lingua franca*.

- The broadcasting policy should seek to harness the numeric strength of languages such as Luganda, Runyakitara and Lwo while allowing the other languages to develop, with a view to one of these languages gradually evolving into a common language of communication for purposes of facilitating a shared public sphere for public debate. This should however not be done at the cost of the country's rich and diverse linguistic heritage.

- The broadcasting policy should seek to address the issue of the strong opposition to Kiswahili in the Central region. This could be done through a promotion campaign

that includes Kiswahili lessons with incentives attached to them, as well as increased time given to Kiswahili music and other popular programming on the airwaves.

Independent regulator

- Government should put measures in place for the establishment of an independent regulator for the broadcasting sector whose composition is representative of the variety of political, economic and linguistic interests in Ugandan society. The process of their selection should involve the participation of civil society and should not be controlled by the ruling or any other political party.

- The broadcasting policy should seek to lay out clearly the mechanisms for the appointment and composition of the regulator to ensure that the process is open and transparent and that regulators are insured against interference of a political or economic nature in the exercise of their regulatory mandate.

Transformation of the *UBC* into a public broadcaster and strengthening community broadcasters

- Government should put in place a mechanism to transform the *UBC* into a genuine public broadcaster according to internationally accepted standards which include being under a diverse board selected through transparent mechanisms, being accountable to the public through a multi-party body such as parliament and being protected from arbitrary interference in their operations from both government and business (see African Charter on Broadcasting 2001).

- The public broadcaster should seek to develop a clear plan to establish at least four regional broadcasting services (Eastern, Western, Northern and Central) dominated each by one or two selected area languages. The regulator should also ensure that looking at the broadcast media as a whole (that is, state, commercial and community) the other indigenous languages in the regions are adequately catered for.

- The broadcasting policy should seek to enhance the community broadcasting sector to enable it to carry a large percentage of the responsibility for facilitating participation in the democratic process through the broadcast media using (especially) the smaller indigenous languages. This could include the regulator working with the community broadcasting sector to establish sustainable funding mechanisms that allow the latter to maintain their non-commercial mandate. It could, in particular,

include requiring commercial broadcasters to contribute to the sustenance of the community broadcasting sector.

The motivation for the above recommendations is in the arguments of critical media studies discussed in detail in Chapter 2 and in the opinions of role-players in policy discussed in Chapter 7.

8.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This thesis was conceived as an exploratory study. Although Thompson's 'depth hermeneutics' methodological framework was both appropriate and productive in the execution of this exploratory inquiry, the researcher noted a few shortcomings in the executon of the framework. Depth hermeneutics lends itself to a largely narrative and/or descriptive approach. Furthermore, because of the necessarily localised nature of the inquiry, it was difficult to draw conclusions that might apply to a broader situation. While the application of Thompson's 'depth hermeneutics' framework to the Ugandan situation generated a large amount of information and a degree of empathy for the context under study, it did not immediately lead to clear explanations of the phenomena under study except from the perspective of the researcher and to alimted extent the interviewees, authors of policy documents or regulators at the time of the study. One would almost have to re-apply Thompson's depth hermeneutical methodology to every new situation to be able to capture the peculiarity of the historical context and moment and its relevance for the broadcast media's role in the democratisation process in that context at the time. The attempt to conduct the inquiry in phases also posed some methodological challenges as the social historical context, the operation of the broadcast media and the regulatory environment and debate on the regulatory context tend to be intricately interwoven. It should also be noted that by its nature, the depth hermeneutical approach privileges the interpretation of the researcher over the perspectives of the researched. Finally there is a sense in which 'depth hermeneutics' leaves little room for surprise findings except in terms of detail. One sets out to find and document unequal power relationships, organises the study in such a way as to find these relationships and indeed goes ahead to find these relationships. Nevertheless, the framework remains an important one in as far as it gives an opportunity for flexible and deep inquiry into specific phenomena.

Although the thesis does not claim to have exhausted the topic, the problem, or the research questions formulated, it does serve the overall purpose of providing an initial policy-oriented critical document on the state and future of broadcasting in Uganda with the emphasis on the role of the indigenous languages. As such, and to strengthen the foundation for further policy discussions and investigations, the following questions could be addressed further:

- To what extent should language be seen as a way to develop a common public sphere, and to what extent a means of permitting separate public spheres to develop in situations where ethnic loyalties remain strong? How should countries strike this balance in policy?

- Given the financial obstacles that community media have to contend with, what mechanisms need to be in place to ensure that community media thrive as viable 'alternative public spheres'?

- What roles have media ownership patterns played in specific historical conditions with regards to enhancing or curtailing diversity and participation?

- How have other multilingual African countries addressed the issue of language in broadcasting?

- What are the implications of East Africa's move towards an East African Federation for language policy and practice in the broadcast media in the region?

- What is the cognitive relationship (if any) between the language of participation and capacity for genuine as opposed to illusory participation (Pateman 1970:71) in the democratic process?

The Ugandan situation with regards to language, broadcasting and citizen participation in the democratic process demonstrates how political, economic and cultural forces can influence the roles assigned to different languages both in public discourse and media practice. The roles thus assigned to the different languages become entrenched in the psyche of a society and shape the choices of media owners, managers and practitioners with regard to what languages to use and what priority to give them on their stations. This in turn serves to amplify the voices of those who can speak the 'stronger' languages in public discourse while minimising the voices of those whose languages have been deemed 'weaker' or 'minor' languages. This has been complicated by the commercialisation of the broadcast media where languages are given priority in the broadcast media based on their commercial viability. Policy should ideally create an atmosphere where the 'stronger' languages can be harnessed to create an inter-ethnic public sphere. This could serve to reduce some of the tensions that have resulted from Uganda's history of ethnic insularity. Policy should at the same time provide avenues for the public broadcaster to cater for the needs of the broader linguistic

groups where there is a high degree of mutual intelligibility by using area languages. Finally policy should strengthen the community media to cater for as many of the indigenous languages as possible, addressing issues of specific concern to the different ethnic communities. This thesis however notes the limitations of policy given that some of the key players in policy, namely the state and media owners each have interests to protect that are often reflected in media policy. Hopefully the thesis provides a basis for further debate on where to strike a balance between using language to build an inter-ethnic public sphere, using language to strengthen specific ethnic public spheres, and using language in a commercially viable way.

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ADDENDUM 1. MAPS

Addendum 1a. Language map of Uganda

Source: http://www.ethnologue.com/show-country.aspn?name=UG
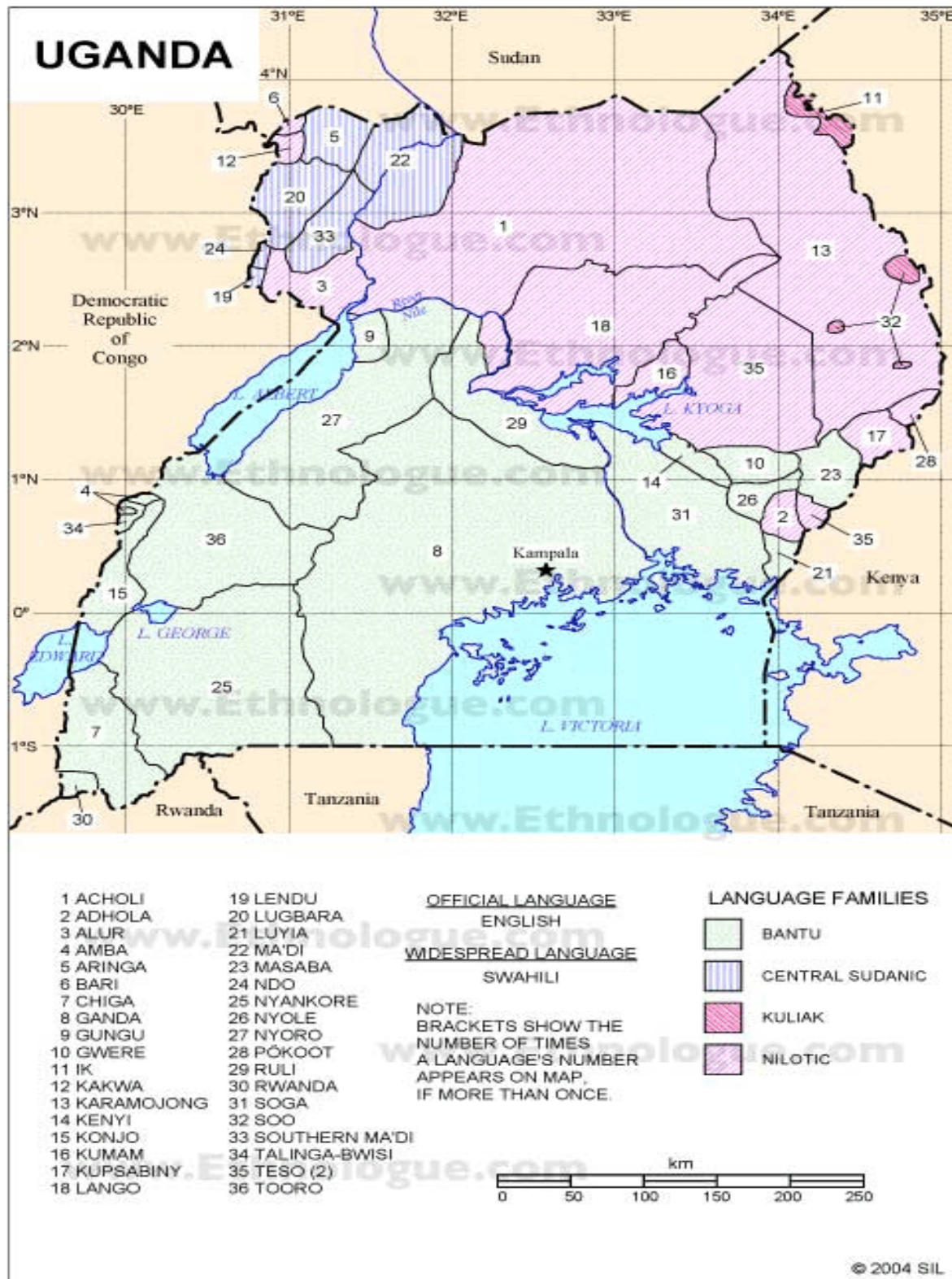
Addendum 1b. Districts of Uganda before independence
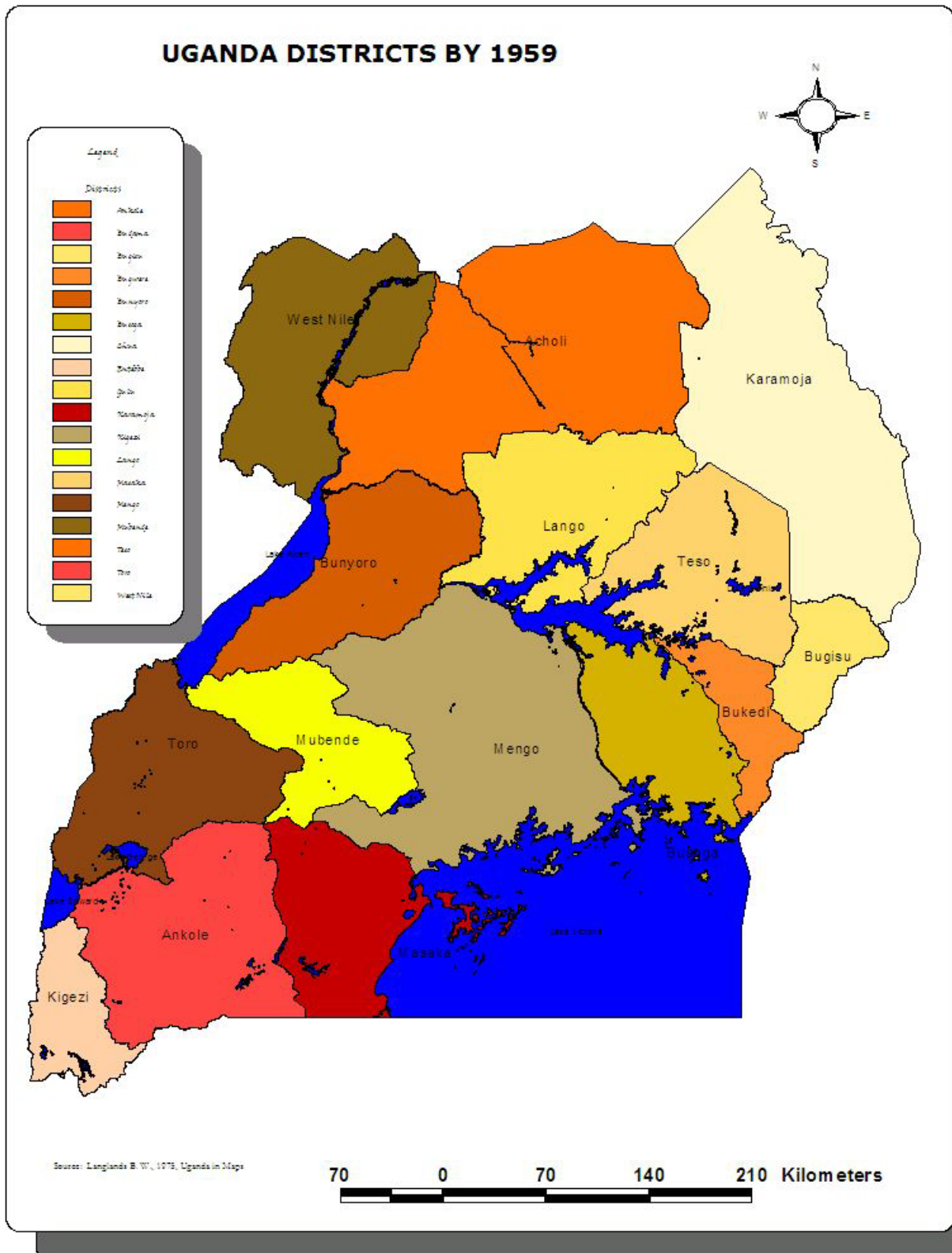
Addendum 1c. Districts of Uganda after independence

DISTRICTS OF UGANDA AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Addendum 1d. Districts of Uganda 2006
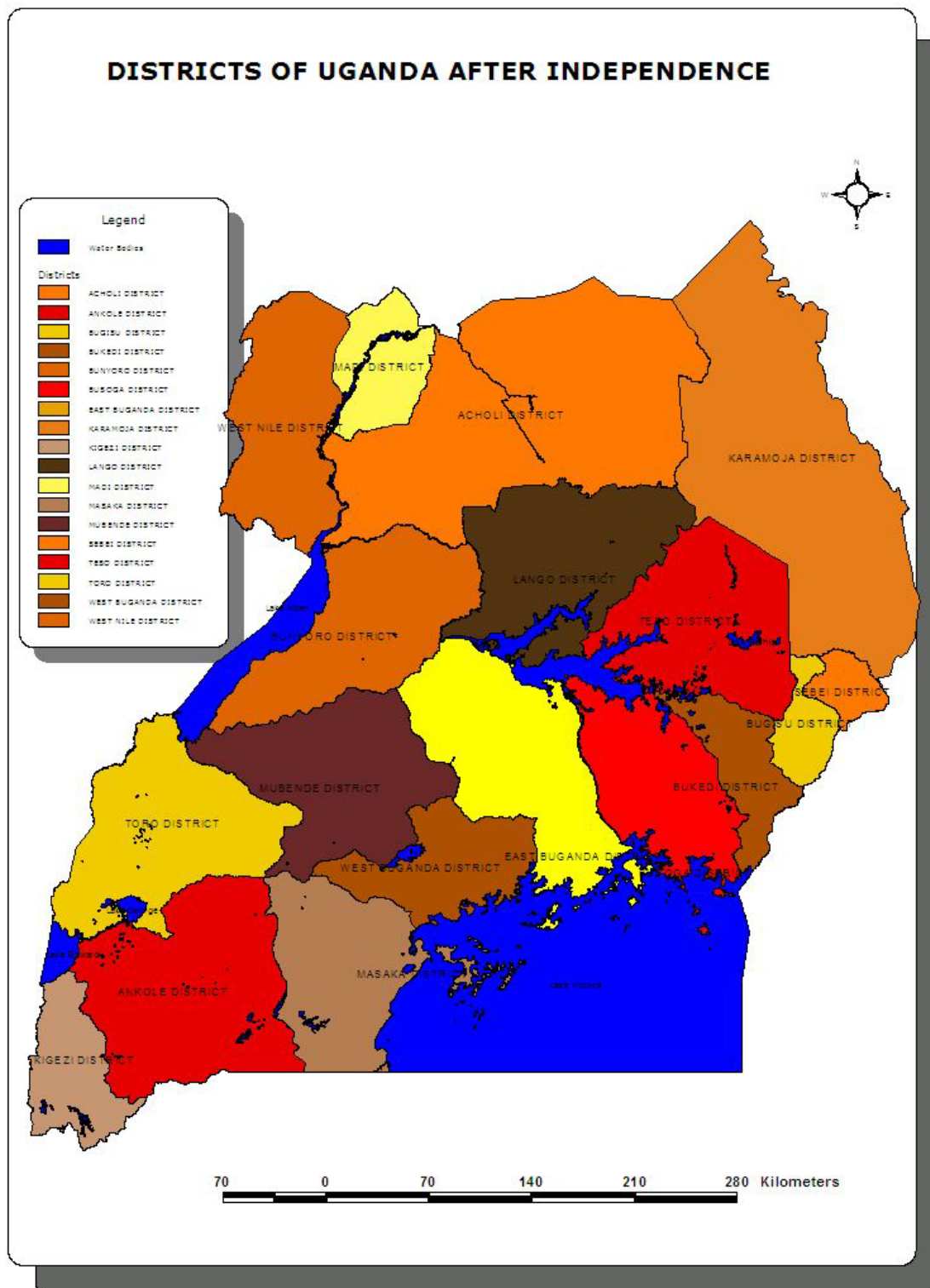
DISTRICTS OF UGANDA 2006
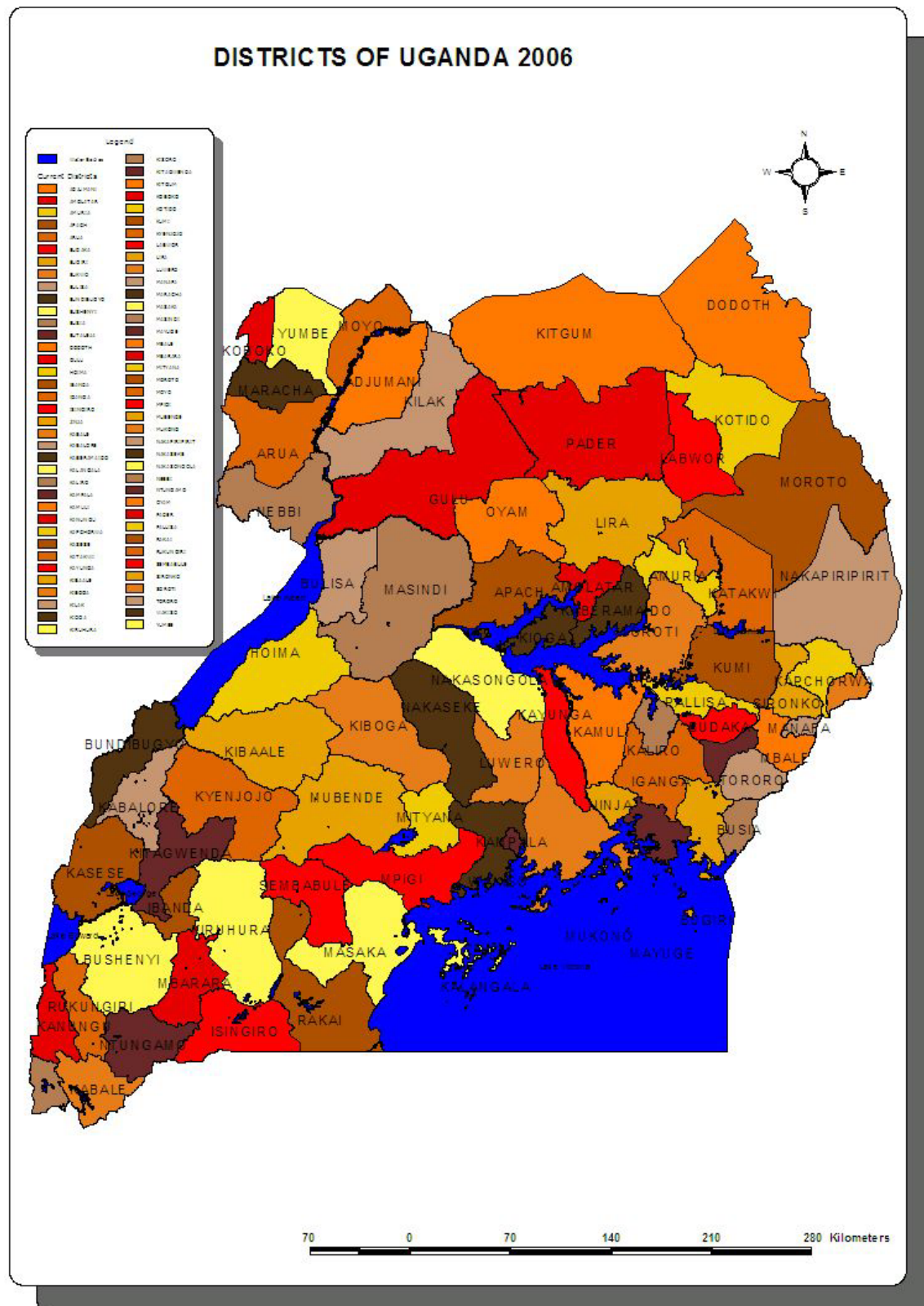
ADDENDUM 2. LISTS OF RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS

Addendum 2a. Radio stations and distribution of radio frequencies by district

REGION/DISTRICT	NAME OF RADIO STATION AND FREQUENCY	STARTING DATES	REPEATERS	TOTAL
CENTRAL				
KAMPALA				28
	Alpha FM			
	City FM 105.3			
	Star FM *100.0*	-----		
	Radio Uganda *98.0*	1954		
	Capital FM *92.5/ 88.7/90.9/91.3*	1993		
	CBS *88.8*	1996		
	Radio One *90.0*	1997		
	Top Radio *89.6*	1997		

	Radio Two *87.9*	1997		
	East Africa FM *99.0*	1998		
	Impact FM *102.1*	1998		
	Kampala FM *99.6*	1998		
	Power FM *106.2*	1998		
	Radio Maria *103.7*	1998		
	Radio Simba *97.3*	1998		
	BBC World Service *101.3 /107.3*	1999		
	Family Radio *105.3*	1999		
	KFM *93.3*	1999		
	Radio France International	1999		
	Radio Sapientia *94.4*	1999		
	Sanyu FM *88.2*	1999		
	Mama FM *101.7*	2000		

	Super FM *88.5*	2000		
	Touch FM *95.9*	2000		
	Voice of Africa *92.3*	2000		
	Kampala Afrikan Radio *104.5*	2001		
	Beat FM *96.3*	2002		
	Dembe FM *90.4*	2002		
	Kampala International University (KIU) 107.8	2005		
KALANGALA				NIL
KAYUNGA				NIL
KIBOGA				NIL
LUWERO				NIL
MASAKA				9
			Voice of Africa *95.7*	
		1954	*Radio Uganda* *96.6*	

		1996	CBS FM 89.9	
	Impact FM 101.5	1998		
		1998	Radio West 106.6	
	Buddu Broadcasting Service 98.8 FM	2001		
	Radio Equator 93.0	2001		
	Top Radio 96.2	2001		
	Baptist International Missions in Uganda(BIMU) 103.0	2002		
MPIGI				
		1954	Radio Uganda 98.2	1
MUBENDE				1
	Radio Sky Net Ltd 96.9	2002		
MUKONO				2
	Dynamic Broadcasting Services Ltd /Spirit FM 96.6	------------		
	Dunamis FM 103	2001		

NAKASONGOLA				NIL
RAKAI				NIL
SEMBABULE				NIL
WAKISO				2
	Prime FM 91.9	2002		
	City FM 105.3	2004		
EASTERN				
BUSIA				NIL
IGANGA				NIL
JINJA				5
		1954	*Radio Uganda 95.7*	
		1993	*Capital FM 92.5*	
	Busoga FM 96.0	2001		
	Nkabi Broadcasting Service 89.4 FM	2001		
	Kiira FM 88.6	2001		

KABERAMAIDO				NIL
KAMULI				1
	Busoga People's Radio Ltd (Empanga) 102.5	2000		
KAPCHORWA				NIL
KATAKWI				NIL
KUMI				NIL
MBALE				7
	Radio Maria 103.7	1998		
	Mbale FM 90.1	1999		
	Continental FM 94.7	2001		
	Open Gate FM 103.2	2001		
	Top Radio 104.9	2001		
	Impact FM 98.5	2002		
			Voice of Africa 100.2	
SIRONKO				NIL

SOROTI				4
	Voice of Teso *94.8*	2000		
	Radio Kioga *91.5*	2001		
	Baptist International Missions in *Uganda* *105.1*	2002		
			Radio Uganda *98.0*	
TORORO				1
	Rock FM *106.8*	2001		
MAYUGE				NIL
NORTHERN				
APAC	*Radio Apac* *92.9*	1999		1
ARUA	*Arua One*			2
	Radio Pacis			
GULU				7
	Radio Uganda *(Mega FM)* *96.6*	1954		

	Voice of Life *100.9*	1997		
	Radio Maria *105.7*	1998		
	Radio Koboko *104.5*	2000		
	Voice of Hope *90.7*	2000		
	Radio Four *89.4*	2000		
	Arua One FM Ltd *102.5*	2002		
KITGUM				2
	Child Care International(Peace Radio) *91.5*	2001		
		1954	*Radio Uganda* *99.1*	
KOTIDO				1
		1954	*Radio Uganda* *97.7*	
LIRA				6
		1954	*Radio Uganda* *99.4*	
	Radio Lira FM *95.3*	1990		
	Radio Rhino *96.1*	2000		

	Unity Radio a Lwak(Unity FM) *97.7*	2000		
	Radio Wa *89.8*	2001		
	Radio North *89.0*	2001		
MOROTO				
	All Karamoja FM *94.7*	2003		2
			Radio Uganda *96.6*	
MOYO				1
			Radio Uganda *98.0*	
NAKAPIRIPIT				**NIL**
NEBBI				1
	Radio Paidha *87.8*	2002		
PADER				NIL
YUMBE				NIL
WESTERN				
BUNDIBUGYO				NIL

BUSHENYI				NIL
HOIMA				5
		1954	*Radio Uganda* *99.1*	
	Radio Hoima *88.6*	1999		
	New Life Radio *(Madison Baptised Church)* *96.2*	2001		
	Bunyoro Broadcasting Service *98.2*	2001		
	Ababaigara FM *89*	2002		
KABALE				4
		1954	*Radio Uganda* *93.7*	
		1998	*Radio West* *94.3*	
	Voice of Kigezi *89.3*	2000		
	The Roots(U) Ltd. *88.9*	2001		
KABAROLE				3
	Radio Maria *104.6*	---		
	Voice of Tooro *100.5*	---		

			Radio West 91.0	
KAMWENGE				1
	Western Broadcasting Services Ltd 91.0	2002		
KANUNGU				NIL
KASESE				2
	Messiah Radio 97.5	1999		
	Lion of Judah Ltd (Grace Radio) 94.2	2003		
KIBALE				1
	Kagadi Kibale Community Radio 91.7	---		
KISORO			*Radio Uganda*	1
KYENJOJO				NIL
MASINDI				3
		1954	*Radio Uganda 98.2*	
	Top Radio 94.9	2001		
	Radio Kitara 101.8	2001		

MUBENDE				1
	Radio Sky Net 89.7	2002		
MBARARA				9
		1993	Capital FM 88.7	
	Radio Maria 105.4, 108.8	1997		
	Radio West 100.2	1998		
		1998	Voice of Toro 95	
	Baptist International Missions in Uganda(BIMU) 96.2	1999		
	Greater Afrikan Radio 98.3	1999		
		1999	BBC World Service 101.3	
		2000	Voice of Africa 90.6	
	Top Radio 91.8	2001		
NTUNGAMO				NIL
RUKUNGIRI				2
		1954	Radio Uganda 97.8	

	Rukungiri FM 96.9	1999		
KINKIZI				1
	Kinkizi FM	2003		

Lists adapted from Broadcasting Council (Uganda)

Addendum 2b. Radio stations licensed and operating June 2006

LOCATION	NAME OF STATION	OWNER/CONTACT PERSON	DATE OF LICENSING
Apac	*Radio Apac*	Mr. Okello Jimmy, Managing Director	1999
Arua	*Arua One FM*	Mr. Mohammed Omar, Managing Director	2002
Arua	*Nile FM (Bornfree Technologies)*	Mr. Sakia B. Adile, Managing Director	2003
Arua	*Radio Koboko*	Mr. Kajubi Sam, Managing Director	2000
Arua	*Radio Pacis*	Fr. Torino Pasolini, Director	2004
Arua	*Voice of Life*	Mr. Joseph Dradria, Managing Director	1997
Fort Portal	*Radio Maria*	Fr. Joseph Scalabrini	1998
Fort Portal	*Voice of Toro*	Mr. Balam Kakuremire, General Manager	2002
Gulu	*Choice FM 92.1 FM (Nora Group of Companies)*	Mr. Joseph Odwor, Managing Director	2003
Gulu	*Mega FM (UBC Radio)*	Mr. David Okidi, Station Manager	
Gulu	*Radio Four*	Mr. Venis Omona, Managing Director	2000
Gulu	*Radio Maria*	Fr. Joseph Scalabrini	1998
Hoima	*Ababagaira FM (Liberty Broadcasting Services Ltd.)*	Mr. Edward Kiiza, Managing Director	2002
Hoima	*New Life Radio (Madison Baptist Church)*	Mr. Tony Star, Director	2001
Hoima	*Radio Hoima*	Eng. Kisembo Deo, Managing Director	1999
Jinja	*Busoga FM*	Mr. Gordon Bell, Managing Director	2001
Jinja	*Nkabi Broadcasting Services (NBS Kodheyo 89.4 FM)*	Hon. Nathan Nabeta, Managing Driector	2001
Jinja	*Radio Kiira*	Mr. David Abura, Director	2001
Kabale	*Kachwekano Radio*	Secretary General, Uganda National CommisSon for UNESCO	
Kabale	*Voice of Kigezi*	Eng. Evan Batuma, Director	2000
Kagadi	*Kagadi Kibaale Community (KKCR Radio)*	Mwalimu Musheshe Snr. Chairman/Managing Director	1999
Kakiri	*95. Busiro FM*	Ms. Jamila Nakku, Station Manager	2005
Kampala	*Alpha FM*	Pastor Dr. Joseph Sserwadda, Managing Director	2004
Kampala	*Beat FM*	Mr. William Pike, Managing Director	2002

Kampala	*BBC World Service*	Ms Strong (Nairobi)	1999
Kampala	*Campus FM*	Dr.Peter Mwesigye, Head/Mass Communications Dept, MUK	2004
Kampala	*Capital FM*	Mr. Patrick Quarcoo & Mr. William Pike, Joint Managing Directors	1993
Kampala	*Central Broadcasting Services (CBS FM)*	Mr. Godfrey Kaaya Kavuma, Chairman/Managing Director	1996
Kampala	*Dembe FM*	Mr. Patrick Bitature, Managing Director	2002
Kampala	*East Africa FM*	Ms. Roselyn M. Nyangazi. Country Manager	2002
Kampala	*Family Radio (Family Broadcasting Network)*	Pastor Steven Sebyala, Managing Director	1999
Kampala	*Kampala Afrikan Radio (KARA FM)*	Ms. Naome Kabasharira, Managing Director	2001
Kampala	*Kampala FM*	Pastor Jackson Ssenyonga, Managing Director,	2005
Kampala	*KIU FM (Kampala International University)*	Hajji Hassan Basajjabalaba, Managing Director	2005
Kampala	*Mama FM (Uganda Media Women's Association)*	Ms. Margaret Sentamu-Masagazi, Coordinator	2000
Kampala	*Metro FM*	Mr. Cedric Babu, Chief Executive Officer	2002
Kampala	*93.3 K-FM*	Mr. Conrad Nkutu, Managing Director	1999
Kampala	*Power FM*	Pastor Garry Skinner, Managing Director	1998
Kampala	*Radio France International*	Mr. Didier martin	1999
Kampala	*Radio Maria*	Fr. Joseph Scalabrini, Managing Director	1998
Kampala	*Radio One*	Mrs. Maria Kiwanuka, General Manager	1997
Kampala	*Radio Simba*	Mr. Aga Sekalala General Manager	1998
Kampala	*Radio Two*	Mrs. Maria Kiwanuka, General Manager	1997
Kampala	*UBC Radio*	Mr. Edgar Tabaro, Ag. Managing Director	1954
Kampala	*Sanyu FM*	Mr. Sudhir Ruperelia, Managing Director	1993
Kampala	*Star FM*	Mr. Steven Mugambe, Station Manager	
Kampala	*Super FM*	Mr. Peter Sematimba, Managing Director	2000
Kampala	*Top Radio (Power of Praise)*	Pastor Jackson Ssenyonga, Managing Director	1997
Kampala	*Touch FM*	Mr. Franco Baitwa, Managing Director	2000
Kampala	*Voice of Africa*	Mr. Haroon Ssengooba, Managing Director	2000

Kampala	Hot 100 FM (FM Holdings Ltd).	Mr. Aga Sekalala, General Manager	2004
Kampala (Gayaza)	City FM	Hon. Sitenda Sebalu, Managing Director	2004
Kampala (Kireka)	Prime FM	Bishop James Kaggya, Managing Director	2002
Kampala (Lubowa Hill)	Radio ABC	Mrs. Neil Chincen, Director	2005
Kampala (Ndeeba)	Impact FM	Pastor Dr. Joseph Sserwadda, Managing Director	1998
Kampala (Nsambya)	Radio Sapientia	Bro Rogers Kazibwe, Director	1999
Kamuli	Busoga People's Radio Radio (Empanga) Ltd.	Hon. Isaac Musumba, Managing Director	2000
Kasese	Messiah Radio	Rev. Julius B. Kithaghenda, Diocesan Secretary	1999
Kasese	Grace Radio 94.2 FM (Lion of Judah Ltd)	Bishop Nathan Abraham, Director	2003
Kinkizi	35. Kinkizi FM	Hon. Amama Mbabazi, Managing Director	2003
Kitgum	Peace Radio (Childcare International	Mr. David Livingstone Okello, Station Manager	2001
Kumi	Continental FM	Ms. Winifred Adio, Chairperson	2001
Kyenjojo	Kyenjojo FM (Kyenjojo Development Radio)	Ms. Joyce Kwebiiha, Director	2005
Lira	Radio Lira FM	Mr. Gordon Bell, Managing Director	1999
Lira	Radio North	Mr. Dickens Elem, Director	2001
Lira	Radio Rhino	Pastor Jackson Ssenyonga, Managing Director	2000
Lira	Radio Wa	Fr. John Fraser, Director	2001
Lira	Unity Radio a Lwak	Mr. Uhuru Jimmy Luis, Managing Director	2001
Masaka	Baptist International Missions in Uganda (BIMU)	Rev. Keith Stensas Secretary/Treasurer	2002
Masaka	Buddu Broadcasting Services	Mr. Steven Kayiwa, General Manager	2001
Masaka	Impact FM	Pastor Dr. Joseph Sserwadda, Managing Director	2002
Masaka	Radio Equator	Mr. David Nabeta, Managing Director	2001
Masaka	Top Radio	Pastor Jackson Ssenyonga, Managing Director	2001
Masindi	Bunyoro Broadcasting Service (Earnest Publishers)	Mr. Ernest Kiiza, Chairman/Managing Director	2001
Masindi	Radio Kitara (Masindi Broadcasting Service)	Capt. Ali Mohammed Kiiza, Managing Director	2001
Masindi	Top Radio	Pastor Jackson Ssenyonga, Managing Director	2001

Mbale	*Impact FM*	Pastor Dr. Joseph Sserwadda, Managing Director	2002
Mbale	*Mbale FM*	Pastor Luke Haumba, Managing Director	1999
Mbale	*Open Gate FM*	Mr. Sam W. Watulatsu, Managing Director	2001
Mbale	*Radio Maria*	Fr. Joseph Scalabrini	1998
Mbale	*Top Radio*	Pastor Jackson Ssenyonga, Managing Director	2001
Mbale	*Signal FM (Katinguma Broadcasts & General Ltd)*	Mr. Ahmed Gamal Kintu-Munyagwa, Chairman	2005
Mbarara	*Baptist International Missions in Uganda (BIMU)*	Rev. Keith Stensas Secretary/Treasurer	1999
Mbarara	*Greater Afrikan Radio*	Dr. Nkamuhayo Rwachumika, Managing Director	1999
Mbarara	*Radio Maria*	Fr. Joseph Scalabrini	1997
Mbarara	*Radio West*	Mr. Peter Bibangamba	1998
Mbarara	*Top Radio*	Pastor Jackson Ssenyonga, Managing Director	2001
Mbarara	*Western Broadcasting Services (WEBS FM)*	Hon. Nulu Byamukama, Managing Director	2002
Mityana	*Radio Sky Net*	Dr. Semageje Higiro, Managing Director	2002
Moroto	*All Karamoja FM*	Mr. Gordon Bell, Radio Management, Kampala	2003
Mubende	*Mubende Broadcasting & Technical Services*	Mr. Kasozi Bukenya, Director	2005
Mukono	*Dunamis FM (Prayer Palace Christian Centre)*	Ms. Margaret Rose Apolot, Operations Manager	2001
Mukono	*Spirit FM (Dynamic Broadcasting Services)*	Ms. Margaret Rose Apolot, Operations Manager	2001
Paidha (Nebbi)	*Radio Paidha*	Eng. Simon D'Ujanga, Managing Director	2002
Rukungiri	*Rukungiri FM*	Hon. Jim Muhwezi, Managing Director	1999
Soroti	*Baptist International Missions in Uganda (BIMU)*	Rev. Bryan L. Stensas, Assistant Director	2002
Soroti	*Kioga Veritas FM*	Fr. Athanasius Mubiru, Diocesan Development Coordinator	2001
Soroti	*Voice of Teso*	Hon. Capt. Mike Mukula, Managing Director	2000
Tororo	*Rock Radio*	Hon. Paul Etiang, Managing Director	2001

Addendum 2c. Radio stations licensed but not operating June 2006

LOCATION	NAME OF STATION	DATE OF LICENSING
Amuria	*Joshua FM*	2006
Bugiri	*Apex Promotions Ltd.*	2005
Fort Portal	*World Evangelical Ministries (Life FM 93.8 Radio)*	2004
Gulu	*Northern Broadcasting (King FM)*	2005
Jinja	*Cradle FM*	
Jinja	*Victoria Broadcasting Network*	2005
Kalangala	*Tim.Com (U) Ltd*	2005
Kampala	*Radio Bilal (Uganda Muslim Supreme Council)*	2000
Kampala	*Route One International*	2002
Kampala	*V.R. Promotions Radio*	2002
Kampala	*Miracle FM (Highway Holiness International Foundation)*	2002
Kampala (Kireka)	*10 Counties FM*	2005
Kiboga	*Kiboga Radio*	2006
Kisoro	*Kisoro FM*	2005
Kiwoko	*Sibco Ltd.*	2006
Lira	*Voice of Lango*	2005
Luwero	*Diamond Communications Ltd.*	2006
Masaka	*Radio Twezimbe*	
Masaka	*Super FM*	2005
Masindi	*Jacaranda FM*	
Mbale	*Step FM*	2005
Mbarara	*Ntare FM*	2005
Mbarara	*Terp FM*	2005
Mbarara	*Moonlight Broadcasting Services*	
Moyo	*Moyo FM (Transnile Broadcasting Services)*	2005
Ntungamo	*Radio Ankole*	2005
Pader	*Best Services Co. Ltd.*	2005
Pallisa	*Radio Bugwere*	2005
Soroti	*Delta FM*	2005
Soroti	*Delta FM (Development Education Leadership Training in Action)*	

Addendum 2d. Television stations licensed and operating June 2006

LOCATION	NAME OF STATION	OWNER/CONTACT PERSON	DATE OF LICENSING
Arua	*BTN-TV (Bornfree Technologies Network)*	Mr. Sakia B. Adile, Managing Director	2003
Jinja	*NBS TV*	Hon. Igeme Nabeta, Managing Director	2005
Kampala	*WBS TV*	Mr. Elvis S. Wavamunno, Company Executive Director	1997
Kampala	*Pulse Africa TV*	Mr. Martin Abura, Managing Director	2004
Kampala	*Lighthouse TV (LTV)*	Rev. Gary H. Everett, Director	1997
Kampala	*Top TV (Christian Life Church*	Pastor Jackson Ssenyonga, Managing Director	1999
Kampala	*East Africa TV*	Ms. Roselyn Nyangazi, Country Manager	2003
Kampala	*Independent Television Network*	Ms. Roselyn Nyangazi, Country Manager	2003
Kampala	*Record TV Network (Uganda) Ltd.*	Mr. Osvaldo Arnaldo Muchanga, Executive Director	1998
Kampala	*Multichoice Uganda Ltd.*	Mr. Charles Hamya, General Manager	1995
Kampala	*JRNet Ltd.*	Mr. Philip Winyi, Director	2004
Kampala (countrywide)	*UBC TV*	Mr. Edgar Tabaro, Ag. Managing Director	1954
Lira	*TV-Wa*	Sr. Joe Martin Nalubega, Station Manager	2005
Lira	*Note TV*	Ms. Julie Bell, Managing Director	2005

Addendum 2e. Television stations licensed but not operating June 2006

LOCATION	NAME OF STATION	DATE OF LICENSING
Kampala	*Dembe TV*	--
Kampala	*Shiloh TV Network*	--
Kampala	*Miracle TV (Highway Holiness International Foundation)*	2002
Bugema	*Three Angels Television Network (3 ABN)*	2003
Kampala	*Terp TV*	2005
Mbarara	*Ntare V*	2005
Mbale	*Step TV*	2005
Kampala	*BTN-TV (Bornfree Technologies Network)*	2005
Kampala	*Africa Broadcasting (U) Ltd.*	--
Kampala	*Diamond Communications Ltd.*	2006
Kampala	*Globe Consortium International – IZ TV*	--
Kampala	*Sledgehammer TV*	2005
Kampala	*Senda TV*	

ADDENDUM 3. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Addendum 3a. List of interviewees: local leaders [Transcript]

	Name	Title	District	Region	Date of Interview	Category
1.	Adoli Ogwok	Secretary for Education	Lira	North	25th July, 2005	Local leader
2.	Erem Joe	District Information Officer	Lira	North	July 25th, 2005	Local leader
3.	Mirembe Beatrice	Secretary for Education	Wakiso	Central	30th August, 2005	Local leader
4.	Mubiru Liz	Assistant District	Wakiso	Central	30th August, 2005	Local leader
5.	Ssempijja Lwanga Henry	Education Officer (Inspectorate)	Wakiso	Central	30th August, 2005	Local leader
6.	Tumwiine Alfred	District Information Officer	Mbarara	West	9th August, 2005	Local leader
7.	Turyamureeba Emmanuel	Secretary for Education	Mbarara	West	8th August, 2005	Local leader
8.	Wambede Nasser	District Information Officer	Mbale	East	20th July, 2005	Local leader

Addendum 3b. Media owners, managers and practitioners [Transcript]

	Name	Title	Radio Station	Region	Date of interview	Category
1.	Byekwaso, Charles	Controller of Programmes	*Radio Uganda*	--	23rd May, 2005	Media manager
2.	Fraser John	Director	*Radio Wa*	North	28th July, 2005	Media owner
3.	Kawooya Mwebe Michael	Station Manager	*Central Broadcasting Service (CBS)*	Central	18th August, 2005	Media manager/practitioner
4.	Kenyi Jane	Head of programmes	*Radio Uganda*	Northern section	14th May, 2005	Media practitioner
5.	Lutaaya Henry	Programmes Director	*Maama FM*	Central	August 12th	Media manager
6.	Lutambo Collin	Programmes Director	*Simba FM*	Central	16th August, 2005	Media manager
7.	Makanake Kaboggoza	Programmes Director	*Greater Afrika Radio*	West	10th August, 2005	Media manager/practitioner
8.	Matojo Suleiman T.	Station Manager	*Radio West*	West	9th August, 2005	Media manager/practitioner
9.	Mawerere Sarah	Producer (part-time)	*Radio Uganda*	Eastern section	13th May, 2005	Media practitioner
10.	Mbabazi-Gunura Joyce	Deputy Head of programmes	*Radio Uganda*	Western Section	13th May,	Media practitioner
11.	Muhoofa Were	Producer	*Radio Uganda*	Buteebo (Eastern) section	19th May,	Media Practitioner
12.	Mukiibi Abbey	Programmes Director	*Central Broadcasting*	Central	18th August, 2005	Media manager/pra

			Service (CBS)			ctitioner
13.	Musisi, Fred	Assistant Head of programmes Midland section; Assistant Commercial manager in the Commercial Division.	*Radio Uganda*	Midland section	13th May, 2005	Media practitioner
14.	Mutazindwa Francis	Station Manager; shareholder	*Vision FM*	West	11th August, 2005	Media manager/pra ctitioner
15.	Nalubega Joe Martin	Station Manager	*Radio Wa*	North	27th July, 2005	Media manager/pra ctitioner
16.	Nkurunziiza Emmanuel	Comissioner, Television	*Uganda Television*	--	12th July, 2005	Media manager
17.	Onyik Bosco	Producer	*Radio Uganda*	Northern section	19th May, 2005	Media practitioner
18.	Opio David	Programmes Manager	*Open Gate FM*	East	27th July, 2005	Media manager/pra ctitioner
19.	Ssekalaala Aga	Station Manager; Director	*Simba FM*	Central	18th August, 2005	Media manager/ow ner
20.	Swilikei-Kissa Peter	News Editor	*Uganda Television*	--	12th July, 2005	Media practitioner
21.	Turyamwijuka, Jack	Commissioner, Radio Uganda	*Radio Uganda*		23rd May, 2005	Media manager
22.	Wanzusi Joseph	Presenter/Technician	*Radio Maria*	East	20th July, 2005	Media practitioner
23.	Wetaka Ahmed	Producer	*Open Gate FM*	East	19th July, 2005	Media practitioner

Addendum 3c. List of interviewees: policy-makers, regulators and academics [Transcript]

	Name	Title	Place of interview	Date of interview	Category
1.	Bukenya Geraldine	Local languages specialist, National Curriculum Development Centre, Ministry of Education	Kampala	23rd August, 2005	Government
2.	Gumoshabe, Gilbert	Lecturer, languages; local languages advocate (Runyakitara)	Makerere	11th May, 2005	Academic
3.	Kamukama Dixon	Lecturer, Media History; political analyst.	Makerere	22nd April, 2005	Academic
4.	Kiyimba, Abasi	Senior Lecturer, Literature, Swahili	Makerere	29th April, 2005	Academic
5.	Lukaaya, Dennis	Operations Manager, Broadcasting Council	Kampala	6th May, 2005	Regulator
6.	Mayanja, A. Kakyaama	Ex-minister of information, Lawyer; politician (opposition)	Kampala	17th May, 2005	Government
7.	Mayiga, Charles Peter	Minister of Culture, Youth and Information (Buganda government); lawyer; official spokesman of the Buganda Kingdom	Kampala	2nd June, 2005	Government (Local)
8.	Muranga, Manuel	Professor, Ethno-linguistics	Makerere	21st April	Academic

				2005	
9.	Mutabazi, Godfrey	Chairman, Broadcasting Council (regulator for broadcasting sector)	Kampala	25th August 2005	Regulator
10.	Nassanga G. Linda	Senior Lecturer, Mass Communication	Makerere	26th April, 2005	Academic
11.	Nekyon, Adoko	Ex-minister of information, politician (opposition).	Kampala	18th May, 2005	Government
12.					
13.	Nsaba-Butuuro, Albert	Minister of state for information and broadcasting, office of the president.	Kampala	5th August, 2005	Government
14.	Okullu-Mura Justin	Ex-Director, Broadcasting	Kampala	27th April, 2005	Regulator
15.	Turyamwijuka, Jack	Commissioner, Radio	Nakasero	23rd May, 2005	Media manager/Regulator
16.	Walusimbi, Livingstone	Professor of Linguistics; language advisor to UNESCO; local language languages advocate (Luganda).	Makerere	19th April, 2005	Academic

Addendum 3d. List of stations where group interviews were conducted with listeners.

	Radio Station	Region	Date of interview	Category
1.	*Central Broadcasting Service (CBS)*	Central	16th August, 2005	Listeners
2.	*Maama FM*	Central	14th August, 2005	Listeners
3.	*Open Gate FM*	East	20th July, 2005	Listeners
4.	*Radio Maria*	East	21st July, 2005	Listeners
5.	*Radio Uganda[1]*	Central, East, West and North	9th July, 20th July, 26th July, 23rd August, 2005	Listeners
6.	*Radio Wa*	North	July 2005	Listeners
7.	*Radio Apac*	North	July 2005	
8.	*Radio West*	West	August 2005	Listeners
9.	*Simba FM*	Central	August 2005	Listeners

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[1] Interviews were held with one group of listeners in each of the four regions for Radio Uganda because the state radio has a national reach.

ADDENDUM. 4 BROAD AREAS OF INQUIRY

Government officials, ex-ministers, local leaders and academics

The goal of this level of the inquiry was to obtain some expert opinion on the language debate in Uganda and to place it in the context of policy and of the commercialisation of the media. Inquiry here also sought the views of government on the roles the different languages of Uganda are playing and could play in the broadcast media, with a focus on participation in the democratic process. This part of the inquiry was also vital in drawing out region specific sentiments about, especially, Kiswahili and Luganda and relating these to the socio-historical analysis. The broad questions raised were:

- What are the key political, economic and cultural factors at play in influencing broadcast policy as well as the priorities and programming of the broadcast media in Uganda especially since the liberalisation of the airwaves starting 1993?

- What are the salient features of broadcast policy in Uganda as it relates to linguistic diversity?

- How do these features relate to the wider context of the commercialisation of the broadcast media?

- What are some perceived solutions to improving participation in the media and in the democratic process via the indigenous languages?

Listeners

The goal of the inquiry here was to gauge community consensus on how the average Ugandan sees policy on the use of indigenous languages relating to their participation, as well as how the commercialisation of the media seems to be affecting participation in their local media via the indigenous languages. Key areas of inquiry at this level were:

- The significance of the indigenous languages for participation in and through the broadcast media;

- The rationale for regulating the use of Uganda's different languages in the broadcast media; and

- The ideal policy for regulating linguistic diversity in Uganda's broadcast media.

Media owners, managers and practitioners

The goal of this level of inquiry was to establish the language environment at a cross-section of radio stations from the three tiers of broadcasting, to gauge attitudes of media owners, managers and practitioners towards the different languages and to gather their views on language policy. This level of inquiry also sought to make connections between language practice at the radio stations and broader political and/or economic forces.

- The significance of the indigenous languages for participation in and through the broadcast media;

- The rationale for regulating the use of Uganda's different languages in the broadcast media;

- The motivation for exisiting station policy on language.

- The ideal policy for regulating linguistic diversity in Uganda's broadcast media.